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Research contributions towards the professionalization of coaching: The effects of coaching on psychological resources, job attitudes and performance – a between and within-person analysis

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*To Catarina and Maria, my daughters, who are
constantly reminding me what is really important in life*

ABSTRACT

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Coaching, an increasingly popular intervention in organizations, aims to induce change in coachees through collaborative, reflective and goal-focused relationships while achieving professional outcomes. Rooted in practice, coaching struggles to find the pathway to becoming a profession. Through four empirical studies, this thesis intends to contribute towards a more theoretically informed coaching practice, to fill some of the existing gaps in the literature. Given the non-homogeneous development of coaching worldwide, the first study provides perspective on the practice in Portugal. Findings evidence the need for theory-based practice, highlighting psychologists as better equipped practitioners with theory-driven tools. The second study attests to coaching effects regarding job attitudes and performance, plus the role of Psychological Capital (PsyCap) as mediator between coaching and job attitudes. The third study explores the transfer process in coaching. Three types of learning were found, together with main factors hindering transfer. The introduction of reflective writing exercises, based on PsyCap, evidenced its relevance also in coaching transfer. The last study analyses the change process in reflection, after coaching. Three types of change were found. The ability of implicit person theory to predict change and the correlations between change and coachees' reactions was shared. This thesis contributes to coaching research with implications for theory and practice, evidencing explanatory mechanisms of effectiveness, sustainability over time and the factors implied in coaching transfer. The rigorous and diverse methodological designs plus the theory driven tools also contribute to enrich the well-supported empirical research thus to the professionalization of coaching practice.

Keywords: coaching, workplace coaching, coaching transfer, PsyCap, change

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3650 Personnel Attitudes & Job Satisfaction

RESUMO

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O coaching, com popularidade crescente nas organizações, induz a mudança nos coachees através do relacionamento colaborativo, reflexivo e focado em objetivos orientados para resultados profissionais. Enraizado na prática, o coaching ainda procura o reconhecimento como profissão. Esta tese, com quatro estudos empíricos, pretende contribuir para uma prática teoricamente mais informada, preenchendo lacunas da literatura. Atendendo ao desenvolvimento diferenciado do coaching a nível mundial, o primeiro estudo fornece perspetivas sobre a prática em Portugal. Os resultados evidenciam a necessidade de uma prática teoricamente fundamentada, destacando os psicólogos como profissionais mais bem equipados. O segundo estudo atesta os efeitos do coaching nas atitudes e desempenho e o papel do Capital Psicológico (PsyCap) como mediador entre o coaching e as atitudes no trabalho. O terceiro estudo explora o processo de transferência no coaching. Foram encontrados três tipos de aprendizagem, juntamente com fatores que dificultam a transferência. A introdução de exercícios de escrita reflexiva, baseados no PsyCap, evidenciou a sua relevância na transferência. O último estudo evidencia os três tipos de mudança na reflexão do coachee. A capacidade de prever essa mudança, com base em traços de personalidade e as correlações entre a mudança e as reações dos coachees foram partilhadas. Esta tese, com implicações teóricas e práticas, evidencia os mecanismos explicativos da eficácia do coaching e a sustentabilidade ao longo do tempo, bem como os fatores implicados na transferência. As metodologias rigorosas e diversas, aliados às ferramentas orientadas pela teoria contribuem para o enriquecimento da investigação e consequentemente, para a profissionalização do coaching.

Palavras-chave: coaching, coaching no trabalho, transferência de coaching, Capital Psicológico, mudança.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Coaching has become a wide spreading industry all over the world. According to recently released figures from ICF (2020) this industry is worth over 2,8 billion dollars worldwide, presenting a 21% increase on 2016. According to the same report, there are more than 71,000 coaches spread around the world covering areas as varied as health coaching, life coaching and business coaching (Grover & Furnham, 2016).

Coaching, origins, and definitions

The term coach comes from the word “Kocs”, the name of a Hungarian village where high quality carriages were made. These carriages were developed to carry passengers more comfortably and better protected across rough terrain, from their point of departure to their ultimate destination (Hendrickson, 1987). In the 19th century, university students began to use this designation for the tutors who “carried” their students through their academic career. Later, it was also used for those who helped improve the performance of athletes (Cox, Bachkirova & Clutterbuck, 2009). But it was in the 90s, mainly in the US, that coaching became more popular, particularly within organizations, as support for modern, ambitious generations.

