

EAWOP SGM

‘Advancing Theory, Research, and Practice of Workplace Coaching’ – Activity Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Small Group Meeting was held on December 9-11, 2021. HMKW University of Applied Sciences for Media, Communication, and Management in Berlin hosted the meeting. In light of the travel and gathering restrictions caused by the Omicron wave at the time, the meeting was conducted in a hybrid format. Through this hybrid format, all delegates and keynote speakers were able to present their work while participating actively in small group meeting activities either on campus or virtually through Zoom and other online collaboration tools. The organizing committee included Dr. Gil Bozer of Sapir Academic College, Israel, Prof. Dr. Carolin Graßmann of Victoria International University of Applied Sciences, Germany, Prof. Dr. Silja Kotte of HMKW University of Applied Sciences, Germany, and Dr. Yi-Ling Lai of Birkbeck University, UK. The aim of our SGM was to make a significant contribution to advancing the theory, research, and practice of workplace coaching. In the course of two and a half days, thirty-one established and emerging coaching scholars from nine countries presented their recent work in workplace coaching and discussed current and future directions for the development of workplace coaching as a theory-driven field and a scientifically sound practice. The meeting covered a variety of topics, including input, process, and contextual factors in workplace coaching, advances in coaching outcome studies, design issues associated with coaching research and practice, and different types of coaching and related workplace interventions. There were also two distinguished keynote speakers. Professor Tatiana Bachkirova, Director of the International Centre for Coaching and Mentoring Studies at Oxford Brookes University, UK, opened the SGM with her keynote presentation entitled "Against all odds – researching coaching". Professor Niels van Quaquebeke, Head of the Leadership and Management Department at Kühne Logistics University, Germany, presented a keynote titled "From theory to theorising: Using Respectful Inquiry Theory as an example to underline key aspects of the theory development process." The overall feedback was very positive. Participants highlighted particularly how engaging the SGM was despite its hybrid nature – which was far above their pre-meeting expectations. It was felt that the combination of different formats within the SGM was extremely engaging and helpful. Participants appreciated the opportunity to meet, to get to know each other, interact, and develop ideas for international collaborations, such as conducting friendly reviews on manuscripts, writing a position paper, and proposing a special issue on workplace coaching.

ACTIVITY REPORT

1. Event General Information

The Small Group Meeting took place on December 9-11, 2021 at HMKW University of Applied Sciences for Media, Communication, and Management in Berlin ([link to university press release](#)). The organizing team included Dr. Gil Bozer of Sapir Academic College, Israel, Prof. Dr. Carolin Graßmann of Victoria International University of Applied Sciences, Germany, Prof. Dr. Silja Kotte of HMKW University of Applied Sciences, Germany, and Dr. Yi-Ling Lai of Birkbeck University, UK. A total of 31 participants from 25 institutions representing nine countries attended the SGM.

2. Program Overview and Course of the Meeting

The overall theme of the Small Group Meeting was 'Advancing Theory, Research, and Practice of Workplace Coaching'. The main topics covered in the meeting were input, process, and contextual factors in workplace coaching, advances in coaching outcome studies, design issues associated with coaching research and practice, and different forms of coaching and related workplace interventions. Due to the travel and gathering restrictions caused by the Omicron wave at that time, the meeting was conducted in a hybrid format in order to allow all delegates and keynote speakers to present their work along with active participation in other meeting activities either on campus or virtually through Zoom and other online collaboration tools (namely, Conceptboard). The meeting included two keynotes. Professor Tatiana Bachkirova, Director of Oxford Brookes University's International Centre for Coaching and Mentoring Studies and Professor of Coaching Psychology, opened the SGM with her keynote entitled "Against all odds - researching coaching". Prof. Dr. Niels van Quaquebeke, Professor of Leadership and Organizational Behavior and Head of the Leadership and Management Department at the Kühne Logistics University in Germany, gave a keynote called "From theory to theorising: Using Respectful Inquiry Theory as an example to illustrate key aspects of theory development." A total of thirty papers were presented in six paper sessions organized around the main topics of the meeting. Additionally, participants discussed topics in coaching research and practice at theme tables, such as coaching for sustainability, the digitization of coaching, and coaching in an organizational context. Furthermore, we facilitated two workshops focused on future directions for coaching research and examining the blurry boundaries between workplace coaching and managerial coaching.

3. Short Description of the SGM Topic Discussion

In addition to the comments and discussion that occurred following each paper session, the SGM included a workshop entitled 'What's next in coaching research?'. Participants discussed key topics related to workplace coaching research, such as coaching contexts, coaching processes, and digitization. Groups presented their reflections and outputs in a plenary session. Each group proposed future research directions to extend the 'research



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frontiers' of coaching to unexplored fields of scholarly inquiry. With respect to coaching contexts that play a pivotal role in workplace coaching as a context-sensitive intervention, participants highlighted the various contexts and the multiple roles that context may play in coaching. Participants shared research questions that can help guide our research agenda, such as: Who are the stakeholders involved in coaching and what are their various roles? What are the different layers of context in coaching (implicit and explicit)? How do we integrate and engage with context in coaching? Furthermore, we identified established theories and concepts such as sensemaking, information processing, boundary management, and social identity that can be used as theoretical frameworks for the study of coaching contexts. The participants also discussed qualitative and quantitative research methodologies that researchers can employ when researching coaching contexts, such as comparative case studies, ethnography, scenario-based experimental studies, and storytelling (e.g., myths, metaphors). As a result of technological evolutions, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, coaching has evolved from a face-to-face intervention to digitally mediated distance (or blended) coaching, with an emerging interest in artificial intelligence-based coaching. We considered some key research questions that can guide future research including: What are the unique input and process factors that play a significant role in digital coaching? What are the appropriate theoretical foundations and concepts that can be exploited for digital coaching research? How does the introduction of new supportive digital tools and methodologies shape the coaching intervention? What are the differences and similarities between the different formats of digital coaching (e.g., VR, video, chatbot)? And what are the differences and similarities between digital coaching and other online learning and development practices? We also discussed the theoretical and practical implications of the democratization of coaching, as coaching becomes more accessible and scalable. As an example, we discussed how this trend could impact the coaching profession (e.g., standards, ethics, coaching education, coach competencies). Additionally, we discussed the impact of the new world of work on workplace coaching, as work is transforming and the lines between personal and professional life blur in the sharing economy.

In addition to the three workshops, we also discussed a major debate in the coaching literature in small groups, namely the similarities and differences between workplace coaching delivered by professional coaches and managerial coaching where managers coach employees as part of their leadership responsibilities. The small groups offered insights and an agenda for future research to facilitate a better understanding among both researchers and practitioners of the definitions and unique characteristics of these developmental relationships. The participants offered ways we can learn from the current literature of each domain, including highlighting key concepts and theories that are relevant to both domains or exclusive to one domain. Moreover, power dynamics

and organizational politics and agendas (implicit or explicit) were suggested for further study.

4. Meeting Implications/Outcomes

There have been several implications for research, knowledge transference, and networking developments. We had several meeting participants who asked to provide friendly reviews for manuscripts that will be submitted soon for publication and agreements were made as to who would provide such feedback after the SGM. As another direct outcome of this SGM, the organizing team is currently planning a special issue/section with the Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, in collaboration with one of the SGM participants who is on the editorial board of JOOP. Furthermore, the SGM identified and created space for discussion of the tension and possible interplay between managerial and workplace coaching as a timely and highly controversial topic. Therefore, the organizing team aims to write a position paper to move that debate forward and guide both researchers who are conducting research in these fields, as well as human resource development professionals who often plan, design, implement, and coordinate these practices in organizations. We also consider inviting other SGM participants who contributed particularly strongly to this debate during the SGM workshop on this topic. We are currently exploring the fit of this position paper in dialogue with the EJWOP editor. To ensure the knowledge transference to coaching practice, we invited a member from the German coaching association (DBVC). The DBVC had agreed to sponsor the meeting financially if needed and sent a practitioner delegate to participate in our SGM, bring in the practitioners' perspective and report back to different DBVC boards after the SGM.

5. SGM Evaluation

In the evaluation session with which we concluded the SGM, the overall feedback was very positive. Participants highlighted particularly how engaging the SGM was despite its hybrid nature – which was in contrast to their expectation (“Coming into the meeting, I was firmly convinced that hybrid conferences don’t work, particularly for those participating remotely. You proved the opposite.”; “It is the first online conference where I actually stayed from beginning to end and that even during the weekend.”). The combination of different formats within the SGM (keynotes, paper sessions, breakout sessions to get to know each other, topic-centered small groups, and plenary discussions) was perceived as very engaging and helpful. Participants appreciated opportunities to meet, to get to know each other, start conversations, and develop ideas for (international) cooperation, especially through discussion time (after the paper presentations, during workshops and small group discussions). What was appreciated during the paper sessions was the extended time for discussion and the constructive feedback in response to each of the studies presented. This extended beyond the SGM: Several participants asked for friendly reviews for papers further along in the



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publication process and several agreements were met to provide it accordingly. On a content level, participants appreciated getting up to date with current developments in coaching research, gaining insights into the variety of different ways for examining coaching, becoming aware of different stages of development of coaching. Participants particularly thanked us as organizers for having pursued organizing the SGM and having held onto the hybrid format in spite of the constantly changing and challenging pandemic conditions. From the organizers' perspective, the dynamic pandemic developments around the then newly discovered Omicron variant constituted the greatest challenge for the SGM. It required us to constantly check hygiene and travel restrictions, adapt the hygiene plan and measures accordingly and communicate it back to participants. Especially participants from the UK who had been determined to attend in person had to switch to online participation less than a week before the SGM because of newly introduced travel restrictions. While maintaining the core of social activities for those attending in person (conference catering, joint dinners, guided tour around the Berlin wall), we also had to let go of the special framework which we had planned, namely a boat tour on the river Spree combined with the conference dinner. Although we kept the Zoom rooms open during breaks and allowed for self-assignment to breakout sessions to chat informally, the informal socializing which we also consider to be a vital part of SGMs was very limited due to the hybrid nature of the meeting. Under the given the circumstances, we nonetheless managed to create a lively and engaging hybrid SGM. What contributed in particular from our perspective was the deliberate mingling of online and in-person participants during small group discussions, the combination of different formats into a diversified conference program, and the dedication of our participants to engage actively and constructively in an attempt to advance their own research and the field of workplace coaching research overall.

ANNEXES

SGM Meeting Booklet

**Small Group Meeting
“Advancing Theory, Research, and Practice
of Workplace Coaching”**



B E R L I N

GERMANY

DECEMBER 9-11, 2021

Organizing Committee

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Dr. Yi-Ling Lai, Birkbeck, UK, y.lai@bbk.ac.uk



Hochschule für Medien
Kommunikation und Wirtschaft
University of Applied Sciences

H M K W



Conference Venue

HMKW University of Applied Sciences
for Media, Communication and Management,
Berlin

We are thankful to our conference sponsors



The German Federal Association of Executive Coaching (DBVC) wishes you an interesting and exciting event!



The DBVC (registered association) is the leading association in the German speaking countries focussing on coaching for management and leadership. Well-known executive coaching experts who have made their mark are members of the DBVC. True to its leading role the DBVC is committed to respectability, quality standards and professionalism in executive coaching.

Our objective is to professionalize the field of executive coaching and to promote and develop executive coaching in practice, research and teaching and in continuing education.

The DBVC is the only association which adopts a "four-pillars-concept" and joins together all relevant representatives of the executive coaching market on one single platform: executive coaches and providers of executive coaches, training providers for executive coaches, company experts, scientific experts.

By adopting a multiple perspective approach, the DBVC is the professional, scientific, and managerial focal point for all key persons in the sector of executive coaching. We intend to shape and design the business of executive coaching in general.

International umbrella association



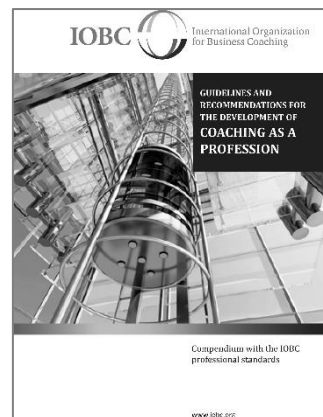
Above this the DBVC is an initiator, founding member and cooperation partner of the International Organization for Business Coaching e.V. (IOBC, registered association) - an international umbrella organisation for the worldwide, continuous assurance and development of quality, seriousness, and professionalism in executive coaching.

Quality standards and references for the coaching market

As part of our association activities since 2004 we have continuously formed and set high quality standards for coaching activities. As a result of these activities, we have published a bound reference work first in 2007: the DBVC / IOBC Coaching Compendium "Guidelines and Recommendations for the Development of Coaching as a Profession".

DBVC/IOBC Coaching Compendium

Today the DBVC Coaching Compendium in its 5th new edition has become an indispensable reference work for the coaching market and a binding standard canon for DBVC members. It can be downloaded for free in German an – thanks to our international umbrella association IOBC – as well as in English.



German version
www.dbvc.de/standards

English version
www.iobc.org/en/standards

Important Information – Links to the Meeting

The Small Group Meeting will be held on **Zoom**. The Zoom-Link for the entire meeting is as follows:

<https://zoom.us/j/97459579629>

Meeting-ID: 974 5957 9629

In addition, we will use **Concept Board** as our working platform where you will find an overview of the program, guidelines for interactive sessions and space to document results.

If you have not used Concept Board before, please take a moment to familiarize yourself with it before the meeting.

The link to the trial board is:

<https://app.conceptboard.com/board/5k8d-omsq-q9px-ed8x-q72q>

The link to the actual working board will be provided during the meeting.

Wifi access will be available at the conference for all in-person participants. Access data will be provided on site.

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Program Overview

Time	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
9:00	Arrival and registration (11:30 – 13:00)	Welcome & Paper session 3 (9:00 – 10:50)	Welcome & Paper session 5 (9:00 – 10:30)
		Coffee break (25min.)	Coffee break (20min.)
		Paper Session 4 (11:15 – 12:45)	Paper session 6 (10:50 – 12:00)
			Lunch (12:00 – 13.00)
13:00	Welcome and opening (13:00 – 13:45)	Lunch (12:45 – 13:45)	Debating workplace vs. managerial coaching (13:00 – 14:00)
	Keynote 1: Prof. Tatiana Bachkirova (13:45 – 14:30)	Workshop: What's next in coaching research? (13:45 – 16:15)	Closing reflection, evaluation and farewell (14:00 – 15:00)
	Paper session 1 (14:30 – 15:40)		Optional activity: Guided tour Wall Memorial (15:30 – 16:30)
	Coffee break (20min.)		
Paper session 2 (16:00 – 17:10)	Coffee break (20min.)		
16:00	Brief break (10min.)	Keynote 2: Prof. Niels van Quaquebeke & Theory think tank (16:35 – 18:05)	
	Theme tables (17:20 – 18:20)		
	Evening break		Evening break
	Social gathering		Conference dinner
19:15 - open			

Overview of Paper Sessions

Session Number, Day	Authors	Presentation Title
Session 1 Thursday (14:30-15:40)	Natalia Fey & Christof Miska	When a coach from Global North meets a coachee from Global South: Examining intercultural executive coaching success factors
	Fabien Moreau	The blackbox of coaching: The psychosocial resonance in the practice of coaches: A study based on life narratives
	Tünde Erdős, Joshua Wilt, & Michael Tichelmann	Changing beyond goals in coaching: Testing whether personality traits and their facets predict authentic self-development via affect balance
Session 2 Thursday (16:00-17:10)	Eva Jonas, Anna Moser, Georg Zerle, Isabell Braumandl, Sandra Schiemann, Nicklas Kinder, Christina Mühlberger, & Siegfried Greif	Staying on track: How coaching increases autonomous self-regulation
	Carsten Schermuly & Carolin Graßmann	Negative side effects of business coaching: State of research and next steps
	Angelina Roša & Natalja Lace	The methodology for assessing the impact of coaching on a company's performance
Session 3 Friday (9:00-10:50)	Almuth McDowall, Joanna Molyn, & Chris Strike	How many coaching sessions are enough? A dose-effect randomized controlled study
	Andrea Fontes & Silvia Dello Russo	A study of coaching transfer: Exploring factors regarding the coachee and coaching the design
	Pauline Fatien, Dima Louis, & Gazi Islam	Hidden in Tensions: Coaching ambivalence and the political context of paradox management
	Gil Bozer, Marianna Delegach, & Silja Kotte	The influence of organizational coaching context on pre-coaching motivation and the role of regulatory focus: An experimental study
	David Lane	The role for work-based coaching in psychological trauma
Session 4 Friday (11:15-12:45)	Christina Mühlberger, Eva Jonas, & Andreas Böhm	Benefitting from regulatory fit: How a promotion or prevention fit increases coaching success
	Lena Müller-Frommeyer, Eva-Maria Schulte, & Simone Kauffeld	An exploratory analysis of emotion dynamics between coaches and clients and their effect on coaching success

Session Number, Day	Authors	Presentation Title
	Lara Solms, Jessie Koen, Annelies E.M. van Vianen, Anne de Pagter, & Matthijs de Hoog	Understanding coaching as a process: The impact of client process factors for coaching effectiveness
	Christine Gockel, Carolin Graßmann, & Alexander Pundt	The role of humor in coaching
Session 5 Saturday (9:00-10:30)	Patrizia Ianiro-Dahm & Erik De Haan	What makes for a good quality coaching conversation?
	Conny Herbert Antoni & Lisa Catherine Zimmermann	Clarification and coping during coaching processes influence goal attainment via single and double loop learning
	Christine Busch, Romana Dreyer, & Monique Janneck	Mechanisms and processes of a highly effective blended detachment and WLB coaching: Intervention fidelity matters!
	Nancy Doyle & Emily Bradley	Disability coaching during a pandemic
Session 6 Saturday (10:50-12:00)	Batia Ben-Hador	He just didn't listen: Coaches' and coachees' different perceptions about the practice of Managers as Coach (MAC)
	Margarita Nyfoudi, Helen Shipton, Nicholas Theodorakopoulos, & Pawan Budhwar	Managerial coaching skill and team performance: A moderated mediation model
	Julia Milner	Feel it: The role of empathy across video, audio and written coaching interactions

Keynote 1: Prof. Tatiana Bachkirova

Against all the odds – researching coaching

Some might see focusing their research on coaching as the most exciting and fulfilling choice they have made as academics. Others would call becoming a researcher of coaching as career suicide for an aspiring academic. There are good reasons to support both sides. As this meeting is a gathering of those who have already made this choice, I believe it still worthwhile to consider what we are up against and what it takes to deal with it. The challenges of researching coaching are multiple and we will try to identify and explore them from multiple perspectives.