The emergence of coaching journals, such as the International Coaching Psychology Review (peer-reviewed), International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring (peer reviewed), and The Coaching Psychologist (British Psychological Society) also provide important evidence of coaching’s evolutionary stage, with a particular landmark being the first special issue on executive coaching of the American Psychological Association’s Consulting Psychology Journal in 1996 (Spence, 2007). Also, if we analyze the number of publications in peer reviewed journals that include coaching in the title, in PsycInfo alone, from the first publication in 1937 until the year 2000, only 238 could be found, and from then until today, 2927 studies have been published. In the academic field, the first university based postgraduate degree programs in coaching psychology at the University of Sydney, Australia (2000) and City University, London (2005) marked the establishment of coaching as a field of psychology in those countries.

An important part of the history of coaching is the role played by entities or associations, such as the International Coaching Federation (ICF) formed in 1992. But like the ICF, there are many other associations all over the world that have emerged in defense of a training program

with a common approach to the practice of coaching. Such entities have established standard practices for their members, creating principles, values and voluntary codes of ethics, and recommending standards of competence, complaints procedures and other guidelines (Cox et al., 2010). These entities and training schools, however, have also tended to be “driven by proprietary coaching systems, whose syllabi have little or no connection to relevant fields of knowledge” (Spence, 2007; p.260). As also stated by Cox et al and colleagues (2009), those entities seem to be more concerned with providing practice guidelines than coming up with a theoretical basis and robust research, being this way difficult to build and achieve a professional status. And despite some associations having already accepted coaching as a profession, there are nevertheless still several gaps that need to be filled before coaching can achieve that status. As stated by Grant and Cavanagh (2004) and further echoed by Spence (2007) “coaching practitioners currently operate within an industry in which they: (a) do not have to complete any formal training, nor possess any specific academic qualifications (except by choice); (b) are not bound to any particular code of ethics; (c) face no barriers to entry into the industry; (d) are not subject to any form of state or industry regulation; and (e) have little linkage to established knowledge bases that have relevance to coaching” (Spence, 2007; p.261).

Definitions of coaching vary considerably in accordance with which theoretical routes each has derived. In fact, as stated by Passmore and Yi-Ling (2019) the search for a formal definition of coaching is an academic pursuit in itself, but necessary to develop evidence-based practice and adequate training. The first clear definition of coaching was stated in 1992, by Whitmore (1992) who defined coaching as a process that led to “unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them – a facilitation approach” (Whitmore, 1992, p.8). Later, Whitworth and colleagues (1998) emphasized the dyad between coach and coachee designating it as a relationship based on trust, confidentiality (Whitworth, Kimsey-House, & Sandahl, 1998), later explored in detail by De Haan and colleagues (2011). Further definitions have since been added by several authors, such as coaching is a “result-oriented, systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of life experience and goal-attainment in the personal and/or professional life of normal, non-clinical clients” (Grant, 2003, p. 254) where the role of the coach is to promote the change in the coachee”. It is important to examine this definition in detail, highlighting the key components: 1) a results-oriented systematic process, thus reinforcing coaching as being

performance oriented and a pre-defined process, as opposed to an ad-hoc intervention; 2) goal-attainment as the initial and crucial phase common to all coaching processes and working as an important trigger to every coaching process, involving the search for resources, pathways and solutions towards goal-achievement, 3) non-clinical clients, emphasizing the in-existence of pathology in the coachee, clarifying differences versus other clinical interventions. It is worth calling for a further, additional definition of coaching as a “reflective process that facilitates coachees to experience positive behavioral changes” (Lai & McDowall, 2014), highlighting reflection here as the key variable that will feed the self-regulatory cycle inherent to the desired change process (Grant, 2003; Gray, 2006; Theebom, Van Vianen & Beersma, 2017).

In order to differentiate coaching from other interventions, it is important to clarify the role of the coach. The coach is a facilitator, not a teacher or instructor with specific directions for goal-attainment, which is crucially different from a traditional developmental intervention. In fact, it is not even mandatory that the coach has more experience in the area on which the coachee has decided to focus (Bono, Purvanova, Towler & Peterson, 2009). There is, however, some debate about the coach's role as provider of feedback vs a complete absence of opinions from the coach (Cavanagh, Grant & Kemp, 2005). Some might argue that the coach should only question coachees as an incentive for their self-discovery (Withmore, 1992), and others might consider the inclusion of some relevant advice, or at least suggested paths for a coachee to follow (Goldsmith, 2000). This discussion generated not so much a dichotomy of positions among coaches, but rather a continuum which the coach can navigate according to each coachee's situation and goal. It is important to note, however, that to better facilitate a sustained change process, one that lasts over time, the coaching process should foster a coachee's self-directed learning and personal growth (Grant, 2003) so they can function autonomously in the future. The future, as the temporal focus of coaching, is another important characteristic of this solution-oriented practice. The coach should help the coachee uncover their own resources, in contrast to psychotherapy or counselling which seeks solutions through extensive analysis of problems and their origins (Berg & Szabo, 2005; Grant & O'Connor 2010). Also, important to note, with regard to this distinction, is the assumption that, in coaching, clients should belong to a population without psychopathology (Grant, 2003). In a processual definition, coaching can be defined as a collaborative relationship between coach and coachee, whereby the coach should follow a systematic process in order to help the coachee set their goals, define action