Presenter short Bio: Tatiana Bachkirova (MEd, MSc, PhD, C Psychol, AFBPsS) is Professor of Coaching Psychology and Co-Director of the International Centre for Coaching and Mentoring Studies at Oxford Brookes University, UK <http://www.brookes.ac.uk/iccams/>. Being an academic, she supervises PhD students and leads various research projects. As a practitioner she supervises coaches individually and in groups. At Oxford Brookes she also leads an internationally renowned programme of Advanced Study in Coaching Supervision. Tatiana is a recognised author, international speaker and holder of many achievement awards that include recognition of distinguished contribution to coaching psychology from the British Psychological Society, Harnisch Scholar award from the Institute of Coaching, USA and 2018 Coaching Supervision award from the EMCC. She serves as a member of the editorial boards of five academic journals. As an active researcher she published more than 70 research articles, book chapters and books, including the Complete Handbook of Coaching (2010, 2014 and 2018), Coaching and Mentoring Supervision: Theory and Practice (2011 and 2021), Developmental Coaching: Working with the Self (2011 and 2022) and The SAGE Handbook of Coaching (2017).

Keynote 2: Prof. Niels van Quaquebeke

From theory to theorising: Using Respectful Inquiry Theory as an example to highlight aspects of the theorising process

In his keynote, Niels Van Quaquebeke will not only present his theory on Respectful Inquiry, but use the same to explain different aspects of theorising. This includes, among others, how to identify the right topics, when it is better to work empirically versus "only" theoretically, the relevance of precise concept definitions, and various other pitfalls and hacks.

Presenter short Bio: Dr. Niels Van Quaquebeke is Professor of Leadership and Organizational Behavior and Head of Department of Leadership and Management at the KLU as well as Distinguished Research Professor at the University of Exeter Business School. A psychologist by training, he pursued his PhD at the University of Hamburg and as a visiting scholar at various business schools around the globe, including the Rotterdam School of Management of the Erasmus University where he worked as a postdoc and later as Assistant Professor. In his research, Van Quaquebeke focuses on the issue of leadership. Among others, he explores the communicative basis of successful leadership, the importance of values, ways of leading ethically, and the function of interpersonal respect. He is involved in the Research Institute on Leadership and Operations in Humanitarian Aid (RILOHA), which seeks to enhance the effectiveness of humanitarian aid operations via psychological insights, the Exeter Centre for Leadership, and the Erasmus Centre for Leadership Studies.

Abstracts (in program order)

Paper Session 1, Thursday 09th December 14:30-15:40

When a coach from Global North meets a coachee from Global South: Examining intercultural executive coaching success factors

Natalia Fey & Christof Miska

In recent years the cultural sensitivity of coaches has attracted increased attention among scholars, however, our theoretical understanding of its role in effective intercultural coaching is limited. Further, theoretical explanation of the importance of a coachee's cultural sensitivity and the joint effect of a coach's and a coachee's cultural sensitivity in intercultural executive coaching is absent. To help fill these voids, this study's main research question is to what extent do a coach's and a coachee's cultural intelligence, and their joint effect translate into coaching effectiveness in a global business environment? To answer this question, this study leverages the combination of social exchange theory and cultural intelligence theory and aims to advance scholarly understanding of the antecedents of a high-quality coaching relationship in executive coaching in a multicultural business environment. In particular, this study proposes two new antecedents of the coaching relationship - a coach cultural intelligence and a coachee's cultural intelligence and applies social exchange theory to explain their individual and joint role in developing a high-quality coaching relationship and, therefore, in facilitating effectiveness of intercultural coaching. Our study sheds light on new coach- and coachee-related characteristics affecting the conditions under which intercultural executive coaching is the most effective.

Conceptual Background and Literature Review

Executive coaching is becoming an increasingly important IHRM tool for leadership development in contemporary global organizations. While the effectiveness of executive coaching has been well demonstrated in recent years, the remaining big question is what makes coaching so effective (De Haan et al, 2020)? Research on executive coaching success factors has found several key predictors of coaching efficiency (Ely et al., 2010). Coaching relationship quality was found to be a key predictor of coaching outcomes (Baron & Morin, 2009; Bozer et al., 2015; Sonesh et al., 2015) with coach's credibility (Bozer et al., 2014) and coachee's motivation (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2020) being core predictors for coaching relationship.

Given the exponential growth of executive coaching in global organizations coaching with the coach and the leader (coachee) coming from different countries/ cultural backgrounds is becoming increasingly common. One of the challenges highlighted as preventing executive coaches from adding maximum value in their coaching of global leaders is their lack of higher multicultural capabilities (Abbott & MacFarlane, 2008; Rosinski, 2003; 2010; Plaister-Ten, J., 2009, Abbott & Salomaa, 2016). Abbott



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et al. (2010) and Booyesen (2015) highlighted the importance of CQ for executive coaches in the multicultural business environment. However, empirical studies on the role of coaches' CQ are scarce (Salomaa, 2017), and no quantitative studies currently exist. Therefore, our study bridges intercultural management and executive coaching literatures and builds on social exchange (Blau, 1964) and cultural intelligence (Ang et al., 2007) theories.

Research design/Methodology

The study is a mixed-method study combining a two-wave online survey of 200 coaching dyads with in-depth interviews with several coaches and coachees. The dyads consist of executive coaches, providing pro-bono coaching for a major global UN agency, and their 200 global leaders (coachees). The data is collected from all 200 global leaders and their executive coaches before a 4-month long coaching assignment has started (in Time 1) and after the coaching assignments have been completed (in Time 2). Pre-existing scales are used in the questionnaire, and the questionnaire has been rigorously developed and helped by insight from pilot interviews with six global coaches providing coaching to the UN agencies. A full-size data collection has started in June 2021 and will be completed at the end of November 2021. We aim to use the PSL-SEM technique for analyzing the data (Hair et al., 2012).

Expected contribution and its significance to scholarship in the coaching and international business (IB) field

Our study is an innovative quantitative research attempting to bridge intercultural management and executive coaching literatures. Our study contributes 1) conceptually to the executive coaching literature by identifying the new coaching success factors representing a coach's characteristics such as a coach's CQ and a coachee's characteristics such as coachee's CQ; 2) empirically to the executive coaching literature through carrying out a large-scale rigorous quantitative studies of coaching dyads as they are limited in the literature on executive coaching; 3) specifically to intercultural coaching literature by examining quantitatively the role of coach's CQ and coachee's CQ on coaching relationship and coaching outcomes; 4) to the IB literature by introducing new variables such as coach's CQ, coachee's CQ, and coaching relationship to the IB literature and by applying social exchange theory from coaching field to the IB field; 5) to non-profit leadership development literature by examining coaching success factors for the rarely studied context of an international development organization. Our research also addresses United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3 (Good health and well-being) and Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth) (United Nations, 2015). This is important since relatively little attention has been placed on how to develop leaders in international development organizations. Thus, there is a great need for our research!

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The blackbox of coaching: The psychosocial resonance in the practice of coaches: A study based on life narratives

Fabien Moreau

Purpose/Contribution

« A coach is his/her first tool ». Every coach understands this expression, because he/she supports people with what s/he is made of: life and career path, including social and subjective dynamics ... Said differently, the process of coaching implicates a resonance between the former experience and the practice. Isn't that contradictory with a fundamental pillar of coaching: neutrality? Especially if we consider coaching fundamentally as a collaborative, reflective and intersubjective professional relationship. Then, how someone can be neutral and also subjective ? Of course, we could consider that objectivity means getting distance with subjectivity. But to fill this gap between neutrality and subjective implication, we suggest here to analyse the hidden part of the coaching practice, its blackbox (Lankau & Feldman, 2005). If coaching is usually studied regarding performance (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Bozer & Jones, 2018), our contribution is to enlighten its underlying process (axis 4 of the call).

That's why, during an exploratory research, we asked for the life narratives of 25 executives turned coaches. The professional and personal path towards coaching (Salman, 2015) is made of subjective and social intricated experiences. This life process nourishes the representations of the coaches about their activity: i-e the image and the subjective signification they give to coaching. In other words, experiences have an impact on the representations of coaching which resonate in the practice (Giust-Desprairies, 2009).

Thus, the concept of psychosocial resonance appears relevant (see figure 1) – more than the freudian psychoanalytical concept of transference which only refers to childhood (Devereux, 1967). The psychosocial resonance (Amado, 1994) is “a diachronic and or a synchronic process situated at the cross-roads of the psychic and the social, and which is characterized by the particular intensity with which specific elements of the social context vibrate within one psyche or several interacting psyches”. Therefore, our research question is : how does the psychosocial resonance of personal and career path help to analyse the underlying dynamics of the practice of coaching?

Design/Methodology

Our research is based on a subjectivist perspective (Golsorkhi & Huault, 2009), using the Grounded Theorisation method (Glaser & Strauss, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 2004) with life narratives (Bertaux, 2010). Table n°1 presents our interviewees met in 2011/2013 in seven French big cities. They have varied academic backgrounds and professional experiences, and belong to different professional coaching networks. Life storytelling is a form of structured narration on temporalized series of events, situations, projects and actions (Bertaux, 2010). It allows to gradually and continuously compared retranscribed data along the research by going back and

forth with the data. And it gives access to the representations that interviewees have about their behaviours, and to discover hidden aspects in it (Joyeau, Robert-Demontrond, & Schmidt, 2010). We focused on the structural aspects of the interview (Martin, 2005).

Our interviews were started by the question “what brought you to coaching?”. Coaches were then asked to talk about their experience of coaching. Thus, we could discover the resonance of their life (of manager) in the practice of coaching. Some typical sentences helped to identify resonance: “it is very touching”, “I have a debt”, or “it is a convergence”. From our data, we obtained categories of resonance (see Table 2 and results). To illustrate it we chose two idealtypical cases of coaches who did their turning point young and at midlife (figures 2&3).

Results: A personal and professional resonance in the practice of coaching

Life and career experience nourishes representations of coaching which resonates in its practice. The resonance appear along the trajectory (diachronic) and while practicing coaching (synchronic). It is both subjective (psychic) and social. For each individual the psychosocial resonance is specific : the elements of their social (family, professional) context vibrate differently with their subjectivity, and therefore in their practice. From our data, we obtained two main categories of resonance (Table 2): 1/ personal resonance like childhood, socio-professional category or family context; 2/ professional resonance like experience of a lack (of sense or recognition), the choice to become independent or another activity (like counselling or therapist).

The resonance is mainly explicit. According to interviewees, they can coach “in accordance the problems that I myself experienced” (C22); “we accompany people in relation to the problems on which we have lived... and... then (throat noise), yes! we accompany many people on personal and professional problems that we have known "(C9). The resonance is sometimes more implicit. For example, C14 was over-adapted and for him, coaching is "helping people to ... to ... become who they really are inside". We give two deeper illustrations with figures 2&3 and comments.

Limitations & Perspectives

On the one hand, our work is not directly linked to the effectiveness but it shows the underlying process in the coaching practice. On the other hand, in the psychosocial resonance our data don't take into account the institutional context (of professional networks coaches belong to for instance). Besides, our interviews show an ambivalence discourse between critical opinions (about the negative externalities of organizations) and a managerialist discourse (serving efficiency ideology). Yet, we observed a resonance between the negative experience of management and their critical discourse.

Implications

Our results show the importance of the reflexive process in the shadow of the coaching in vivo. It explains why the coach is considered as his/her own first tool. Our work has ethical implications, it shows the necessary distance of coaching

practitioners with their former frameworks regarding career and life. It displays the complexity of this practice since it implicates a convergence of different experiences and identities along life. Plus, the resonance explains why coaches observe a continuity in their career path: "I did not have a (career) transition, that is to say, I was a coach already before" (C8). Our contribution, by analysing resonance, completes the critical literature (Fatién-Diochon & Nizet, 2012) about coaching as a social process – which considers organizational and social conformity (Shoukry & Cox, 2018).

Originality/Value

Few studies show what is underlying in the coaching practice in a non-instrumental perspective, that is to say to show coaching as an uncertain, complex and (unconscious) subjective process (of performance). Our contribution highlights the stake of reflexivity in coaching to become more aware of what coaches engage from their history and career path in their practice.

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Changing beyond goals in coaching: Testing whether personality traits and their facets predict authentic self-development via affect balance

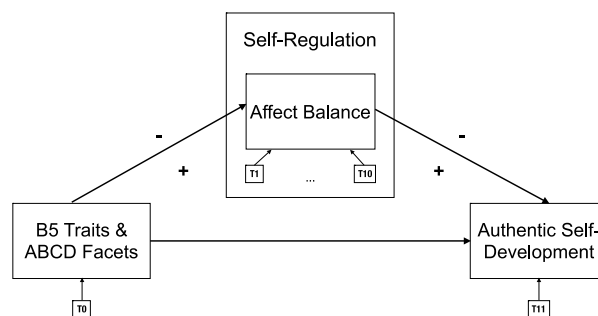
Tünde Erdős, Joshua Wilt, & Michael Tichelmann

Purpose/Contribution

Recent research into authenticity in leadership group coaching (Fusco, O’Riordan & Palmer, 2015) suggests that leader authenticity is a process of change (i.e., authentic self-development). Yet, little is known about authentic self-development (ASD) and how individual differences play out in ASD through workplace coaching.

Therefore, the ASD focus in workplace coaching in this study follows Mischel and Morf’s (2003) concept of self as an ‘organised dynamic, cognitive-affective-action system’ (p. 23) in social psychology. The purpose is to demonstrate the extent to which affective (A), behavioral (B), cognitive (C), and desire (D) facet-level components of the Big Five (Wilt & Revelle, 2015) predict ASD. Furthermore, we examine the role of affect balance (AB) as a mediator (Figure 1).