plans and act upon them with a solution-focused orientation. This process should also involve monitoring, evaluating and, if needed, reframing of strategies and routines to help coachees better reach their goals and overcome obstacles through a self-regulatory cycle with the ultimate aim of well-being (Cavanagh et al., 2005; Theeboom et al., 2017).

The diversity of backgrounds from which coaches emerge (business consultancy; management; human resources, training and education, counselling, psychology) also informs the diversity of coaching's theoretical roots. An important debate is about the role of psychology in coaching. The inclusion of this psychological perspective in the analysis of coaching is attributed to Grant (2001), who is considered the father of coaching psychology. In his PhD thesis, Grant (2001) defined the relevant aspects of coaching psychology as: 1) an empirically validated framework of change which facilitates the coaching process; 2) a model of self-regulation stimulated by goal setting and goal-attainment; and 3) a methodology of interaction between behaviors, thoughts and feelings that work together to facilitate goal-attainment (Passmore & Yan-Lin, 2019). After that, the main systematic reviews and meta-analysis that were released shared the view of coaching through the lens of psychology (Theeboom, Beersma & Vianen, 2014; Jones, Woods & Guillaume, 2016; Bozer & Jones, 2018; Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). However, not all practitioners necessarily agree and some even consider that psychology, used more to uncover psychological disorders, might be more harmful than beneficial (Bono et al. 2009). But Bono and colleagues (2009), while comparing both ideological perspectives in a survey, concluded that results favored “psychologist coaches, especially with respect to strong measurement, use of data from multiple sources, and use of techniques with empirical validity” (Bono et al., 2009; p. 387). Also, in the defense of psychologists it is worth mentioning that in the literature on the side-effects of coaching, one the most relevant issues referred to by coachees was that practitioners could not deal with in-depth problems brought up during their sessions (Graßmann & Shermuly, 2016). In fact, during the coaching process of “unlocking his/her potential” (Whitmore, 1992) the coachee might “open” some important “wounds” that only a professional such as a psychologist can deal with.

Regarding the theoretical bases of coaching, its roots sit firmly within the field of psychology. Positive psychology is one of those theoretical bases, focused on amplifying individual strengths rather than repairing weaknesses, giving individuals, who are decision makers, the ability to be masterful and efficacious (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Also

found in the theoretical foundations of coaching, from Maslow (1954) and Rogers (1959), is humanistic psychology which focuses on the ability of individuals to grow and reach their highest potential. Similarly present in coaching are constructivist origins which assume that individuals are the agents of their own development, finding ways to fill the gaps and overcome limitations (Laske, 1999). Moreover, the conceptions of learning from social constructivism postulate that knowledge construction is achieved through reflective thinking and interaction with others (Vygotsky, 1978). Cognitive-behavioral approaches, which are also found in coaching, acknowledge the reciprocity between feelings, thoughts and behaviors as a response to the environment. From a cognitive-behavioral perspective, as stated by Grant (2003), goal-attainment is facilitated by understanding the relationship between these three domains and structuring them in order to better support goal-attainment. The name cognitive behavioral coaching has gained ground in some literature (Cox et al., 2009) and is defined as: 'An integrative approach which combines the use of cognitive, behavioral, imaginal and problem-solving techniques and strategies within a cognitive behavioral framework to enable coachees to achieve their realistic goals' (Palmer & Szymanska, 2007; p.86). Other theories and approaches have been linked to coaching and combine several psychological roots. Underlining the importance of goals for individual behavior change, we find the Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2010), Goal-setting Theory (Locke & Latham, 2002), Self-efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1977) and Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) as some examples. SDT posits that goal-directed behaviors are capable of influencing the extent to which individuals are able to satisfy basic psychological needs. According to these authors, coaching has the potential to positively influence coachees' psychological needs and subsequent outcomes through being autonomy-supportive, mastery-supportive and social-supportive. The goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990) posits that goals serve a directive and energizing function affecting persistence and action by leading to the use of task-relevant knowledge and strategies. Moreover, the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) argues that individuals' behavior is goal-directed and guided by behavioral intentions and influenced by their self-efficacy. Indeed, according to the Self-efficacy theory (Bandura, 1977) people are likely to engage in activities to the extent that they perceive themselves to be competent in those activities. Also, solution-focused approaches (Grant, 2003), bridging solution-focused therapy, is a constructivist, humanistic approach that concentrates on the strengths that clients bring to the sessions, and