Figure 1
Basic prediction model



Note: Basic prediction model, in which ABCD stands for A (affective), B (behavioral), C (cognitive), and D (desire) facets of the B5 (Big Five Personality Model); Self-regulation as measured through affect balance is predicted to mediate the relationship between the Big Five Traits / the ABCD Facets (Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Extraversion, Openness) and authentic self-development. T0 indicates pre-coaching assessment of ABCDs / Big Five Traits. T1 ... T10 indicates the post-session assessment of Affect Balance as per dyadic engagement. T11 indicates the post-coaching assessment of Authentic Self-Development as goal outcomes three months after completion of the coaching engagement.

We propose that the mediating role of affective processes underlying self-regulation (Self-Regulation Model; Sirois & Hirsch 2015) will enhance our understanding of why certain traits predict ASD. As such, the mediated ABCD-process perspective and ASD focus complement the goal-focused approach to workplace coaching. In doing so, this study contributes an important frontier in coaching science and practically help coaches, clients and organizational developers make discerning choices when investing in leadership development.

Design/Methodology



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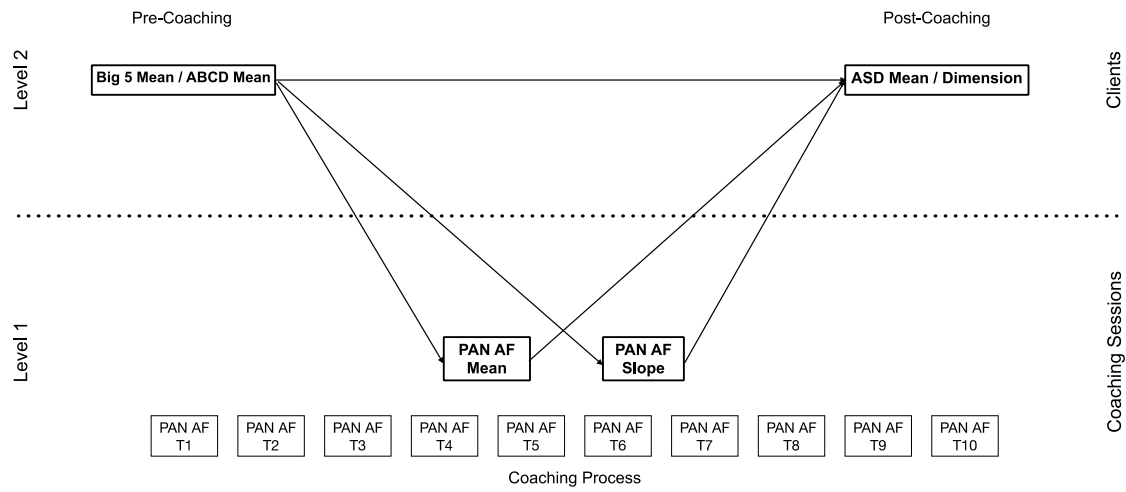
Trained professional coaches performed up to 10 workplace coaching interventions (i.e., minimum 60-minute interventions). Data was collected between October 2018 and October 2019. There were no dropouts. 176 clients' personality was assessed pre-coaching. ASD was assessed three months post-coaching. Clients' AB scores were obtained within 24 hours post-session. Clients received online questionnaire links via their coach. The study design is maximally naturalistic to ascertain a certain level of generalizability.

The ABCD scales used for each Big Five trait (Wilt & Revelle, 2015) have not been validated extensively. Thus, we sought to compare the predictive validity of the ABCD scales to the Maples et al. (2014) 120-item IPIP-NEO measure that does not explicitly contain balanced ABCD content while it contains a similar number of items and has desirable psychometric characteristics.

The 20-item Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS; Watson, Clark, & Tellegen, 1988) was used to assess AB. The scales used to assess ASD reflect grounded theory on ASD in coaching (Spence & Oades, 2011). The following components were selected: Perceived Competence (Williams & Deci, 1996); Goal Commitment (Klein et al., 2001); Goal Self-Concordance (Sheldon & Elliot, 1998); Goal Stability (Prywes, 2012).

The dataset consists of multilevel data measures. Personality and ASD were assessed between-persons (level 2), and repeated measures of AB were assessed within-persons (level 1). Multilevel structural equation modeling (MSEM) (Preacher, Zyphur, & Zhang, 2010) was performed in Mplus version 8.4. As the level 2 independent and dependent variables were mediated by the level 1 AB score, a 2-1-2 mediation model was chosen for the analysis (Figure 2). We modeled the mean and random slope of AB as potential mediators of personality and ASD relationships. Maximum likelihood estimation was used to account for unbalanced cluster sizes (i.e., varied number of sessions) and random slopes.

Figure 2. Basic analytical overview of 2-1-2 mediation model



Note. Basic analytical 2-1-2 path model reflecting interactions between personality traits as a mean measure (Big 5 Mean comprising Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Emotional Stability, Extraversion, Openness) representing the balanced ABCDs as a mean (comprising Affect, Behaviour, Cognition, Desire) prior to the commencement of the coaching engagement, affect balance (PAN AF) measured within 24 hours after each session over time (PAN AF T1 ... T10), the mean level of PAN AF over time (T1 ... T10), the slope of state PAN AF over time (T1 ... T10), authentic self-development as a mean (ASD Mean) and measures for the dimensions Perceived Competence, Goal Commitment, Goal Self-Concordance, Goal Stability three months after the coaching engagement was completed. Big 5 Mean and ASD Mean form Level 2 variables assess clients, and PAN AF M (T1 ... T10) mean and PAN AF Slope form Level 1 variables in the 2-1-2 model assess client session self-reports.

In iterating the models, the goal was to explore associations (i.e., overall pattern of effect sizes and magnitudes). Parameters of interest in all path models were estimated by standardized regression coefficients (Table 1).

Results

Results largely supported mediation models for the ASD components of perceived competence and goal commitment, but not for goal self-concordance nor goal stability. Moreover, the models showed that personality predicted goal self-concordance, but that neither personality nor AB predicted goal stability (Table 1).

Table 1.

Indirect Effects and p-Values from Multilevel Path Models Including Mean Affect Balance as a Mediator - Big Five on ASD

Variable	ASD composite		Perceived competence		Goal commitment		Goal self-concordance		Goal stability	
	<i>Est.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Est.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Est.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Est.</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Est.</i>	<i>p</i>
Agreeableness Trait	0.11	0.02	0.28	0.00	0.17	0.02	0.06	0.39	-0.05	0.60
Agreeableness A-sympathetic affect	0.08	0.04	0.16	0.01	0.11	0.03	0.07	0.13	-0.02	0.72
Agreeableness B-considerate behavior	0.08	0.02	0.19	0.00	0.11	0.02	0.06	0.21	-0.03	0.61
Agreeableness C-trusting cognitions	0.09	0.03	0.19	0.01	0.13	0.03	0.07	0.18	-0.02	0.76
Agreeableness D-affiliative desire	0.09	0.02	0.21	0.00	0.13	0.02	0.06	0.26	-0.04	0.64
Conscientiousness Trait	0.13	0.01	0.27	0.00	0.19	0.01	0.13	0.07	-0.07	0.45
Conscientiousness A-affinity for routine affect	0.00	0.94	-0.01	0.92	0.00	0.94	0.00	0.94	0.00	0.94
Conscientiousness B-responsible behavior	0.07	0.01	0.14	0.00	0.10	0.01	0.07	0.07	-0.02	0.57
Conscientiousness C-perceptive cognition	0.12	0.04	0.28	0.00	0.18	0.01	0.08	0.36	-0.07	0.55
Conscientiousness D-perfectionistic desire	0.06	0.05	0.12	0.03	0.08	0.04	0.06	0.11	-0.02	0.64
Emotional Stability Trait	0.11	0.03	0.24	0.00	0.17	0.01	0.09	0.21	-0.05	0.57
Emotional Stability A-stable affect	0.08	0.02	0.15	0.00	0.12	0.01	0.08	0.07	-0.02	0.74
Emotional Stability B-respectful behavior	0.05	0.04	0.11	0.02	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.12	-0.02	0.57
Emotional Stability C-composed cognition	0.08	0.02	0.15	0.00	0.12	0.01	0.07	0.18	-0.03	0.67
Emotional Stability D-tolerant desire	0.07	0.01	0.13	0.00	0.09	0.01	0.06	0.07	-0.01	0.84
Extraversion Trait	0.09	0.06	0.19	0.03	0.14	0.05	0.08	0.17	-0.02	0.71
Extraversion A-positive affect	0.08	0.04	0.15	0.02	0.11	0.04	0.05	0.20	-0.02	0.77
Extraversion B-gregarious behavior	0.01	0.65	0.02	0.62	0.02	0.64	0.01	0.66	0.00	0.83
Extraversion C-spontaneous cognition	0.08	0.05	0.15	0.02	0.11	0.05	0.07	0.14	-0.02	0.74
Extraversion D-attention-seeking desire	0.07	0.05	0.14	0.02	0.11	0.04	0.07	0.13	-0.03	0.54
Openness Trait	0.09	0.03	0.23	0.00	0.14	0.02	0.06	0.37	-0.06	0.50
Openness A-appreciation for beauty affect	0.09	0.02	0.20	0.00	0.14	0.01	0.05	0.26	-0.04	0.53
Openness B-challenging behavior	0.10	0.02	0.20	0.01	0.13	0.02	0.08	0.11	-0.02	0.72
Openness C-intellectual cognition	0.06	0.03	0.13	0.01	0.09	0.02	0.05	0.16	-0.03	0.57
Openness D-inquisitive desire	0.07	0.02	0.17	0.00	0.11	0.01	0.05	0.24	-0.03	0.59

Note. 2-1-2 mediation model output estimate (Est.) and two-tailed p-value (p) for Authentic Self-Development (ASD) on Big Five trait facets and domains. Slope refers to grow slope of Affect Balance per session. Indirect effects between slope of mediator on Big Five trait and slope of ASD on slope of mediator (indb) and indirect effects between slope of Affect Balance on Big Five trait and slope of ASD on Affect Balance (indd).

The models also showed that higher levels of mean (but not the slope) AB mediated the associations between personality and perceived competence and goal commitment (Table 2).

Table 2.

Absolute Values of Indirect Effect Sizes Relating Personality to Perceived Competence and Goal Commitment via Mean Affect Balance

Scale	Absolute Value of Indirect Effect Size					
	Perceived competence			Goal commitment		
	.00 - .10	.11 - .20	.21 - .30	.00 - .10	.11 - .20	.21 - .30
ABCD Scale Composite Traits	0	1	4	0	5	0
ABCD Scale Facets	2	16	2	7	13	0

Note. Numbers indicate how many indirect effect sizes fall within the specified effect size range.

The Maples et al (2014) facets showed relatively similar effects.

Implications

First, moderate trait effect sizes and small ABCD effect sizes may be attributable to the balanced representation of the ABCDs across traits (Wilt & Revelle, 2015). Specifically, each ABCD component may add predictive value. Thus, when combined, they are likely to have higher predictive power, which is important for the future orientation of coaching research into the effect of personality on change processes.

Second, the lack of association between personality and goal stability calls for a more nuanced research approach to goal attainment (Boyatzis & Howard, 2013) that considers the adaptive aspects of rigidity and flexibility (Brandtstädter & Rothermund, 2002). Specifically, both flexible goal adjustment (i.e., goal instability) and tenacious goal pursuit (i.e., goal stability) could facilitate ASD in workplace coaching.

Third, self-regulatory resources such as AB may not be important for explaining the association between clients' personality and goal stability in ASD. Clients with more adaptive traits are likely to experience coaching as guiding them toward goal-related behaviors already in line with their personality (i.e., self-congruent). That is, coaches may encourage more extraverted, agreeable, conscientious, emotionally stable, and open behaviors to facilitate clients' growth. However, clients who score lower on these traits may feel that goal pursuit is not self-concordant, as they would try to behave 'out of character'.

Limitations

First, the correlational design of the present study results in weak causal conclusions. Second, as many self-reported variables correlate, we acknowledge that it is not possible to rule out common method variance (CMV, Podsakoff et al., 2003)

completely. However, in the full-length article we present considerations to support our claim that CMV did not overly influence results. Third, we did not investigate coaches' perspectives, and clients' self-reports come with well-known biases. Fourth, we did not control for potential third variable explanations for findings, such as psychopathology and well-being.

Originality /Value

First, owing to the clearer associations between client's personality and ASD, future longitudinal research can investigate both the direct and indirect influence of traits and ABCDs to advance our theoretical understanding about the role of client's personality both in goal-focused coaching (Clutterbuck & Spence, 2017) and coaching as a meaning-making process (Stelter, 2016). Coaching researchers (e.g., Lai & McDowall, 2014) increasingly seek to understand how personality works in workplace coaching.

Second, identifying ties between workplace coaching and ASD moves coaching science further toward becoming a mature, interdisciplinary intervention towards positive organizational practices such as organizational citizenship behavior.

Third, the mediational findings highlight the importance of supporting a more optimal affective experience during workplace coaching. As affect is an internal experience, this study underlines the importance to include external (i.e., contextual) factors in investigating coaching experiences and outcomes (Erdös, de Haan, & Heusinkveld, 2020).

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Paper Session 2, Thursday 09th December 16:00-17:10

Staying on track: How coaching increases autonomous self-regulation

Eva Jonas, Anna Moser, Georg Zerle, Isabell Braumandl, Sandra Schiemann, Nicklas Kinder, Christina Mühlberger, & Siegfried Greif

Research shows that coaching often supports effective goal attainment. However, by which process can this result be explained?

Building on our previous research which has shown that coaching particularly satisfies the client's need for autonomy (Schiemann, Mühlberger & Jonas, 2018), we now wanted to take a closer look at self-regulation processes in coaching that are related to clients' need satisfaction. Self-regulation can be located in Kuhl's Theory of Personality-System-Interactions (PSI theory, Kuhl, 2001) and is understood as the

ability to make decisions, formulate goals and implement the goals. Self-regulation can be divided into different sub-components, like planning ability, self-determination, self-motivation and self-reassurance (Fröhlich & Kuhl, 2003; Kuhl, 2001).

Self-regulation encompasses unconscious, parallel and intuitive-holistic processes and can therefore be seen as a "democratic instance", since all desires, one's own and others' needs, feelings, values and ideas are considered before people make a decision. Opposing aspects are not suppressed in self-regulation, but creatively integrated. As a result, the self-determination of a person is promoted, which means that a person can act according to his or her motives and values (Kuhl, 2001). This again illustrates the connection to the autonomy need. If this need is fulfilled, the person experiences him/herself as the initiator of his/her behaviour: he/she is free in his/her will, may freely express his/her opinion and make his/her decisions. In this way the person experiences him/herself as self-responsible and has control over his/her actions (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

Following Greif (2008) we understand coaching as a special form of individual counselling in which the clients are supported in their goal attainment and development by a goal-, resource- and solution-oriented approach. Thus, coaches accompany the clients by improving their self-regulation skills (Mühlberger, Braumandl & Jonas, 2018). The link between PSI theory and coaching has already been established in several scientific papers (Engel & Kuhl, 2018; Kuhl & Strehlau, 2014). There is also a training course for PSI Coach, in which the use of diagnostics for self-management and motives is taught (Kuhl & Alsleben, 2009). However, to our knowledge so far no studies have investigated self-regulation processes according to PSI theory within actual coaching processes. To close this gap we explored in three studies which self-regulation competencies were affected in the course of different coaching processes.

Design/Methodology

In Study 1 we explored 1217 coaching processes from the perspectives of the coachees and their coaches. At the point of measurement all processes had been completed within the last few month. There were 326 coaches in our sample. 172 coaches evaluated their process with only one client and 154 coaches evaluated two or more coaching processes. In Study 2 we investigated 40 Coaching processes in a longitudinal design within a project on study activity at the University of Salzburg. Among other things, the coaching process is intended to increase the motivation and planning ability of students with regard to active participation in lectures, seminars and courses. The basis for intervention is formed by three sessions, which are the content of the self-management coaching concept according to Jonas, Braumandl & Beer (2018). The coaches have previously successfully completed training as career coaches (CoBeCe) at the University of Salzburg (career coaching concept according to Braumandl & Dirscherl, 2005). There are a total of six measuring points, as the participants fill out a questionnaire before and after each of the three units. Components of the questionnaire were the self-regulation inventory with reference to

the goal (Kuhl & Fuhrmann, 2004), the current goal, the current goal achievement, the goal satisfaction, the importance of the goal and the share of coaching in the achievement of the goal. In Study 3 we looked at peer-coaching processes of working nursing staff in management positions (N=21) of the part-time Bachelor's degree course in Nursing Management which was conducted in Regensburg (see Braumandl, Hohenester, Zerle & Jonas).