emphasizes the importance of coachees' being focused on solution construction rather than problem analysis.

Among some other remaining theoretical inspirations, not as directly related to psychology, it is important to highlight the relevance of Neurolinguistic programming (NLP). Developed by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in the 1970s, NLP is an approach that uses techniques of linguistics, psychology, systems theory, cybernetics and hypnosis to achieve rapid changes in individuals. More simply, it might be seen as a modern version of behaviorism, meaning changing behaviors but without recourse to the in-depth approach that explores past events and feelings (Grimley, 2010).

The diversity of theories also informs the diversity of techniques used. Unfortunately, however, not many studies report the methods and techniques used which does not help ensure that coaching to be afforded a professional status (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). In their meta-analysis, Jones and colleagues (2016) found information about techniques in only five studies. Cognitive-behavioral, solution focus orientation and the GROW model (Whitmore, 1992) were the methods most referred to. Athanasopoulou and Dopson, (2018), in their systematic review of executive coaching, also mention some of the same methodological approaches, with the cognitive behavioral approach being the most mentioned, followed by the solution-focused and positive psychology approaches. Despite these contributions, there is still an ongoing debate about the contribution of each theory and technique and the influence they have in a successful coaching intervention (De Haan & Duckworth, 2013; MacKie, 2007).

The Portuguese context

As previously seen, the coaching industry has progressed rapidly in recent decades, but the history of coaching differs greatly around the globe. The industry's fast rise has mainly occurred in English speaking countries (USA, UK, Australia) as can be seen from analyzing the authorship of the principal publications. If we analyze the case of Portugal, we see that coaching is a much more recent practice, with the first records of its existence dating back to 2007, according to ICF Portugal. However, and even though the Portuguese literature on coaching is scarce there are some records of its existence at least ten years earlier (Barosa, 2008). There are several economic, political and cultural reasons that can justify this "delay". Portugal, like some other countries in western Europe, had until fairly recently a dictatorial regime, and seen

through the Hofstede (2019) lens is classified as a collectivist country with a high-power distance. The management practices reflecting this reality are also more paternalistic, which limit individualist forms of development, such as coaching (Rosinski, 2003; Tulpa & Bresser, 2009). This context, together with the lack of robust theoretical pillars and approaches, makes organizations and individuals view coaching with some distrust and prefer more traditional types of development, which is why there is scant literature portraying the Portuguese context of coaching. The differences found between the Portuguese reality and the reality expounded in international literature show precisely why we considered it of great relevance to investigate the actual state of the practice of coaching in Portugal, as shown in Chapter II.

Workplace coaching

According to the latest ICF report (2020), workplace coaching comes in at 65% of all coaching practitioners, presenting its increased relevance in the total, compared to previous years. In fact, coaching has come to be considered a valuable tool for people's development at work, with its popularity increasing in the Human Resources areas (Grover & Furham, 2016; Blackman, Moscardo & Gray, 2016). Several designations have been used to define the coaching practice in the organizational context, with much of the literature using terms such as: executive coaching, leadership coaching, and managerial coaching although these are normally associated with the coachees' having a role in management. This research, however, intends to use a more democratic or inclusive definition of coaching, viewing it as a development intervention able to be provided to all employees at work, where the term used interchangeably throughout this thesis will be *business* (Blackmam et al., 2016) and/or *workplace* coaching (Jones et al., 2016). These terms can define the one-on-one collaborative, reflective and developmental relationship (between coach and coachee) that occurs in organizational settings. The coach, via questioning and giving feedback, guides the coachee through a self-regulatory cycle (Grant, 2003) intended to facilitate change, produce professional outcomes relevant to the coachee (Smither, 2011; Jones et al., 2016) and, ultimately, improve their well-being at work (Theeboom et al., 2017).

Since the term coaching is often used interchangeably with other terms, it is important to distinguish workplace coaching from other types of work interventions, such as consulting and mentoring. While in consulting the consultant is viewed as a technical expert and, thus, meant

to provide advice or recommendations on a certain topic, (Feldman & Lankau, 2005), in coaching the coach should present powerful, insightful questions that encourage the coachee to reflect and find their own answers. In mentoring, it is expected that the mentor has more experience either in the job or in the culture of the company and can, therefore, provide relevant support to the mentee. This also differs from the coaching process in that the coach is not required to have any experience in the coachee's field. The relationship the coach has with the organization can also present different forms, with the first distinction being as either an external or internal coach. Several advantages and disadvantages can be found in both scenarios. While external coaches might not have absorbed the culture of the company in a way that can help them better understand the coachees' issues, they are also free of any kind of bias regarding certain topics; they can also be assumed to present a better guarantee of confidentiality. Jones and colleagues (2016) found in their meta-analysis a significant moderation according to the type of coach (with effects being stronger for internal coaches than for external coaches), which was contrary to what they had hypothesized. The coach, being internal, can either carry out this role exclusively, or can combine it with other functions, the most common being Human Resources or other management roles.

The concept of manager-as-coach has gained popularity in the literature evidencing coaching as an essential aspect of effective performance management (Steelman, 2016). It is argued that coaching skills facilitate the process of providing feedback, setting goals, and monitoring progress toward those goals (Gregory & Levy, 2012) with clear benefits in job satisfaction and performance (Ellinger, Ellinger & Keller, 2003). Similarly, Human Resources professionals being responsible for training and development in organizations, also frequently play crucial roles as coaches and learning counsellors (McLagan, 1999; Ellinger, Ellinger & Keller, 2003). However, and going back to the basic definition of the coaches' role and their required unbiased view, we might argue that a manager or a member of HR management as coach might compromise a coachee's willingness to discuss certain topics. Nevertheless, the usefulness that knowledge of coaching skills can bring to these roles cannot be overlooked.

Outcomes of coaching

The outcomes of coaching have been extensively studied and although presented in different ways, point in similar directions. Theeboom and colleagues (2014) in their meta-analysis

presented a segmentation of individual outcomes in performance/skills, well-being, coping, work attitudes and goal-directed self-regulation. Although some of the terms are self-explanatory, it is worth detailing some of them. Performance or skill outcomes include those directly related to objective performance and depend on the variables being measured in the organization, as well as less tangible skills that enable the coachee to perform better, such as communication or leadership skills. In the well-being category, the authors include protective health and the coachee's well-being at work in opposition to known work-induced ill-health, such as stress, burnout, anxiety, etc. Related to this group is the coping category which includes the ability to adopt protective behaviors and to better adapt to environmental demands, such as self-efficacy. Included in work attitudes are cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses, such as job satisfaction, commitment and career satisfaction. Lastly, goal directed self-regulation includes goal-setting, goal-attainment, and goal-evaluation which, despite being inherent parts of the coaching process, can also be considered outcomes. Other authors, (Grover & Furnham, 2016) later divided the outcomes in their systematic review into two main groups: individual and organizational. The individual outcomes included self-efficacy, resilience, well-being, self-awareness and satisfaction with job and career and performance. In the organizational outcomes, the authors included work engagement, organizational commitment, turnover intentions, performance as rated by others, and several other outcomes related to leadership, such as transformational leadership, subordinates' satisfaction and managerial behaviors (Grover & Furnham, 2016). Part of this categorization was later criticized by Athanasopoulou and Dopson (2018), namely the classification of performance as rated by others and transformational leadership, which according to these authors should be considered individual outcomes and not organizational. Individual performance was also deemed an outcome in some studies but with mixed results; some found a positive link between coaching and performance but some others found no significant results. These authors (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018) also included qualitative studies in their literature review and added the relevance of the contextual factor in their analysis of the coaching outcomes. Additionally, they sub-segmented the outcomes into smaller categories, with the coachee category being divided into groups of outcomes such as: personal development, (including goal-setting, resilience or flexibility); the coachee in relation to others (including behavioral changes in relation to others like leadership skills, team building skills or communication skills); and the coachee in relation to their work

(including performance and job organization skills). Also Jones, Woods and Guillaume, (2016) investigated the outcomes of coaching in their meta-analysis using the learning evaluation methodological approach of Kirkpatrick (1976) and Kraiger et al. (1993). The workplace coaching outcomes were organized as cognitive, affective, skill related and individual results. In 2010, Ely and colleagues also applied the same framework, but exclusively for executive coaching. In the cognitive outcomes, the new cognitive strategies could be initiated in the goal-setting process and then stimulated by self-directed learning and problem-solving. In the affective outcomes, the authors include self-efficacy and confidence, reduction of stress, and increased satisfaction and motivation. Included in the skills category is all skill acquisition and enhancement promoted via coaching that contribute to achieving organizational level goals and that will comprise the results level.