Results

In Study 1 the results showed a significant influence of autonomy satisfaction and self-regulation on the achievement of goals. Self-regulation also had a significant effect on satisfaction with coaching. In this way, promoting self-regulation and the coachee's autonomy alongside the working alliance can make a significant contribution to predicting the achievement of goals.

The results of Study 2 show a positive influence of the coaching process on most self-regulation subscales over the course of the three coaching session (ten out of eleven skills tested were increased) whereas a parallel mentoring process did not show such effects.

The results of Study 3 show that also peer coaching has led to a significant increase in self-regulation skills.

Implications, and Originality/Value

We think our research has important theoretical and practical implications.

The current studies help to shed some light on the process by which coaching might be effective. At the same time this process is embedded into a coherent theory, PSI theory, which leads to a deeper understanding of self-regulation processes.

As self-regulation capacity increases adaptability and persistence at the same time the theory has to potential to derive a range of different interventions within on theoretical framework. Because PSI theory (Kuhl, 2001) can be considered a meta-theory and integrates several research perspectives (Engel & Kuhl, 2018), findings can be easily transferable to other groups of people and contexts.

Finally, we were fortunate to test our assumptions with the context of three very different samples which points at the generalizability of our findings.

Limitations

So far we are still in the process of analyzing the current data. In addition, in all studies we had to find compromises with regard to the complexity of data collection and the design of the study. Unfortunately, we were not able to provide a randomized experimental control group design. So there might have been self-selection effects.

Negative side effects of business coaching: State of research and next steps

Carsten Schermuly & Carolin Graßmann

Purpose/Contribution

Coaching can have tremendous positive effects, but to date, there has been little attention to the possibility that coaching can also exhibit negative side effects. Negative side effects are defined as all harmful or unwanted results for clients, coaches or the organization directly caused by coaching that occur parallel to or following coaching. This new research field developed in recent years. The theoretical and empirical research on negative side effects is introduced in this presentation and future directions for this research field are offered.

Design/Methodology

Nine different studies with a qualitative, cross-sectional, time-lagged, and experimental research orientation were conducted and used for this review. They are presented and an overarching research model is derived.

Results

The results show that negative side effects of coaching cannot be equated with coaching failure. Negative side effects of coaching also occur in very successful coaching and are regular parts of coaching processes. Throughout the diverse studies, negative effects occurred frequently, but only a few of them were severe and most of them were low in intensity. Negative side effects occur more often for coaches than for clients. Concerning their antecedents, higher relationship quality between clients and coaches was related to fewer negative effects. The findings also indicated a beneficial influence of supervision. Moreover, negative side effects for clients and negative side effects for coaches were interrelated.

Limitations

The data was predominantly collected in Germany. Only one study was experimental.

Implications

Negative side effects of coaching are a regular part of coaching processes. Coaching education should integrate negative side effects and their antecedents into their programs to inform coaches about when and how they might be prevented. Because coaches experience more side effects than clients, they should be supported in this matter.

Originality/Value

The analysis of negative effects contributes to the professionalization of coaching and puts coaching in line with other helping relationships, where negative effects have been acknowledged as natural occurrences without being tabooed. A research model is presented which can guide future research initiatives in this field.

The methodology for assessing the impact of coaching on a company's performance

Angelina Roša & Natalja Lace

Purpose

The issue of assessing the impact of coaching on a company's performance still remains insufficiently explored, even though coaching has become one of the main facilitating activities in companies (Bachkirova et al., 2015; Leedham, 2005; de Meuse et al., 2009). One of the reasons for this situation is related to the nature of coaching and the complexity of evaluating its impact. Coaching as a human resource development activity differs considerably from other development approaches (Ely et al., 2010).

While consensus exists among scholars as regard the importance of assessing the impact of coaching, there is no unanimity on the methods to be applied whether they are to be qualitative or quantitative (Lawrence & Whyte, 2014; Grant, 2012; Gant, 2006; de Meuse et al., 2009; Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014; Albizu et al., 2019). There is also the view that the assessment of coaching process and outcomes is to be conducted applying structured and systematic approach to increase the reliability of estimates (Bozer et al., 2013; Greif, 2007; Ely et al., 2010).

However, there is a lack of a holistic approach which integrates the assessment of the factors, process and outcomes. Therefore, the purpose of the present research is to elaborate a methodology for assessing the impact of coaching interactions on company's performance to raise the company's awareness of the changes caused by coaching.

Design

The research applied exploratory sequential design with the dominance of qualitative research methods. The following research questions guided the investigation of the subject area and the elaboration of the methodology for assessing the impact of coaching on a company's performance:

1. What are the factors that promote coaching in companies?
2. What capacities of coaching trigger the driving forces for the development of a company?
3. How to assess the impact of coaching interactions on a company's performance?

The research is composed of four phases. During the first phase, the matter of coaching was investigated based on the analysis of the scientific literature and interviews with coaches. The second phase explored the key factors which have positive impact on the promotion of coaching in a company. Phase 3 investigated the driving forces for the development of a company and capacities of coaching, which can accelerate these drivers. The research finalizes with the development of the

methodology for assessing the impact of coaching on a company's performance. The methodology was tested in the course of the coaching program in the construction equipment supply company from June to December, 2018.

Results

The research conducted in phases 1 – 3:

- provided evidence to support the scientific literature that the goal of coaching is to facilitate self-directed learning, which, as a rule, contributes to the development and personal growth;
- identified that favourable conditions at organizational, team and individual levels are mainly related to learning and development;
- aligned the capacities of coaching to the driving forces of company development which can be accelerated using coaching.

The methodology for assessing the impact of coaching on a company's performance, which was elaborated in phase 4 of the research, comprises the methods for evaluating the process and outcomes of coaching, taking into consideration a company's current performance and favourable conditions. The methodology embraces the preliminary, active implementation and post-implementation stages of the coaching interaction and utilizes both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis.

The preliminary stage of a coaching interaction undertakes a significant role in the methodology, in view of the fact that during this stage the company's current needs in development are identified, the driving forces, which can be accelerated by coaching, are determined, and favourable conditions at individual, team and organizational levels are explored. The special assessment methods, namely the executives' judgements about the company's current performance, and a preprogramme survey of coaching clients, were developed. These methods aim to align the coaching capacities with the desired company's driving forces, as well as to detect the availability of the direct and indirect external and internal conditions to advance coaching.

During the active implementation stage, the progress in the achievement of the coaching goals is evaluated through a number of after-session feedback surveys. Besides monitoring the achievement of the goals, these surveys also aim at assessing the participants' reaction to the coaching interaction and identifying the ways of improvement of coaching delivery.

The methods developed to assess the coaching outcomes cover both short-term impact (they include end-of program feedback survey, and comparison between the coached group and the control group) and long-term impact (individual interviews: 3-4 months after the program).

Therefore, the developed methodology for assessing the impact of coaching on a company's performance determines the prerequisite conditions for an impactful

coaching interaction, monitors the process, and estimates the coaching outcomes at individual and organizational levels in the short- and long-term perspectives.

Limitations

The methodology was tested in one company; however, the results obtained in the course the different phases of the research were discussed at the scientific conferences and published in the scientific journals. The methodology was based on the findings of the scientific literature and the result of empirical studies carried out in two Baltic countries, namely Latvia and Lithuania.

Implications

The methodology was developed to provide coaches and companies with the methods and tools appropriate for assessing the impact from different perspectives and involving all parties concerned. The further research could be conducted to determine the assessment methods used in other disciplines which can also be applied in evaluating the impact of coaching on a company's performance.

Originality/Value

The methodology brings value by proposing the approach to assessing the impact of coaching on a company's performance based on the assumptions that:

- identifying the availability of direct and indirect external and internal conditions improves the impact of coaching;
- adjusting the capacities of coaching to the company's needs in development purposefully influences the changes in a company's performance;
- estimating the process and outcomes of coaching interaction at individual, team or/and organizational levels in a short and long run perspective ensures the assessment of the impact from different perspectives.

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Paper Session 3, Friday 10th December 09:00-10:50

How many coaching sessions are enough? A dose-effect randomized controlled study

Almuth McDowall, Joanna Molyn, & Chris Strike

Purpose/Contribution

Investment in coaching as a development activity of choice is popular as documented by growth statistics around the globe. Coaching is commonly defined as a relationship-focused developmental intervention facilitated by a series of contracted, one-to-one conversations with a qualified coach (de Haan, Duckworth, & Birch, 2013), taking place in various contexts including work, health and education. Various taxonomies of outcomes exist and often have a goal directed element with regards to wellbeing, performance, learning and other relevant outcomes (e.g., Jones et al, 2016).

As coaching is usually tailored to individual needs where goals might change during a series of sessions, evaluation is not without challenges. Given the element of change over time, it is crucial to track measures over a time series, but also to compare those receiving coaching with those who do not to preclude the impact of naturally occurring changes where people 'simply get better'. We needed this need for more rigorous designs in our current study. We undertook a dose-effect RCT study using a longitudinal design to consider the relationship between the dose (e.g., length or frequency) of treatment and the observed level of change (Robinson, Delgadillo & Kellett, 2020).

Our research was set in a UK institution with a mission for widening participation, where a good proportion of students enter education without formal qualifications, and are from families where they are the first one to go to university. In order to improve retention, academic success and employability, the university was keen to trial coaching as a voluntary means of extracurricular support and collaborated in the present research. There are many challenges stakeholders in modern higher education institutions. Prompted by changes and increases in tuition fees there has been a rise in students facing financial struggles, there are rising incidences of mental ill health and suicides, and a globally volatile employment market means uncertainty after graduation. It is therefore not surprising that a number of HEI

providers have considered coaching as part of their education or as extracurricular activities. A review of coaching in medical education argued a greater place for coaching in skills development than to support wellbeing for medical students (Lovell, 2018); we were keen to investigate what students would see as central foci.

Research questions and hypotheses

The coaching activity in this paper had a relational model which aimed to support self-selected needs and goals with a focus on increasing individual capacity and resilience. Conceptually, this was premised on Conservation of Resources Theory (COR, Hobfoll, 1989) which posits that individuals strive to hold on to their valued resources, positioning an increase in psychological resilience as a mechanism to do so. In summary, it was our aim to understand how coaching would decrease students levels of stress, and augment the degree of achievement of self-referenced goals through enhanced psychological resilience. We expected an accelerated rate of change at the beginning of student-coachee and coach interactions, given that this would have been the first time they had encountered such personalized professional support, but that there would be between person variability given that student had varied backgrounds, goals and contexts. Our hypotheses included:

H1. Self-reported stress will decrease during the coaching period with significant between-subject variability and the rate of change strongest at the start of the coaching period.

H2. Goal attainment will increase during the coaching period with significant between-subject variability in the extent of this change and the rate of change will be strongest at the start of the coaching period.

H3. Coaching will have a negative indirect effect on change in stress, and a positive indirect effect on changes in goal attainment and well-being, operating via change in resilience.

Methodology/Design

We recruited 105 student-coachee coach pairs for the experimental group and 105 students to a control group; coaches were recruited from a second HEI institution. Coaching was offered online, and each set of coaching sessions was bespoke to address the respective coachees' aims. All participants recorded two coaching goals, which were mainly focused on facilitating academic success as well as supporting wellbeing.

We had a time series design over eight time points. Our measures included the general self-efficacy scale, coaching outcome expectancy, resilience, perceived social support, goal attainment scaling, gender, age, and a number of control measures. We used Latent Growth Curve Modelling (Preacher et al., 2008) to model change over time in our mediator, resilience, and the outcomes of psychological well-being, perceived stress and goal attainment.

Results

A CFA of our baseline-only control measures (hope, self-efficacy, coaching-outcome-expectancy and social support) supported the proposed 8 factor measurement

model: self-efficacy measured by a single scale; coaching-outcome-expectancy subscales of credibility and expectancy; hope likewise measured by agency and pathways subscales; and social support measured by family, friends, and significant others subscales. The model fit was satisfactory ($\chi^2 = 718.256$ on 436 df, CFI = 0.921, RMSEA = 0.057, SRMR = 0.055).

Limitations

It is a strength of our research that we collated data over eight time points. It is a limitation that there was considerable variation in the actual coaching process, therefore it remains elusive to determine what triggered any change, although we were able to model the change curve over time. Due to ethical constraints, we were unable to record students actual academic achievement, which would have provided an objective measure of 'coaching effectiveness'.

Implications

We found that coaching has cumulative effects over time, which supports that coaching builds and scaffolds resources, and more specifically does so by increasing psychological resilience given the support for our mediated model. We note that although students chose academic success and skills topics as primary central foci, coaching had holistic effects beyond the academic curriculum.

Originality/Value

To our knowledge this is the first RCT dose effect study in a coaching context.

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A study of coaching transfer: Exploring factors regarding the coachee and coaching the design Andrea Fontes & Silvia Dello Russo

Purpose

Meta-analytic findings support coaching effectiveness, but little evidence is available on the durability of its benefits (Jones et al., 2016). Achieving long-lasting results assumes that learning and transfer have occurred (Bozer & Sarros, 2012; Grant, 2014; Griffiths & Campbell, 2009), which are crucial elements for an intervention that is aimed at realizing an individual change. Hence, exploring coaching transfer and

how to achieve it, is of high relevance for both science and practice. Mirroring training transfer, Stewart and colleagues (2008) proposed coaching transfer as the sustained application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired during coaching into the workplace. Our research draws on this definition and focuses on a feature of coaching design that could enhance transfer. In fact, to improve coaching transfer, coaching design seems a crucial element (Burke & Hutchins, 2007), and we explore the use of reflective writing exercises in between coaching sessions, namely analyzing how they enable strengthening psychological resources (Gilbert et al., 2017). Psychological Capital (PsyCap; Luthans et al., 2007), was the selected set of resources (self-efficacy, hope, optimism, resilience) which has been shown to mediate the effects of coaching on job attitudes (Fontes & Dello Russo, 2021). Overall, we intended to investigate: 1) what type of learning takes place after a coaching program and how it relates to coaching transfer (namely, application, maintenance and generalization); 2) what patterns of PsyCap development are observed along the sessions of a coaching program and 3) how those patterns relate to coaching transfer.

Method

In this study 62 participants, working in a marketing agency voluntarily engaged in a coaching program, with four individual sessions. Between each monthly face- to-face session, a written reflective exercise was assigned as a “homework” (HW). The total number of exercises (171), constitutes our sample: 29 for HW1; 37 for HW2; 57 for HW3; 48 for HW4. A subset of respondents, completed at least 3 HWs, was used to examine the changes in PsyCap across sessions and their association with coaching learning and transfer.

The reflective exercises asked:

1st: “Based on what happened in the last weeks, please choose an event related to the objective you defined in our coaching session, describe in detail what happened, what was your behaviour, your thoughts and your feelings”.

2nd: identical to the first exercise, but explicitly asked to report a positive event.

3rd and 4th: “Write the progress made towards the achievement of the defined objective(s), what results you achieved, what behaviours you adopted, what you did, how you felt”.

The exercises were collected via Qualtrics, coded with Nvivo12 and analyzed through the process of template analysis. The HWs were coded with an a priori theoretical framework, namely the PsyCap dimensions. All four dimensions were coded as either “high” or “low”, as instances in which the PsyCap dimension was manifested or lacking respectively. In the fourth exercise, which was collected four months after the end of the program, we looked for coaching transfer elements (application, maintenance and generalization), simultaneously with the Kraiger et al.’s dimensions of learning (1992). Last, we studied the patterns of PsyCap across the sessions and related those to the coaching transfer elements.

Results

Results show that reflective writing exercises can stimulate the activation of positive psychological resources. Analyses show that over time the instances of “high” PsyCap dimensions increase in number, while the instances of “low” PsyCap dimensions decrease. Similar to the dynamic interactionist perspective of learning (Blume, 2019), also in coaching we observe that coachees adjust their responses over time, as evidenced in the concrete written episodes.

The last exercise yielded results on coaching transfer and the outcomes that participants mentioned recall Kraiger et al.’s dimensions of learning (1992), namely cognitive, affective and skill based. In terms of transfer, we found that coachees evidenced their ability to apply, maintain and/or generalize the knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired during coaching, this way considered as key elements of coaching transfer.