As seen in the meta-analytical findings and extensive literature reviews, much has been said about the effectiveness of coaching. However, many limitations have also been pointed out regarding the “weakness” of the research designs; particularly the lack of a control group, the need for data collection over more periods of time and also from multiple stakeholders (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Jones et al, 2016; Sonesh et al., 2015; Theeboom et al, 2014).

In addition to the pointed limitations, the literature is not that clear about the mechanisms that lead to those outcomes described above. Besides stating and organizing the outcomes, some authors tried to answer the call from Theeboom and colleagues (2014) “it is the time to shift attention from the question ‘does it work?’ to ‘how does it work?’. In their systematic review, Athanasopoulou and Dopson (2018) listed the factors that might influence the outcomes of coaching. They mention factors related to the intervention itself such as: the methodological approach and communication; factors related to the coachee, including traits, motivation to learn and expectations of success; factors related to the coach, such as their background and skills; factors emerging from the organization, like its culture, dimension and the support it gives coaching practice; and, finally, factors that emerged from the relationship among stakeholders such as the clarity of roles, alignment and collaboration. In answer to a similar research question, Bozer and Jones (2018) concluded that self-efficacy, coaching motivation, goal orientation, trust, interpersonal attraction, feedback intervention, and supervisory support were the most relevant factors that determine workplace coaching effectiveness. Despite these

contributions, research that can adequately explain the causal mechanisms of coaching effectiveness is still lacking. In other words, there is a need for information about the mediating mechanisms of coaching effectiveness. (Grover & Furnham, 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). Besides the mediation mechanism, scholars have also called for greater rigor and robustness in future research: More rigorous experimental designs, for instance; more rigor while presenting data and collecting it from different stakeholders who can attest to the outcomes, (rather than just self-reported data); and also more studies that can provide evidence and explain the sustainable outcomes over time (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Ely, Boyce, Nelson, Zaccaro, Hernez-Broome, & Whyman, 2010).

Mediation mechanisms of coaching effectiveness

Having established the outcomes of coaching, and knowing the calls for literature explaining the mediation mechanisms (Grover & Furnham, 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018) recurring to important theoretical propositions can help in the design of a mediation model. If we consider the goal-setting process as common to all coaching interventions regardless of the theoretical or methodological approach applied (Grant, 2012; Gregory, Beck, & Carr, 2011), we could frame the coaching process within the goal-setting theory. According to that theory, when setting a goal, we can expect a motivational effect that stimulates the identification of cognitive strategies for attaining that goal (Seijts & Latham, 2005). And upon achieving that goal, which is expected to positively impact performance, an attitudinal reaction like increased job satisfaction (Borgogni & Dello Russo, 2013; Latham, Locke, & Fassin, 2002), and a higher probability of increased commitment to the organization can also be expected (Tett & Meyer, 1993). Additionally, once coachees have established their goal and have a direction to follow, they are committed to find pathways and will activate their resources to achieve that goal. And those activated resources can stimulate additional resources as mentioned in the Conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018). In accordance with this theory, resources evolve in caravans (Hobfoll, 2011) and 'gain spirals,' meaning that each time resources activation results in a successful experience this will, in turn, strengthen additional resources. Additionally, in accordance with this theory, those resources are also malleable and can be developed through interventions, therefore applicable to intervention like coaching (Theeboom et al, 2017).

Recalling the outcomes of coaching, some resources have already been identified as part of the individual outcomes such as resilience and self-efficacy (Baron & Morin, 2010; Franklin & Doran, 2009; Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009; Sherlock-Storey, Moss & Timson, 2013; Vanhove, Herian, Perez, Harms, & Lester, 2016). As previously mentioned, under the goal setting theory, the process of establishing a goal stimulates the cognitive mechanisms to find pathways towards achieving it. The coach's role is to facilitate the coachee's movement through the self-regulatory cycle towards goal-attainment (Grant, 2003). This is done via the questioning process and feedback within the established cooperative relationship. The feedback may be directly given by the coach or brought to the coaching table as reflection materials, such as multi-source evaluation reports. The development of those pathways and positive belief in the goal achievement can be called hope and optimism. Together hope, optimism self-efficacy and resilience comprise a known set of psychological resources named as psychological capital (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007), proven to be malleable through intervention (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman & Combs, 2006) and also positively related to job satisfaction, commitment to the organization and individual performance. (Avey, Reichard, Luthans & Mhatre, 2011; Luthans et al., 2007). Based on what has been mentioned above, in Chapter III PsyCap is proposed as a mediation mechanism between coaching effectiveness and performance, job satisfaction and organizational commitment.

Coaching transfer

Having established the main outcomes of coaching and there being a wealth of literature about the effects collected immediately after the intervention, it is important to know what happens beyond that; not just the longitudinal effects of coaching and its sustainability overtime, but also its real applicability to work, in other words the transferability of coaching. The study of coaching transfer can inform the durability of the effects, which has been a concern of scholars (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Blackman et al., 2016), as well as provide relevant information on how to support the autonomous progress of the coachee immediately after and beyond the intervention.

Inspired by training transfer, coaching transfer was defined as the “sustained application of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other qualities acquired during coaching into the workplace” (Stewart, Palmer, Wilkin & Kerrin, 2008, p. 87). In fact, as per the training literature, transfer

implies application and generalization plus maintenance of knowledge (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Application stands for usage of the learning acquired from the coaching intervention in the workplace, maintenance stands for the sustainability of the knowledge after the end of the intervention, and generalization refers to the application of coaching development to areas beyond those initially planned (Stewart et al., 2008). However, there is scant literature about the topic and further evidence of coaching transfer is needed. As reported in the systematic review by Bozer and Jones (2018), only a few studies have analysed the effects of coaching over an extended period of time after the intervention, with scholars highlighting the relevance of collecting data some time after the end of the program as a way to corroborate the sustainability of the outcomes (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Grover & Furnham, 2016; Jones et al., 2019; Theeboom et al., 2014).

In training, as proposed by Baldwin and Ford (1988), the factors influencing training transfer are trainee characteristics, training design, and work environment factors. In trying to adapt this model to coaching, Stewart and colleagues (2008) focused only on coachee characteristics and environmental factors, thus excluding detailed analysis about the design in their conceptual model of training transfer. They concluded that the conditions required for positive transfer are coachee motivation, manager and peer psychosocial support, as well as organizational factors such as the culture of the organization. Despite their contribution, since it is the only study focused on coaching transfer, there is still a lot to explore about the process, for instance, the features of the coaching design and further exploration of environmental factors. Those factors were also highlighted in studies of training transfer as playing an important role in the practical application of learning and should also be further explored in coaching (Jones, Woods & Zhou, 2019).

Specifically with regard to coaching design, and in order to improve the probabilities of transfer, there is another key element of coaching that should also be an important variable to take into account when examining coaching transfer, namely - reflection. In fact, reflection encourages coachees' awareness of their current resources and stimulates the emergence of a recurrent loop of other resources as stated by Hobfoll, and colleagues (2018) in his conservation of resources (COR) theory. This process is, in fact, the basis of the self-regulatory process inherent to goal-attainment (Theeboom et al., 2017) observed in coaching. Thus, reflection about resources should also play a relevant role in coaching effectiveness and in coaching

transfer. Reflective writing exercises were the chosen format to be included in the design, the expectation being that they would foster cognitive and psychological resource gains (Brown, McCracken & O’Keane, 2011; Gilbert, Foulk & Bono, 2018). In this way, reflective writing exercises would be a coaching design feature that could facilitate the strengthening of coachees’ specific psychological characteristics, which themselves play a role in coaching transfer.

Although important contextual factors can inhibit the transfer process, two factors were already identified in the literature: organizational culture and psychosocial support (Stewart et al. 2008) but further detailed analysis is needed in order to better guarantee the context is prepared to facilitate coaching transfer in the workplace. The study included in Chapter IV elaborated on the coaching transfer topic with the main focus being on design and the combination of individual and environmental factors.

Analyzing the change process in coaching

Coaching aims to facilitate individual change and learning (De Haan, Culpin & Curd, 2011) but several scholars are calling for a better understanding of the intra-individual process of change (Ely et al., 2010; Theeboom et al., 2014). In fact, there is **little empirical research on within-person changes linked to coaching interventions (Jones et al., 2016).**

The taxonomy of change was developed by Golembiewski and colleagues (1976) and includes three types of change (alpha, beta, and gamma) that might be found as a result of developmental interventions. Despite explicit calls from scholars to apply this type of analysis in coaching as a way to reveal underlying cognitive structures of change (Ely et al., 2010; Theeboom et al., 2014), so far no studies have been found to use it. Alpha changes stand for the traditional comparative measurement between pre and post (intervention), beta change reflects a recalibration of a previous scale, and gamma change presents a complete change in the previous concept under analysis. The variable selected for analysis under the scope of this tri-party model of change was reflection. As previously mentioned, reflection is the enabling construct that allows coachees to engage with the self-regulated cycle that will facilitate long-lasting behavioral change. Stimulated by coaches’ questioning, reflection comprises a process of pondering, reviewing and questioning past experiences to extract meaning from them (Ong, Asford & Bindle, 2015; Theeboom et al., 2017), which can later be replicated or readjusted.