Finally, when exclusively considering the coachees who completed at least 3 HWs, we could explore the patterns of PsyCap evolution. We found that 15 people displayed an increasing trend in PsyCap, 2 were stable, and 3 displayed a decreasing trend. We also observed that increasing PsyCap trends were associated with specific elements of transfer, which would imply that strengthened resources is a prerequisite to greater transfer.

Limitations

Our study relied exclusively on self report data and it would be interesting to have the perspective of coachee’s managers or peers. However, if we consider that transfer refers to application, generalization and maintenance of knowledge and bear in mind the time gap between coaching and the data collection, we believe that self report would not represent a methodological obstacle. Another potential concern is that all data were collected from coachees that share the same context, that may be more or less facilitating coaching transfer with respect to others, and we do not have terms for comparison

Implications

This study makes important contributions for both science (i.e., to illuminate when and how long-lasting effects of coaching can be achieved) and practice (i.e., by offering concrete tools and recommendations that enable practitioners to achieve long-lasting effects). Moreover, our study has important implications for coachees, since they can proceed autonomously in pursuing their personal development using the expressive reflective exercises as a technique. Finally, shedding light on techniques that reinforce the transfer process is a contribution toward coaching professionalization (Fontes & Dello Russo, 2019).

Originality/Value

Overall, we believe our study significantly contributes to the coaching field and HRD more broadly by focusing on learning transfer, a critical issue for any developmental initiative. Specifically, we conducted one of the first, exploratory studies on coaching

transfer which not only highlights several aspects of coaching transfer, but also indicates how to possibly achieve that via coaching design features that support the development of individual psychological characteristics

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Hidden in tensions: Coaching ambivalence and the political context of paradox management

Pauline Fatien, Dima Louis & Gazi Islam

Purpose

Workplace coaching is an ambivalent practice, whose ambiguities, dark sides, hollows and bumps are increasingly pointed out (Clegg, Rhodes, & Kornberger, 2007; Nizet & Fatien Diochon, 2012).

On the bright side, coaching presents itself as a seductive practice when it promises the simultaneous development of individuals and their organizations (Amado, 2004; Amado, Faucheux, & Laurent, 1991). By helping individuals think about their values, their objectives, the meaning of their actions, coaches would empower individuals and help align interests and increase synergies. Potential conflicts get dissolved through the magic of increased communication (Amado et al., 1991).

On the darker side, critical voices understand this fluidification as a sort of manipulation resulting from “naiveté and idealism” about organizational power

dynamics (Amado et al., 1991, p. 63): coaching dialogue would rather be “a method of reprogramming the individual’s actions in accordance with the purpose of the system” (Nielsen & Nørreklit, 2009, p. 212). Coaches’ apparent genuine interest in helping clients develop their potentialities would hide an ignorance about the power dynamics of an ideological device that inadvertently align the interests of individuals to those of the organization. That’s why critical scholars worry that coaching might become “merely a tool for organizational and social conformity” (Shoukry & Cox, 2018, p. 414). Without awareness on such potential dynamics, coaching takes the face of a new a practice of control (Louis & Fatien Diochon, 2018; Nielsen & Nørreklit, 2009; Shoukry & Cox, 2018) and the proclaimed emancipation is another face of oppression (Shoukry, 2017).

All in all, coaching presents itself as a power-loaded device, in tension between a practice of empowerment and a practice of control (Louis & Fatien Diochon, 2018; Shoukry & Cox, 2018). Our research therefore intends to advance a conceptualization of this ambivalent divide. It seems an important objective: while coaching ambivalence has been pointed out, very few research has tried to provide an explanation for this ambivalence. To do so, we refer to the concept of mediation (Pagès, Bonetti, de Gaulejac, & Descendre, 1979; Pérezts, Bouilloud, & de Gaulejac, 2011). Mediations are organizational regulation practices that prevent conflicts to develop and anxiety to escalate. As temporary solutions provided by organizations to soothe tensions, they prevent their development into unmanageable paradoxes. But, what in the case of coaching, how does coaching operate as a potential mediation? If some research have started to suggest - implicitly (Salman, 2008) or explicitly (Fatien Diochon, 2009)- that coaching could act as a mediation practice, its effects on underlying tensions have never been empirically documented. Therefore, our research question is:

RQ: What is the impact of coaching as a mediation practice on organizational tensions?

Design/Methodology

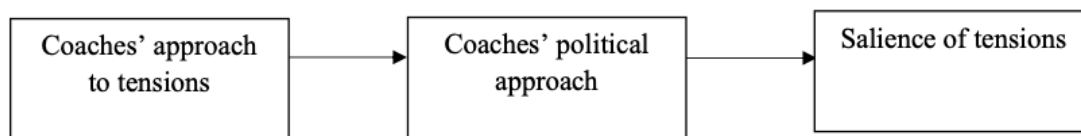
Research approach and design. Given our interest in exploring the impact of coaching on tensions, we conducted an inductive study. This form of research that generates theory from data is particularly well suited to explore complex uncertain phenomenon, in particular “hard to measure constructs” (p.1117) such as paradoxes (Eisenhardt, Graebner, & Sonenshein, 2016). Additionally, it “excel[s] at explicating processes and related “how” research questions (Eisenhardt et al., 2016, p. 1115; Langley, 1999). This qualitative research method is grounded in an interpretive and constructivist philosophical position that focuses on “how the complexities of the sociocultural world are experienced, interpreted, and understood in a particular context and at a particular point in time” (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008: 24).

Data collection method: Critical incident technique. Given our focus on the impact of coaching on tensions, we chose a data collection method which helps capture complex situations and interviewees’ reactions to subsequent situational demands (Arthur, 2001). Consequently, we used the critical incident technique (CIT)

(Flanagan, 1954) for interviewing coaches about their personal experiences of complex challenges. CIT has been designed to collect real-life activities and behaviors perceived either as outstandingly effective or ineffective with respect to meeting the general aims of the activity (Flanagan, 1954, p. 338). Critical incidents in this situation pertained to the recollection of a “situation [that] may have made it difficult for [people] to act, to know what to do, or to determine how to resolve the situation.” The interviewers invited the interviewees to “Think back to a time in (your) coaching practice when (you) were faced with a complex challenge”. Interviewees were asked 3 main reflective questions: (1) What was the challenge? (2) What were you thinking at the time? (3) What were you feeling at the time?, furthered by follow-up questions.

Data analysis. We decomposed our study of the impact of coaching as a mediation practice on tensions into two main explorations (See Figure 1 below). First, we looked at how coaches react when faced with an emerging issue, i.e. the critical incident, and identified the impact of this reaction on the tensions. Second, we analyzed the political context created as a result. Third, we depicted the impact on tensions. To accomplish those objectives, we did several rounds of data analysis, using open, axial, and selective coding, to identify emerging categories. Figure 1 illustrates the steps of data analysis. Our results are presented in the next section.

Figure 1. Steps of data analysis



Results

Table 1 presents our results. We identified three main scenarios, articulating each time approaches to tensions, political context and salience of tensions.

Coaches' approaches to tensions	Political context	Latency/Salience of tensions
Individualization	Politically blind	Tensions buried
Socialization	Politically neutral	Tensions surfaced
Systematization	Politically active	Tensions re-embedded

Implications/Originality/Value

Coaching has been described an ambivalent practice, but most research stays at the declarative stage, without providing an explanation for this ambivalence. Our research tackles this issue of providing understanding of coaching ambivalence, and we adopted a political lens. Indeed, approaching coaching as a mediation practice that is inherently power loaded (Pagès, Bonetti, de Gaulejac, & Descendre, 1979; Pérezts, Bouilloud, & de Gaulejac, 2011), we show that coaches' approaches to tensions shape a specific political context that, in turns, informs the salience and latency of organizational tensions. This various impacts of coaching on organizational tensions (whether buried, surfaced or re-embedded) makes coaching an ambivalent

practice. Therefore, our research suggests that coaching ambivalence derives from the multiple political contexts shaped by coaches' approaches to tensions.

When coaching is too often perceived a neutral practice, reduced to its technicality, our research depicts it at a political device, which calls for increasing awareness of the political context of coaching, asking practitioners whether and how coaching can be potentially disruptive.

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The influence of organizational coaching context on pre-coaching motivation and the role of regulatory focus: An experimental study

Gil Bozer, Marianna Delegach & Silja Kotte

Abstract

This study responds to the call for closer analysis of the role that contextual and individual factors play in workplace coaching as a context-sensitive intervention. We build on theories of regulatory focus and training motivation, to propose and examine a model that explains employees' pre-coaching motivation when assigned to workplace coaching. Specifically, we propose that the employees' perception of the organizational coaching context, as either developmental or remedial, contributes to their pre-coaching motivation through employees' situational regulatory focus. Results of a scenario-based experimental study (N=175) demonstrated that organizational coaching context affects employees' situational regulatory foci beyond their chronic dispositions. Further, the indirect relationship between developmental organizational coaching context and pre-coaching motivation was mediated by employee situational promotion focus. However, we did not find the hypothesized indirect relationship between remedial organizational coaching context and employee pre-coaching motivation via employee situational prevention focus. The study highlights the important role that organizations' management and human resource development personnel play in the "kick-off" of a workplace coaching intervention by shaping the context of coaching assignments prior to coaching. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the importance of including the organization's informal feedback to the employee prior to coaching as a key contractual element that contributes to coachees' pre-coaching motivation. We conclude with implications for future workplace coaching research and practice.

Purpose

Questions of how different contexts and circumstances of workplace coaching are associated with coaching processes and outcomes and when coaching is (most or least) impactful have started to attract research attention (Bachkirova, 2017; Kotte et al., 2019). Addressing these questions is a high priority and a timely step in advancing coaching research from work that simply investigates the effects of coaching toward studies that consider why and how coaching works (Bozer & Jones, 2021). However, contextual factors remain largely unexplored and untested (Pandolfi, 2020). This research gap has hindered our understanding of the organizational context most conducive to workplace coaching (Kotte, 2019) and the potential interrelatedness of contextual factors and coachee-related factors (Erdös et al., 2020). Accordingly, our study aims to investigate how different organizational contexts (namely, different organizations' primary objectives for using coaching) impact pre-coaching motivation among employees who are assigned to coaching.

Moreover, although recent work highlights the importance of coachee motivational factors in coaching processes and outcomes (e.g., Blackman et al., 2016; Bozer & Jones, 2018; De Haan, 2019), there is little empirical evidence regarding the motivational processes through which coaching interventions are associated with coaching outcomes beyond goal setting and goal orientation (Bozer & Delegach, 2019). In response to this gap, we draw on regulatory focus theory, which assumes that the process of self-regulation unfolds through two coexisting self-regulatory motivational systems (Higgins, 1997). Self-regulation via *promotion focus* is concerned with the growth, ideals, aspirations, and presence or absence of positive outcomes. In contrast, self-regulation via *prevention focus* is concerned with the obligations, duties, security, and absence or presence of adverse outcomes (Higgins, 2000). Hence, examining the role of regulatory focus in workplace coaching promises to provide important insights into how and why coachees respond differently to different coaching contexts. Specifically, to develop our study hypotheses, we build on regulatory focus theory and training motivation theory and propose that regulatory focus plays a mediating role between coaching context (namely, the organization's objective for using coaching) and coachee pre-coaching motivation.

Design/Methodology

We used the services of an online survey agency to host our surveys and collect our data. This agency is the largest Israeli online panel agency. We filtered participants based on the following criteria: 1) full-time employment; and 2) above 25 years old. Survey data was collected at two points in time one month apart between December 2019 and January 2020 (before the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic in Israel). At time 1 (T1) of the study, the participants completed the chronic regulatory foci scale and demographic questionnaire. At time 2 (T2), participants were randomly assigned to one of the two study conditions – namely, a developmental or remedial coaching context. Accordingly, each participant received one of the two written scenarios (developmental vs. remedial). The final sample included 192 participants with data for both points in time (37.46% attrition rate from T1 to T2). The participants' ages ranged from 25-65 years ($M = 42.70$, $SD = 9.92$ years), and 60.4% were female.

Results

In line with our hypothesized model, we found that the association between coaching context and coachee pre-coaching motivation was mediated by coachee situational promotion focus. In contrast, we did not find the hypothesized indirect association between coaching context and coachee pre-coaching motivation via situational prevention focus. Although a remedial coaching context primed the participants' situational prevention focus, we did not find that their situational prevention focus inhibited their pre-coaching motivation.

Implications

Our study provides and empirically tests a nuanced model of the interplay of contextual and individual factors that enhances the theoretical and empirical understanding of workplace coaching as an increasingly prominent HRD practice. In

additionally, our study highlights the need to reconceptualize the construct of feedback in workplace coaching. Feedback processes are considered as an essential component of almost every workplace coaching engagement and a key construct associated with coaching outcomes (Bozer & Jones, 2018). To date, feedback in coaching has predominantly been conceptualized as a process factor over the course of the coaching engagement. In line with feedback theory (e.g., Kluger & DeNisi, 1996; London & Smither, 2002), we demonstrate that the influence of feedback on workplace coaching motivation (and ultimately effectiveness) is not limited to *explicit* feedback that occurs *during* the coaching engagement. Rather, we show that *implicit* (performance) feedback from the organization *prior to* coaching, as reflected in the organization's primary objective for using coaching, can have a substantial impact on the coaching engagement and needs to be considered in order to maximize its benefits.

Originality/Value

To the best of our knowledge, this study is the first to examine the effect of organizational workplace coaching context on employees' motivation to participate in coaching. Drawing on regulatory focus theory (Higgins, 1997), this study provides a possible explanation for this relationship and highlights the role of coachee situational regulatory foci as an underlying mechanism. Our findings contribute to advancing coaching theory and have practical implications for key stakeholders responsible for designing, assigning, and implementing workplace coaching.

The role for work-based coaching in psychological trauma

David Lane

Purpose

There is a tendency to think about interventions for trauma as solely an individual therapeutic endeavour. We contend that it is also an organisation level matter and that ways to work with individuals, teams and systems need to be part of the approach. This creates a role for coaches. However, coaches need to understand trauma and the way in which current events can trigger memories from the long distant past. If coaches work in this area, they have a responsibility to understand the boundaries of their role, when and when not to intervene. This paper explores the skills that workplace coaches bring. Its purpose is to provide guidance on when to refer and looks at preventing secondary trauma and compassion fatigue and organisationally induced trauma.

Design

Trauma is everywhere impacting on most people at some point either directly or through secondary impacts from the organisations in which we work.

The paper is designed to explore the boundary between coaching and parallel fields (e.g. psychology, therapy). In particular coaches have been warned to stay away from anything that might be about therapy. It is the case that coaches should not

attempt to be therapists, yet the complexity of our lives and the contexts in which we work mean that there are ways for coaches to intervene which are outside of therapy but nevertheless helpful. The paper will draw upon a number of studies that have made clear that invention is not just about therapeutic work. We have to address four stages to generate a comprehensive approach - preparation, response, recovery and mitigation. It considers the wide range of factors affected by personal traumas:

- industrial accidents,
- violence or bullying
- industrial exposure through a work role in high risk environments,
- contexts in which professional and public meet in distressing circumstances, nurse, social worker, police officer, ambulance or fire & rescue personnel,
- sudden death of a much-loved colleague,
- slow demise of a close work colleague from cancer
- unexpected mass redundancies.

It will also draw upon a number of cases studies looking at work-based trauma. A case study based on events within an organisation in response to the attacks on the World Trade Center (9/11) will be explored to illustrate the varied roles that coaches can bring.

Results and Limitations

It is clear from the literature reviewed and case studies examined that some workplaces have a higher exposure to traumatic events indeed they are almost routine. This can be direct exposure in the case of fire-fighters, paramedics and police officers or indirect when dealing with victims of rape or child abuse. Organisational effectiveness is impacted.

We conclude found that such interventions help emergency responders to manage post incident trauma with the proviso that they are delivered in a way that respects organisational culture, have the support of the organisation and senior management, and incorporate existing social cohesion and peer support within teams. While the data is limited to reviews and case material and therefore can be considered specific to each case the increasing range and depth of such studies does render the findings sufficiently robust to merit consideration.

Contribution and Originality

The paper explores and contributes to the understanding of trauma that we can bring, how coaches can help and the organisational factors that as work and occupational psychologists we can use to inform practice and deliver interventions. Its originality lies in exploring the specific elements of the field that enables coaches to make a difference.

Paper Session 4, Friday 10th December 11:15-12:45

Benefitting from regulatory fit: How a promotion or prevention fit increases coaching success

Christina Mühlberger, Eva Jonas & Andreas Böhm

Purpose/Contribution

Regulatory focus (Higgins, 1997) theory distinguishes between two self-regulatory strategies – promotion which is growth-oriented and prevention which is security-oriented. People differ in these strategies as they tend to follow one strategy more than the other. Promoters use eager strategies to achieve their growth-goals and preventers use vigilant strategies to achieve their security-goals. According to research on regulatory fit, people experience a „feeling right“ about what they are doing and engage more strongly in this behavior when the strategy fits people’s underlying regulatory focus. Therefore, a coachee should benefit most from coaches and coachings that use methods, tools, and language fitting the coachee’s underlying regulatory focus. We present six studies investigating this regulatory fit in coaching. In two online-studies, we investigated how the coachee’s regulatory focus affects the evaluation of promotion- or prevention-coaches and promotion- or prevention-coaching offers. In three online studies, we explored how a regulatory fit in coaching can be established. Thereby we created promotion- or prevention-versions of established coaching interventions. As promoters and preventers use different language (e.g., promotion words: successful, performance; prevention-words: sufficient, rules), in a sixth study we investigated how a match between the coach’s and coachee’s language affects coaching success.

Design/Methodology

In Study 1 (N=41), participants read descriptions of two coaches – a promotion- and a prevention-oriented coach. Participants were asked to evaluate the coaches and to indicate how much they trusted the coaches. In Study 2 (N=101), participants read descriptions of three potential coaching offers. One was a promotion-oriented, one a prevention-oriented, and one a neutral offer. Participants were asked to evaluate the coachings and to indicate their „feeling right“ about the coaching.

In Studies 3, 4, and 5, participants performed different versions of established coaching interventions – either a promotion- or prevention-version – and responded to different variables assessing coaching success (e.g., self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation regarding goal pursuit, experienced „feeling right“). In Study 3 (N=120), we focused on the action planning phase of a coaching process. Participants in the promotion condition were asked to identify promotion-oriented action strategies to reach their goal. Participants in the prevention condition were asked to identify prevention-oriented action strategies to reach their goal. In Study 4 (N=125), we focused on a specific intervention, called the „energy-map“, which is used in coaching sessions to help clients reflect upon personal resources in different areas of their life. In the promotion condition, participants were asked to reflect upon goal-relevant energy-givers and in the prevention condition, participants were asked to reflect upon personal energy-takers. Study 5 (N=189) was based on the finding that

promoters process information on an abstract level, i.e., they focus on the „why“ of an action, and preventers on a concrete level, i.e., they focus on the „how“ of an action. Thus, we asked participants to reflect on their goal on an abstract (why do you want to reach your goal) vs. concrete level (how do you want to reach your goal). In Study 6 (N=90), we transcribed videos of real coaching sessions and used an artificial intelligence tool to analyze the promotion- or prevention-language of coaches and their clients. In the end of the coaching session, we assessed coaching success using the scales facilitated implementation and strengthened motivation.

Results

In all studies, we found fit-effects. In Study 1 and 2, which focused on the choice of a coach or coaching offer, we found fit-effects for promotion and prevention: When the coach or the coaching offer fit the individuals' orientation, evaluations were more positive, people indicated more trust in the coach, and more feeling right. In Studies 3, 4, and 5 we designed interventions in a promotion- or a prevention-oriented way. Study 3 that focused on the action planning phase of a coaching process showed fit-effects for promotion, such that promoters indicated more self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation for goal pursuit when they identified promotion-oriented action strategies. For preventers, there were tendencies in the expected direction. Study 4 showed fit-effects for promotion and prevention but the time differed: While promoters indicated more self-efficacy directly after reflecting upon energy-givers, preventers indicated more self-efficacy one week after reflecting upon energy-takers. Study 5 showed a prevention-fit: While for promoters, an abstract or concrete goal reflection did not make any difference, for preventers a concrete goal reflection led them to experience a „feeling right“ which positively affected their self-efficacy, intrinsic motivation, goal commitment, and their intended time of goal initiation. In Study 6 we found a promotion-fit: Coachees with a promotion-oriented language indicated more coaching success when they were worked with a coach with a promotion-oriented language than with a coach with prevention-oriented language.

Limitations

First, regarding regulatory fit, our studies focused on specific parts of the coaching process (i.e., choice of coaching, action planning phase). Experienced coaches, however, may criticize that a whole coaching process entails both, promotion- and prevention-properties. Future research might investigate how many fit- or non-fit situations in a coaching process affect coaching success. Second, as most of our studies were composed online, the majority of our participants were not real coaching clients but people who placed themselves into a coaching process. Although this raises the question whether our results are applicable to actual coaching clients, our participants set themselves actual personal goals, received realistic instructions, and worked actively on the intervention.

Implications

Coaching often focuses on growth and change which may lead to the conclusion that coaching may be more appropriate for promoters than for preventers. However, our line of studies shows that preventers feel right about a coaching which focuses more

on security than on growth. Therefore, by adapting coachings to the regulatory focus of a coachee, a coaching process can also be successful for preventers.

Originality/Value

The concept of regulatory focus and fit is a promising approach to not only understand but also form coaching processes. Coaches can use their knowledge about the different regulatory foci to individually adapt their coachings to the focus of the client. This can contribute to an augmented effectiveness of coaching.

An exploratory analysis of emotion dynamics between coaches and clients and their effect on coaching success

Lena Müller-Frommeyer, Eva-Maria Schulte & Simone Kauffeld

Purpose/Contribution

Research has long been trying to make sense of the role emotions play in coaching (e.g., Chan & Mallett, 2011; David, 2005). However, to date, there are no empirical insights into coach and client emotion expression, potential emotional dependencies, or effects on coaching success. This leads to unclear recommendations for coaches on how to react to client emotions—ranging from ignoring to mirroring or exploring them (e.g., Bachkirova & Cox, 2007; Ianaro et al., 2015).

Research on emotions in other dyadic settings (e.g., client-therapist, mother-child) shows that the investigation of emotion dynamics yields important insights into dependencies of emotional processes (e.g., co-regulation, patterns of leading/following; Soma et al., 2019; Main et al., 2016). Studying emotion dynamics takes an interpersonal approach to emotions that emphasizes patterns of reciprocal influence of coach and client and fundamentally links their emotions (e.g., Campos et al., 2011; Main et al., 2016). For example, Soma et al. (2019) found patterns of emotional co-regulation where therapists became more emotionally stable when clients became more emotionally labile in psychotherapy. Additionally, meta-analytic results (Graßmann et al., 2020) as well as research on the coaching process (e.g., Will & Kauffeld, 2018; Will, Schulte & Kauffeld, 2019) support the relevance of a strong working alliance and coach empathy for coaching success. However, research on antecedents of these key success factors is sparse.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to answer the following research questions: (1) How do emotion dynamics between coaches and clients unfold over the course of a coaching session? (2) How do emotion dynamics contribute to the emergence of a strong working alliance and coach empathy?

To acknowledge the theoretical linkages between coach and client emotions, we conceptualize emotions under a dynamical framework which considers coach/client emotions as a complex dynamic system that unfolds and changes over time, often in nonlinear patterns (e.g., Abraham, Abraham, & Shaw, 1990; Strogatz, 2018). Methodologically, these dynamic patterns are best captured using recurrence

quantification analysis (RQA). We thereby introduce a new methodological approach to coaching research and apply cross-RQA (cRQA) to quantify co-occurrences of identical emotional states in coaches' and clients' emotions (for more information see Main et al., 2016). By combining cRQA with growth-curve analysis (Mirman et al., 2008), we unravel patterns of emotion dynamics between coach and client (e.g., leading/following, synchrony).

Method

Sample

Our sample consists of video-recordings of 22 initial coaching sessions of coach-client dyads. The majority of coaches and clients were students enrolled in a master's degree at a German University. Coaches' (male = 2) mean age was $M = 23.9$ years ($SD = 2.5$). Clients' (male = 11) mean age was $M = 24.35$ years ($SD = 2.35$).

Procedure

All coaches participated in a career coaching training of 200 hours (for more information see Will et al., 2016). Clients voluntarily signed up for the coaching. Coaches and clients were randomly assigned to each other. Both gave written consent to be videotaped. Coaches and clients discussed career-related issues (e.g., career planning, work–life balance).

Measures

Coach and client emotion. The Specific Affect Coding System (SPAFF Version 4.0; Coan & Gottman, 2007) is used to code client and coach emotions displayed during the coaching session. The SPAFF is divided into positive, negative, and neutral codes. It considers a combination of verbal content, voice tone, context, facial expression, gesture, and body movement cues in determining each emotion. Coaches and clients are coded separately to generate individual emotion sequences. Coding was conducted using Mangold INTERACT (Version 18). We report Cohen's Kappa as a measure of interrater reliability on 10% of the coded material for all measures in this study.

Working Alliance. The Segmented Working Alliance Inventory Observer Version (SWAI-O; Berk, Safran, Muran, & Eubanks, 2013) is used to assess alliance for every 5-minute segment within a coaching session. The SWAI-O consists of 12 items, which are rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *never* to 7 = *always*).

Empathy. To assess coach empathy, the Rating Scales for the Assessment of Empathic Communication in Medical Interviews (REM; Nicolai, Demmel, & Hagen, 2007) are adapted to the coaching context and used for every 5-minute segment within a coaching session. The REM consists of nine items, which are rated on a 7-point Likert scale (where 1 represents minimal and 7 maximal empathy).

Planned Analyses

Data collection has already been completed. Currently, the 22 coaching sessions are coded and rated by two trained coders. Coding will be completed by August 2020. Data analyses will start once coding is completed. Results will be available for the EJWOP Small Group Meeting.

Our plan for examining emotion dynamics is described in the introduction. To assess the role of emotion dynamics for the emergence of a strong working alliance and coach empathy, we use linear-mixed effect models including cRQA results (e.g., recurrent emotions of coach and client) as predictor. All analyses will be conducted in R using the *crqa* (Coco & Dale, 2014) and *lme4* (Bates, Maechler, Bolker, & Walker, 2015) libraries.

Limitations

Even though we analyze approximately 44 hours of coaching, this study only represents 22 student coach-client dyads. Future studies need to confirm that our results can be generalized across coaching samples. Additionally, for our analyses, we collapsed the SPAFF into its three global categories. Even though with the exploratory nature of this study this still sheds new light on emotion dynamics in coaching, investigating emotions on a more fine-grained level might allow for deeper insights into the coaching process.

Implications

Unravelling emotion dynamics in coach-client interaction contributes to expanding the theoretical knowledge on the role (observable) emotions play in coach-client interaction. Focusing on dynamics in observed behavior, we generate recommendations on the use of coach emotions which will strengthen coaching theory, training, and everyday practice.

Originality/Value

The present study introduces an innovative quantitative methodology to the coaching literature. Here, we apply the method to the study of emotions. However, the method can be transferred to other behaviors relevant to the coaching context that can be observed over time to unravel dynamics in coach-client interaction.

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Understanding coaching as a process:

The impact of client process factors for coaching effectiveness

Lara Solms, Jessie Koen, Annelies E.M. van Vianen, Anne de Pagter & Matthijs de Hoog

Purpose/Contribution

With growing attention to individual well-being and thriving in the past two decades, professional coaching has become a popular intervention at both the workplace and the private domain. Research on the effects of coaching supports its popularity: studies have repeatedly demonstrated the positive effects of coaching on both well-being and performance outcomes.¹⁻³ Yet, little is known about the coaching process itself: “what is actually happening in the session, what coach and client do in the coaching interaction”⁴, and the process factors that help or hinder successful coaching.

In this longitudinal study, we aim to investigate important process factors that influence coaching outcomes. Specifically, we are taking into account variables that might influence the interaction between coach and client in important ways such as the client's self-disclosure, openness to feedback and learning, and trust in the

coach. In order to gain a richer understanding of these variables, we will also take into account coach perceptions of these variables. In linking these process factors to coaching outcomes, this study can provide important input to both coaching researchers and practitioners.

Design/Methodology

Participants in this study will be following a 10-month long coaching intervention that consists of 6 individual face-to-face coaching sessions with a professional coach. The coaching program is voluntary and offered to medical specialists and residents from several hospitals in the Netherlands. Based on the Job Demands – Resources Model⁵, we assess job demands (i.e., workload, job insecurity, work-life-interference), job resources (i.e., social support, autonomy), and personal resources (i.e., psychological capital, self-compassion, psychological flexibility), as well as burnout and work engagement before the intervention (T1) shortly after the intervention (T2).

Additionally, we measure process variables of coaching at both the client- and the coach-level halfway through the coaching (i.e., after the 3rd coaching session). Specifically, we assess the client’s perception of coach characteristics (e.g., attractiveness, expertness, trustworthiness, empathy, similarity), and self-rated self-disclosure, feedback orientation, working alliance, and effort. At the coach-level we will assess the coach’s rating of client’s self-disclosure, feedback orientation, effort and working alliance. Additionally, we will assess self-rated coach characteristics (e.g., attractiveness, expertness, trustworthiness, similarity).

Data analysis plan

Data will be analyzed using multiple regression analyses. Controlling for T1 pre-intervention scores, we will investigate to what extent process variables (e.g., self-disclosure, working alliance quality) can predict post-intervention scores for outcomes such as exhaustion, work engagement, and personal resources.

Originality & Relevance

This study can provide evidence about understudied coach- and client process factors that play a key role in successful coaching. As such, the study is relevant both from a practical and a theoretical perspective. First, understanding the coaching process – how it unfolds over time in presence or absence of relevant process factors – can inform coaching practitioners about their own share in generating coaching success, and how to intervene in their coaching practice. It will also shed light on the relevance of process factors that have been argued to be decisive for coaching success (e.g., the working alliance), yet have rarely been empirically examined. From a theoretical perspective, this study will provide insight into the “active ingredients”⁶ of coaching, helping to provide a richer scientific foundation to the practice of coaching.

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The role of humor in coaching

Christine Gockel, Carolin Graßmann & Alexander Pundt

Purpose/Contribution

Humor occurs in many interactions at the workplace and can have important consequences (Scheel & Gockel, 2017). It can help to transmit difficult information and protect and build relationships (e.g., Schöpf et al., 2015). Humor should therefore be particularly important in coaching, when clients need a strong working relationship to disclose and discuss sensitive information. In this theoretical paper, we investigate the role of humor in coaching based on psychological theories and empirical findings on humor in other work-related domains.

Humor is a form non-serious social incongruity (Scheel & Gockel, 2017), which means that something is meant or perceived as humorous when it is not serious (does not harm anyone), occurs in a social context (such as coaching), and is based on some form of incongruity. Incongruity develops when two concepts/ideas are combined that normally do not fit together. Many practitioners have written about the relevance of humor in coaching, but research is still lacking behind.

Design/Methodology

We integrated the literature on the role of humor in professional relationships with the framework of the coaching process. Based on our synthesis, we developed empirically testable propositions about the role of humor in coaching processes. As a basic framework, we use the GROW model of the coaching process, distinguishing between goal setting, reality checking, option development, and will/action planning (Whitmore, 1992). We describe potential effects of humor in each phase building on well-established psychological theories. As the basis for all phases of coaching, we

emphasize the working relationship between coach and client (Graßmann et al. 2019).

Results

The aim of the first coaching step, goal setting, is for clients to clarify what they want to achieve to determine the focus of coaching (Grant, 2011). Goal setting requires mental effort, can be strenuous, and depletes psychological resources (Tice et al., 2007). Research based on the strength model of self-regulation shows that ego-depleted individuals are less willing to make plans, partly due to effort avoidance (Sjastad & Baumeister, 2018). However, positive mood as it is induced by humor can counteract this ego depletion (Tice et al., 2007). We therefore present

Proposition 1: Humor increases the client's capability to set coaching goals.

The aim of the second coaching step, reality checking, is to examine how the current situation affects the client's goals (Grant, 2011). For this, clients need to be willing to disclose and be vulnerable in front of their coach (Alvey & Barclay, 2007). Humor can help saving face while presenting potentially humiliating information about one's situation (Holmes and Marra, 2006). After embarrassing statements, many listeners laughed, which indicates that they understood the comment as humorously. Humor occurrences and the acknowledgement of the humor can therefore attenuate the negative impact of embarrassing statements (Holmes and Marra, 2006; Schnurr & Chan, 2011; Schöpf, Martin, & Keating, 2015). We therefore present

Proposition 2: Humor supports the client's willingness to disclose.

The aim of the third coaching step, option development, is to identify and assess possible options for how clients can achieve their goal (Grant et al., 2003). Drawing on broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson, 2001), positive emotions broaden one's current thought-action repertoires, which in turn build enduring personal resources. Humor can induce such positive emotions (Robert & Wilbanks, 2012), and the resulting broadened perspectives help the client to develop more numerous and more creative options for reaching the coaching goal. Empirical research largely supports the link between positive emotions and creativity; for example, individuals who experience positive emotions prefer variety and accept a broader array of behavioral options (Kahn & Isen, 1993). We therefore present

Proposition 3: Humor supports identifying (a) more numerous and (b) more creative options.

The aim of the fourth coaching step, will/ action planning, is to define specific action steps and potential obstacles. The coach helps to enhance motivation to follow the defined plan (Grant, 2011). Thus, clients need self-regulation after the coaching sessions to apply learned ideas and behavior. Personality systems interaction theory assumes two modulations in these volitional actions (Kazén et al., 2015; Kuhl, 2000).

Self-control depletes energy, whereas self-regulation (or rather self-motivation) maintains and invigorates energy. We argue that humor, via increasing positive affect, enhances motivation to pursue the defined goal, especially in the light of potential obstacles. Positive affect has been shown to be a vital resource in coping with negative experiences, such as encountering obstacles (e.g. Kazén et al., 2015; Tugade et al., 2004; Quirin et al., 2011). We therefore present

Proposition 4: Humor supports self-motivation to implement challenging tasks.

For the development of a relationship between coach and client, we draw on the relational process model of humor (Cooper, 2008) that explains how humor contributes to establishing a positive professional relationship. For maintaining a relationship, we draw on the interest indication model (Li et al., 2009) that depicts how coach humor in a situation of negative feedback can indicate an ongoing interest in a positive relationship.

Limitations

We synthesized results qualitatively and not quantitatively, because we refer to distinct academic domains. We also did not consider the potential downsides of more aggressive forms of humor.

Implications

We integrate previous research on humor into the coaching literature to illuminate how coaches and clients can benefit from understanding the role of humor. We present specific propositions about how humor can impact coaching processes and the relationship between clients and coaches. Future research needs to develop these propositions further and test them empirically.

Originality/Value

Humor is universal and can occur throughout all phases of the coaching process. Researchers have focused their attention on many aspects of humor at the workplace (Scheel & Gockel, 2017), but neglected the coaching process even though humor can have far-reaching consequences on coaching process and outcomes. Our goal was to bridge this gap. We presented several propositions based on humor theories and research. We hope we prepared the ground for meaningful and methodologically sound future research and laid the foundation for evidence-based humor and coaching practice.

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Paper Session 5, Saturday 11th December 09:00-10:30

What makes for a good quality coaching conversation?

Patrizia Ianiro-Dahm & Erik de Haan

Purpose and Value

There has been a substantial growth in coaching research over the last ten years, resulting in a sum total of some 160 original, rigorous, quantitative studies (see, for an overview, De Haan, 2021). Although workplace coaching lends itself well to rigorous outcome research, it is notoriously difficult to undertake studies of realistic coaching, with professional coaches, who have been contracted within organisations. The present study addresses this gap, including video analyses of realistic coach-client encounters on the basis of a representative coach sample. Our hypotheses about high-quality coaching conversations are based on control and self-determination theory (e.g., Gregory, Beck, & Carr, 2011; Markland, Ryan, Tobin, & Rollnick, 2005), interpersonal theory (Kiesler 1996; Leary 1957) as well as Rogers (1973). Results of previous behavioural coaching studies are examined (e.g., on the importance of interpersonal behaviour, e.g. Ianiro et al., 2013, 2014) and combined with new findings (e.g., on the effect of specific coaching interventions).

Methodology

This study is based on a total of 90 (videotaped) realistic, professional coaching sessions which were undertaken by experienced coaching professionals (adults of 50 years on average) who have chosen a career as a professional executive coach (Ashridge Centre for Coaching database). The coaching sessions were 20-minutes long and were recorded as part of a professional accreditation process for coaches. Three female and one male rater were trained in behavioural observation and the use of the INTERACT software (Mangold, 2010) until interrater reliability was reasonably high ($\kappa = .74-.91$; ICC = .98). One rater duo focused on the interventions (recorded as frequency). Specifically, they examined the coach's methodical approach (e. g. addressing client's thoughts/feelings, facilitating learning, complex reflections) and the coach's ability of (self-)guidance within the coaching process (e. g. contracting, disclosure). The other rater duo assessed the coach's interpersonal behaviour (i.e. the duration of demonstrated dominance and affiliation). The two rater teams also assessed various outcome measures, such as the coaching working alliance (WAI, Horvath & Greenberg's, 1989) and warmth (Farber & Doolin, 2011, Rogers, 1957). Another outcome measure we refer to in this study is a coaching quality score. This score was assigned by accreditors of the Ashridge Center for Coaching. It was based on seven evaluation criteria (e.g. relational practice, contract and boundaries) and included a questioning of the coach after the session, the feedback from peer candidates and the perceptions of the client. We then investigated the link between the behavioural categories and coaching outcomes.

Main results

With regard to the coaches' methodological approach, it became apparent that simple and complex reflections of the coach are positively and significantly related to coaching quality. Contrary to our expectations, the coach's ability to (self-)guide and/or to work with what was perceivable within the session did not predict the quality of the working alliance or coaching. Only the coach's humour made a difference for the latter. It was positively and significantly related to coaching quality. Moreover, "addressing the client's feelings" was positively and significantly related to a coach's warmth. Concerning the coach's interpersonal behaviour, the present study could replicate prior study results on the importance of a coach's friendliness and a dominant-friendly interpersonal style for the working alliance and coaching quality. Taken together, successful coaches behaved rather neutral to dominant (dominance dimension), were friendlier and more humorous than their less successful peers. Moreover, they applied simple and complex reflections more frequently.

Limitations

The behavioural data refer to only a small section of a coaching process, namely the first 20 minutes. Nevertheless, clear differences between the coaches can already be seen here. In addition, the recording situation differs somewhat from practice, as it took place within the framework of an accreditation process. This may have led to the coaches being more excited than usual. Implications. The results can be used for an evidence-based and specific design of coaching trainings. They also offer starting points for practical coaches, who can orient themselves here on successful, experienced peers. Therefore, profiles of successful coaches are provided.

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Clarification and coping during coaching processes influence goal attainment via single and double loop learning

Conny Herbert Antoni & Lisa Catherine Zimmermann

Purpose/Contribution

This study examined mediating processes in coaching that have received little attention before. The effectiveness of coaching has been proven in various meta-analyses (e.g. De Meuse et al., 2009; Jones et al., 2016; Sonesh et al., 2015; Theeboom et al., 2014). However, what works and how it works has not yet been sufficiently researched. A current meta-analysis highlights the importance of the coach-client relationship as a key factor in coaching processes (Graßmann et al., 2020). Furthermore, several studies stress the importance of using coaching techniques (De Haan & Duckworth, 2013; Howard, 2015; McKenna & Davis, 2009) and of supporting the transfer into practice (Greif, 2008; Palmer, 2011). Nevertheless, there is still a lack of studies that analyze how coaches influence their clients (Will et al., 2019). Moreover, learning processes remain largely unexplored in the coaching process-outcome literature, although, they are key factors for the transfer of learning (Osgood, 1949) and goal attainment (e.g. Kizilcec et al., 2017). This paper focuses on single and double learning processes (Argyris, 1991) and analyzes their mediating role in the relation between the coaching techniques of *mastery/coping* and *clarification of meaning* and goal attainment.

Psychotherapy research has shown that *mastery/coping* and *clarification of meaning* are effective factors (Grawe, 1995). Both are also common coaching techniques (Zimmermann & Antoni, 2018a; Zimmermann & Antoni, 2018b). Coaches use *mastery/coping*, such as role-playing or stress management training, to support clients in coping better with their problems (Zimmermann & Antoni, 2018a). If clients notice, e.g. in a role play, that a proposed problem solving strategy works a so-called *single loop learning* process takes place (Argyris, 1991). They learn that they achieve their goals with the proposed problem solving strategy and they will continue to

pursue their goal with this strategy (see Figure 1). This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: *Mastery/Coping leads to goal attainment via single loop learning.*

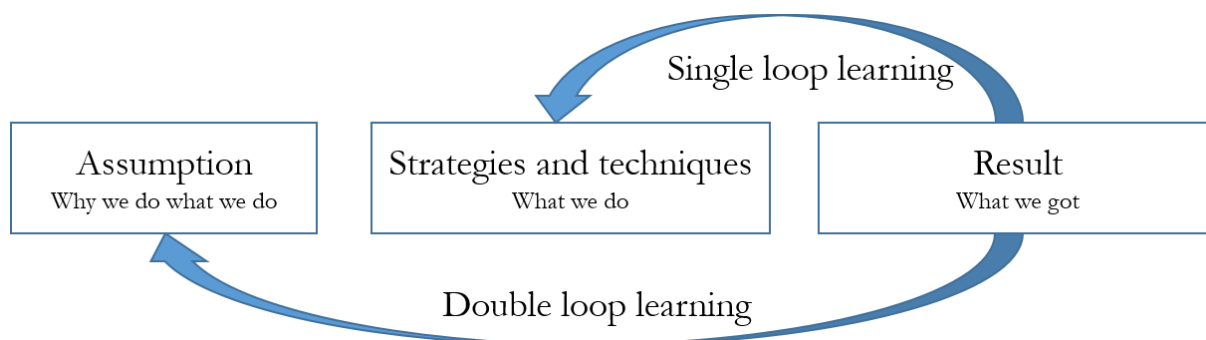
Also, *clarification of meaning* is a problem specific coaching intervention. However, *clarification of meaning* aims at clients' awareness and meaning of their experiences, behaviors and goals (Zimmermann & Antoni, 2018a). Coaches support clients in becoming aware of their conscious and unconscious goals and values, and reflecting them. This includes in particular the explication of implicit meanings and the consideration of motivational aspects that answer the question: Why does the client behave this way? Let's return to our example above. If the proposed problem solving strategy does not help the client, i.e. that it does not lead to the desired result or that the client is dissatisfied with it, rather than proposing a modified problem solving strategy the coach could start *clarifying the meaning* of the problem situation for the client and client's goals. The coach discusses with the client what did not work out, why she/he is dissatisfied, what she/he actually wants and questions her/his conscious and unconscious goals. At this point the *double loop learning* process (Argyris, 1991) begins (see figure 1). The client questions and possibly adapts her/his motives and goals once again and develops a new and more successful strategy to reach her/his goal. Of course coachings could also start with *clarification of meaning*, particularly, if clients report successive unsuccessful problem solving attempts

This leads to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: *Clarification of meaning leads to goal attainment via double loop learning.*

Figure 1

Single and double loop learning process



Design/Methodology

The analyses are based on a sample which comprised 74 clients recruited and coached by 72 coaches during a coaching-training program at a German university. The coaches participated in a 10-month lasting training program on professional coaching practices. Towards the end of the training, each coach had to start at least

one supervised coaching case. Both, coaches and clients agreed to complete questionnaires during the coaching which were used for this study. All coaching processes consisted of three to eleven coaching sessions ($M = 6.96$; $SD = 1.93$; $Mdn = 7$) with a length of 60 minutes each. To account for the nested data structure longitudinal multilevel models were used (e.g. Raudenbush & Bryk, 2010).

Results

Both hypotheses could be confirmed. *Mastery/Coping* leads to *goal attainment* via *single loop learning* ($\alpha\beta = .11$, 95% interval [CI: .07, .17], $p < .000$; $\tau' = .22$, 95% interval [CI: .13, .30], $p < .000$). *Double loop learning* mediated the effect of *clarification of meaning* on *goal attainment* ($\alpha\beta = .07$, 95% interval [CI: .03, .13], $p < .01$; $\tau' = .11$, 95% interval [CI: .00, .22], $p < .05$).

Limitations

One possible limitation of this study is that coaches were still in training and rather inexperienced. But research on psychotherapy, which is very similar to coaching, has shown that the experience of therapists has no strong effect on psychotherapy outcomes (Newman, 2020; Stein & Lambert, 1984). Nevertheless, coaching experience needs to be controlled for in future studies with larger sample sizes. In addition, it should be mentioned that two of the 30 coaches coached more than one client (one coached two and one coached three) which may lead to a dependency of data. However, it seems unlikely that these few cases of dependent data changed results.

Implications

Since coaching interventions have received only limited attention in the literature, further studies should focus on these aspects. With respect to coaching practice, gaining a deeper understanding of coaching processes can improve the effectiveness of coaching. Knowing the mechanisms of change enables coaches to tailor coaching interventions according to person and situation requirements during the session.

Originality/Value

This research contributes to current coaching process-outcome research by examining learning processes as mediators of specific coaching interventions that have so far received too little attention. Findings show that *clarification of meaning* and *mastery/coping* impact goal attainment via learning single and double loop learning processes. Not only mechanisms of coaching interventions are identified and specified, but empirically validated knowledge is also made available for practice and research. These insights help improve coaching practice as well as refine and validate theoretical knowledge.

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Mechanisms and processes of a highly effective blended detachment

and WLB coaching: Intervention fidelity matters!

Christine Busch, Romana Dreyer & Monique Janneck

Purpose

Due to the general and pandemic-driven trends of digitalization, home office and the associated blurring of work-life boundaries, people find it difficult to psychologically detach from work, which is crucial to sustaining a satisfying work-life balance (WLB) and well-being. The aim of this paper is to investigate the mechanisms and processes that impact the effectiveness of a coaching to foster detachment and WLB. We chose an extreme context: small business owners (SBOs) and their spouses who often work together in their business as copreneurs (Jurik et al., 2019). They actively manage a business with fewer than 50 employees (European Commission, 2020). SBOs live for and with their business (physically and mentally), blur work-life boundaries (Helmle et al., 2014), and show enormous difficulties to detach from their business (Kollmann et al., 2019). At the same time, prevention providers hardly reach them for health promotion programs (Hasle & Limborg, 2006). Theoretically, the coaching is based on the result-oriented coaching concept (Greif, 2008) and the Zürich Resource Model (ZRM; Storch & Krause, 2017). The latter is a self-management training concept based on neuroscientific theories and findings, such as the somatic marker hypothesis (Storch, 2004). As spouses have a strong influence on recovery (Park & Haun, 2017; Park & Fritz, 2014), WLB (Helmle et al., 2014) and behavioral changes in general (Nowack, 2017), we chose a couple format. The hypothesized mechanisms that impact effectiveness are result-oriented self-reflection, somatic markers and spousal social support during coaching. Furthermore, we applied a blended format (3 face-to-face and 2 video communication-sessions, 3 online courses and an online diary) to offer sustainable coaching in a time of increased technology use.

Methodology

We involve implementation process research (Nielsen & Randall, 2013) while focusing on the under-investigated intervention fidelity (Gearing et al., 2011) and studying coaches' empathy (Will et al., 2016). We involve realist evaluation (Pawson, 2013) by studying the mechanisms of the couple coaching in boosting detachment and WLB in the context of SBO. We observe coach behavior (Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015), use the adapted study design approach (Randall et al., 2005), and mixed methods (Bryman, 2006).

Coaches' behavior toward intervention fidelity was observed and clients sample (N=42) partitioned into two intervention groups. We observed coaches' empathic communication (Will & Kauffeld, 2018) and clients' intervention receipt (Gearing et al., 2011), and assessed clients' self-reports at different times up to 4 months after the coaching intervention ended regarding the hypothesized mechanisms of change (self-reflection, somatic markers, spousal social support), clients' affinity for technology (ATI), and general and specific coaching outcomes (S. Greif, 2017).

Results

Intervention receipt was significantly higher in the intervention group that was high in fidelity than in the intervention group that was low in fidelity ($p = .000$). Only in the intervention group that was high in fidelity did the mechanisms of change and ATI ($p = .000$ to $p = .036$) predict general coaching outcomes 4 months after the intervention ended. Empathic communication only predicted goal attainment ($p = .004$). Two-factor ANOVAs with repeated measures showed large effects ($d = 1$) for detachment ($p = .002$) and middle effects ($d = .7$) for WLB ($p = .042$) up to 4 months after the intervention ended without any interaction effect.

Limitations

First, our sample was limited to SBOs and their spouses in the German craft industry. Thus, we cannot expect SBOs or employees from other industries and cultures to yield identical results. We need evaluation studies of coaching interventions with other, more diverse samples. Second, the small sample size and the dependencies of the data are strong limitations. The risk of statistical Type II errors is increased and only small proportions of effects can be detected with small sample sizes (Semmer, 2011). We need to conduct more intervention research with larger samples.

Implications

Our findings suggest that the blended couple ZRM coaching intervention effectively fosters detachment and WLB, but coaches should be aware of the contexts and implementation processes, i.e., intervention delivery by understanding the theoretical foundation and the core components of their coaching approach. We need carefully prepared manuals and train-the-coach workshops to support them in delivering high-quality coaching

Originality

Blended couple ZRM coaching is highly effective in boosting detachment and WLB. When coaches delivered the intervention as intended, the hypothesized mechanisms of change and ATI were confirmed. Intervention research needs to consider intervention fidelity on a regular basis. Coaches should be aware of the theoretical foundation and the core components of their coaching approach.

Keywords: coaching, detachment, work-life balance, intervention fidelity, implementation process research, mixed method approach

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Paper Session 6, Saturday 11th December 10:50-12:00

He just didn't listen: Coaches' and coachees' different perceptions about the practice of Managers as Coach (MAC)

Batia Ben-Hador

Purpose

The term Manager as Coach (MAC) (Ladyshevsky, 2010) was defined by Beattie et al. (2014) as "Managers who actively work to improve the skills, competence, and performance of subordinates." More than two decades ago, Graham et al. (1994) noted that the MAC practice is a popular tool for managers in organizations. In 2018, Ali and Aziz confirmed that its popularity is growing, especially in the western world. The perceptions towards MAC in organizations are usually positive; it is cheap, simple (Parsloe, 1999) and can strengthen the relationship between managers and subordinates. However, it also has many known limitations and pitfalls (Tabarovsky, 2015). Schmidt-Lellek (2012) presented two definitions for a coach. According to the broad definition, everyone with motivation and non-binding common-sense standards can be a coach. In the narrow definition, however, a coach must possess standards for ethics, qualifications, dialogical attitudes, application of concepts and methods, quality assurance, theoretical and methodological plurality, multi-perspectivity in concepts and in their application, and a relevant spectrum of competencies and experience. Hence, Schmidt-Lellek (2012) implies that the broad definition – the one that describes MAC practice – undermines coaching professionalism. Other scholars also oppose referring to a supervisor-subordinate relationship as "coaching" (Bozer & Jones, 2018). For example, Kotte (2017) claimed that coaching establishes itself as a consulting format of professionals and not of managers; and Lai and McDowall (2014) suggested that a professional psychological training background is an essential requirement for a coach to manage a coachee's emotions. Therefore, there is a debate about the existence and benefits gained from coaching by MACs. According to the LMX theory (Graen & Cashman, 1975), MAC is a privet case of Leader - Member Exchange (Sue-Chan et al. 2011), Sue-Chan et al. (2011) found that the better the quality of connections between managers and subordinates, the more subordinates perceived the coaching process as more successful. The purpose of this study is to examine the different perceptions of MACs and coachees about the coaching process and to estimate the perceived success of this process.

Design/Methodology

In-depth interviews were conducted to 12 MACs and 21 subordinates, who received coaching from their managers from various organizations in Israel. Thematic analysis was used to interpret and analyze the data.

Results

The results indicate that the perceptions of the MACs towards the coaching process were positive; most of them claimed that it had strengthened their connection with

their subordinates, and that the coached subordinate demonstrated elevated performance. Only a minority of them felt incongruous with the role of a coach. However, the coachees were not as satisfied as the MACs and some of them testified that the process was difficult and sometimes even caused them damages. It was also found that the feelings of the coaches towards the organizations were connected to the perceived success of the coaching process, whereas the feelings of the coachees towards the organization were not so connected to the perceived success of this process.

Limitations

Although qualitative research is the most adequate method to explore perceptions gaps (Ben-Hador, 2016), it is difficult to replicate and to generalize (Garavan et al. 2019). Therefore, future studies should use quantitative measures in order to improve the rigor of the findings.

Implications

The nomination of managers as "coaches" might cause confusion, dissatisfaction, and even feelings of being trapped in an unwanted process among their subordinates (Tanskanen et al. 2019). Not every manager can become a good coach. On the other hand, it is very recommended that managers set goals and give an immediate and precise feedback to their subordinates; this process is what managers are supposed to do, according to leaderships theories such as the LMX, regardless if they are called coaches (Anderson, 2013). LMX theory predicts, that if managers will give up their power and minimize power distance, they will become better leaders (Lin et al. 2018). Relying on this theory, the "coaching by managers" process will be successful only if managers will significantly reduce power distance. Unfortunately, it is very difficult to give up power; as power is very important for achieving managerial goals (Pfeffer, 2010). Therefore, organizations must keep offering managers training in order to teach them how to become better managers, and personal facilitators for their subordinates in achieving their goals. However, in order to coach employees, it will be more effective to appoint a professional coach that is not the direct boss of the employee.

Originality/Value

Coaching studies usually examine the perceptions of coachees (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016) or of coaches (Graßmann et al. 2019). This study shed light on the gap between coaches' and coachees' perceptions when managers serve as coaches. Moreover, many of the studies about the MAC's practice are promoting it (Grant, 2017). This study places question marks on the effectiveness of the MAC's practice. Therefore, this study extends existing theory and holds practical value for organizations.

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Managerial coaching skill and team performance: A moderated mediation model

Margarita Nyfoudi, Helen Shipton, Nicholas Theodorakopoulos & Pawan Budhwar

Purpose/Contribution

The majority of extant literature has focused on individual-level outcomes of managerial coaching, including individual task performance (e.g. Zhao & Liu, 2020; Hui, Sue-Chan, & Wood, 2019; Huang & Hsieh, 2015). Although the contribution of these studies is pivotal in extending our understanding of the practice, we still know little about whether and, if so, how managerial coaching relates to team performance. We address this question by focusing on managerial coaching skill or, put differently, the overall ability of the manager to dyadically interact with team members using a team-oriented approach and techniques such as feedback, goal setting, and active listening (Dahling, Taylor, Chau, & Dwight, 2016; Hooijberg & Lane, 2009). Drawing on social cognition theory and in particular, the concepts of knowledge emergence and salience of line manager characteristics, we propose that managerial coaching skill relates to team performance through team knowledge and suggest that the strength of the relationship is likely dependent on manager's learning goal orientation. We focus on managers' learning goal orientation, i.e. their disposition towards learning and knowledge in achievement situations (VandeWalle, Nerstad, & Dysvik, 2019), in line with past research underscoring the significant role this contextual difference plays in promoting a team environment conducive to learning (Williams, Scandura, & Gavin, 2009).

Design/Methodology

We conducted the study in two British and one Greek organization. We focused on knowledge workers, i.e. office workers with knowledge creation as part of their job requirements, as they and their teams are the most likely to benefit from supportive managerial practices, such as coaching (Joo, 2010). We collected dual-source data from 182 knowledge workers and 60 line managers naturally nested in teams in all three organizations. We used already validated measures and calculated team-level psychometric properties, which provided support for the aggregation of the managerial coaching skill and team knowledge constructs to the team level.

Results

The findings supported a positive relationship between managerial coaching skill and team knowledge, which is moderated by line managers' learning goal orientation. The analysis also revealed that managerial coaching skill relates to team performance via team knowledge when the managers' learning goal orientation is high rather than low.

Limitations

The study adopted a cross-sectional design, and hence detection of causal relationships is limited. Future research may examine the proposed hypotheses by employing a pre- and post-coaching experimental design that may assist in establishing causal directions among the variables. Also, the study focused on teams

of knowledge workers located in nearby proximity within the participant organizations. Hence, the findings may not be directly replicable in differing settings, such as in virtual and globally distributed teams. Future studies may need to account for pertinent factors for such contexts, including distant communication tools and geographical dispersion (Gajendran & Joshi, 2012).

Implications

The research contributes to the coaching literature (e.g. Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Graßmann, Schölmerich, & Schemerly, 2020; Passmore & Lai, 2019) by developing and empirically testing a framework underpinned by social cognition theory that explicates not only whether but also how and under what conditions managerial coaching skill relates to team performance. In doing so, the study has three main theoretical implications. First, we add to the limited literature on the relationship between managerial coaching and team-related outcomes (e.g. Dahling et al., 2016; Hagen & Aguilar, 2012) and respond to calls for more comprehensive studies on the practice (Beattie et al., 2014). Second, we advance previous theoretical claims on the relationship between managerial coaching and knowledge (Agarwal et al., 2009; Huang & Hsieng, 2015; Hui & Sue-Chan, 2018) by examining the association between managerial coaching skill and emergent team knowledge. Third, we draw on the salience of the managers in the team, underlining the importance of managers' characteristics as contextual differences between teams. Hence, we shed light on a rather neglected area (Ye et al., 2016), extending the nomological network of the construct.

In light of the findings, organizations and HR departments may utilize managerial coaching as a strategic practice that is beneficial for teams. However, efforts need to be made to capture the added-value of coaching at multiple levels within the organization and beyond self-report coachee evaluations (Ely et al., 2010). In our study, we used managers' evaluations of team knowledge and performance. HR departments may alternatively utilize 360-degree assessments (Smither et al., 2003). Doing so may not only enable a more comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of managerial coaching but also, justify the investment of business resources. Further, the findings highlight the managers' learning goal orientation as an instrumental contextual characteristic in the relationship between managerial coaching skill and team knowledge. During managerial coaching training, managers' state learning goal orientation could be enhanced (Dragoni, 2005) by being encouraged to set specific and challenging learning goals (Salas, Tannenbaum, Kraiger, & Smith-Jentsch, 2012).

Originality/Value

Our study is pivotal in demonstrating how managerial coaching skill is related to knowledge within the team and thereupon, to team performance. Albeit extant literature has supported a link between managerial coaching and knowledge (e.g. Huang & Hsieh, 2015), there is limited theoretical substantiation and explanation of how the relationship unfolds. This is of grave importance lack of empirical studies may lead to uninformed adoptions of the practice (Jones & Andrews, 2019). Further, with our study, we explicate not only how but also under what conditions managerial

coaching relates to team performance via team knowledge; hence providing a more holistic appreciation and contributing to a more nuanced and informed use of managerial coaching in the workplace. Another strength of our study is the use of dual-source data. Specifically, we measured members' perceptions of their managers' coaching skill. Such perceptions play an important role in shaping employees' workplace attitudes and behavior (Dysvik & Kuvaas, 2012). Moreover, we used manager ratings of the overall team performance. This is in line with the prevalent role of managers in employees' performance appraisals (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). Notably, this practice also reduces the likelihood of common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012).

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Feel it: The role of empathy across video, audio and written coaching interactions

Julia Milner

Purpose/Contribution

Coaching meetings are increasingly happening via video conferencing, phone calls or written interactions and coaches find themselves in a different communication scenario. Everything seems to be stripped of a layer of energy once moving a screen between people. In a real-life interaction the body speaks, even if a person does not move that much, they make hand gestures and/or they lean forward and all of these things are noticeable. For example, when reduced to a small screen in video conferencing, often with a 'zoom in' onto your face, we are losing a lot of these 'body' support mechanisms which can be used to interpret what the other person is saying.

We need more insights into what it means to adapt coaching via different modalities, especially given recent changes in digital interactions due to the pandemic. This study sheds light on coaching via different modalities video, audio as well as written format with a focus on the role of empathy and contributes to an ongoing debate on how to adapt coaching services.

Design/Methodology

In a qualitative study with 16 participants of a three-day virtual workshop on Coaching and Positive Psychology techniques, we let them try out various modalities of digital Coaching. All participants had previously participated in a five day face-to-face coaching workshop covering foundational coaching skills and techniques, thus had a basic knowledge of face-to-face coaching interactions. Prior to the virtual workshop, participants were asked about their assumptions, expectations and skill level of different coaching skills. Furthermore, after the workshop a post survey was distributed to ask about their experiences of the various coaching approaches. The focus was on the following coaching skills:

- listening
- questioning
- giving feedback
- assisting with goal setting
- showing empathy
- letting the coachee arrive at their own solution
- recognizing and pointing out strengths
- providing structure
- encouraging a solution-focused approach

We let participants try to engage in shorter coaching conversations online via video, audio and written interactions (up to 15 minutes per coaching round). We used open-ended questions to gather further insights from the participants which we then analyzed via content analysis. Afterwards, we asked participants to describe which skills they found easy and which they found difficult to execute digitally.

Results

Whilst we gained knowledge about all different coaching skills, we will focus in this paper on empathy as it showcased the most interesting results. With the decrease of visible and audible cues, more named empathy as the most challenging skill to show in a digital format. Or as one participant aptly remarked:

“the one [skill] I found difficult was showing empathy. It’s harder to connect emotionally when you aren’t sharing the same space as someone.”

In other words, whilst some struggled with video interactions and empathy, this was more challenging when moving to audio or written interactions only. Another point that was mentioned is the additional distraction of seeing yourself on the video

screen. When you are interacting face-to-face you simply do not have the opportunity to constantly get self-feedback.

“showing empathy by focusing on the other [person’s] video, it was hard to consider my own facial expressions or body movements at the same time in this digital framework.” (Participant)

In our study, being reduced to a phone call only, some participants struggled to read the emotions of the other person, being left with just the tone of their voice.

“At times it might be difficult to analyze the coachee situation just by his or her tone.” (participant)

“showing empathy: you have to use your voice to show your empathy”

(participant)

Subtracting another input level and moving to writing interaction only, when the participants of our study were at the receiving end of the interaction some highly appreciated the written format giving them time to reflect on and inscribe their thoughts. In addition, when being on the receiving end, people feel all sorts of emotions when reading someone’s words. Coaches should invest some time not only into what they are writing, but also how it might be perceived, as one participant reflected:

“how to make it interesting, touching, showing empathy, but at the same time professional” (participant)

Limitations

This is an initial qualitative study with a small sample of 16 participants of a coaching workshop. However, with a qualitative approach and the collection of in-depth responses we were able to shed light on interesting themes including the importance and adaption of empathy across the various digital formats. Future studies should try to include more participants to be able to generalize findings.

Implications

Most participants reported difficulties with showing empathy across all digital formats. Given recent developments towards hybrid and virtual coaching, it is crucial to be able to translate an empathic approach via digital modalities. In a study amongst Business School students on leadership qualities, researchers found that empathy was considered the least important quality (Holt & Marques (2012). When exploring the reasons for this low ranking of empathy, they found that people were not familiar with empathy and also did not think it was correctly placed in business settings. In addition, it seems that empathy was something people were not comfortable exhibiting. With this in mind, coaches need to reflect upon ways how to include empathy appropriately in workplace coaching conversations. It is crucial for coaches to prepare themselves accordingly for coaching via different formats.

Depending on the clients wishes, coaches need to be able to move smoothly via coaching modalities yet being able to work with empathy without overloading clients.

Originality/Value

The value of our study is to shed light on the role of empathy and how coaches as well as participants receiving the coaching experience various coaching skills. Putting a focus on how to showcase empathy might help coaches to better prepare for coaching via video, audio as well as written interactions.

References

Holt, S. & Marques, J. (2012). Empathy in Leadership: Appropriate or Misplaced? An Empirical Study on a Topic That is Asking for Attention. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 105, 95-105.

List of participants (in alphabetical order)

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Nancy Doyle	Birkbeck University	United Kingdom
Romana Dreyer	Hamburg University	Germany
Tünde Erdős	PTC Coaching	Austria
Pauline Fatien	Grenoble Ecole de Management	France
Natalia Fey	Hanken School of Economics	Finland
Andrea Fontes	University Institute of Lisbon	Portugal
Christine Gockel	SRH Berlin University of Applied Sciences	Germany
Carolin Graßmann	Victoria International University of Applied Sciences	Germany
Conny Herbert Antoni	Trier University	Germany
Patrizia Ianiro-Dahm	Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences	Germany
Eva Jonas	University of Salzburg	Austria
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