This way, analysing the different types of change in reflection can provide important information about the different cognitive structures that can occur as a result of the coaching process. This was the main goal of the study included in Chapter V.

Besides identifying the different types of change, the ability to predict them from coachees' traits was also investigated. In fact, several studies have identified coachee traits and the role they play in the coaching process (Klockner & Hicks, 2008; Jones, Woods & Hutchinson, 2014; Jones et al., 2019; Stewart et al., 2008). Of particular relevance were implicit person theories, which have also been analyzed but only in a few studies (Lin, Lin, & Chang, 2017; Sue-Chan, Wood & Latham, 2012). Implicit person theory (IPT) first defined by Dweck and Leggett (1988), presents a dichotomous perspective on individual change: incrementalists are those who see their attributes as malleable and capable of being developed; whereas entitists are those who perceive individual change as nearly impossible. Besides the belief in change, other characteristics can be found in each of the categorizations of IPT in the way people respond to developmental interventions. Incrementalists present more learning goal orientation and perceive feedback as a learning opportunity, while entitists present a more performance goal orientation and perceive developmental contexts as opportunities to show their knowledge or the absence of it (Smith & Brummel, 2013; Heslin, Vandewalle & Latham, 2006). In coaching research, it is known that IPT can moderate the effects of coaching on performance (Lin et al., 2017), and also that individuals with incremental beliefs present a better regulatory fit than those with entity beliefs (Sue-Chan et al., 2012). With coaching being an individualized learning intervention, where self-regulatory mechanisms and motivation to change are key (London, 2002; Harakas, 2013), the ability to predict the types of change can be considered extremely relevant with regard to developing realistic expectations about the outcomes of the coaching process. In Chapter V, the role of IPT as a predictor of change in reflection was further investigated.

Like traits, reactions to coaching could also be analyzed as being correlated to the various types of change. Reaction, as the first level of learning evaluation according to Kirkpatrick (1967), refers to participants' ability to find the training favorable, engaging and relevant to their jobs. This model was previously mentioned to frame coaching effectiveness (Ely et al., 2010; Jones et al., 2016; MacKie, 2007) but few studies have analyzed the role of reactions in coaching. Notable exceptions have nevertheless been found that speak to the ability

for reactions to predict other meaningful outcomes of coaching (Albizu, Rekalde, Landeta, Fernández-Ferrín, 2019; Ely & Zaccaro, 2011). Mirroring the learning literature, affective and utility perceptions (Alliger, Tannenbaum, Bennett Traver & Shotland, 1997) reactions to coaching might include several distinct aspects, such as: satisfaction with the trainer, satisfaction with the process and satisfaction with the results achieved. In coaching, just as in learning, reactions are an important source of information about the suitability and utility of the intervention (Morgan & Casper, 2000), as well as indicative of the perception of coaching effectiveness (Ely & Zaccaro, 2011). Understanding the way different types of change may lead to different reactions from coachees can be considered of particular relevance with regard to reaching a better understanding of coachees' perceptions of the outcomes of the process. This is also explored in Chapter V of this study.

AIM AND OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS

Over recent decades, the coaching industry has grown considerably all over the world (ICF, 2020). But some discrepancies can be found between geographies, with Portugal being one of the countries where the evolution of coaching started later and still faces several obstacles to its proper establishment as a credible practice that is theoretically routed and methodologically informed. The first study (Chapter II) is the result of a survey conducted among Portuguese practitioners of coaching. Inspiration was taken from previous studies (Bono et al., 2009; ICF, 2016) although with relevant differences; the scope of coaching practices was broader and not restricted to the executive field (Bono et al., 2009), and there was no influence from any of the coaching associations which could have biased the results in a certain direction (ICF, 2016). Overall, this study has three main objectives: 1) to give an overview of the coaching practice in Portugal, with regard to coaches' background, training and certification, areas of intervention and developmental needs addressed by coachees; 2) to investigate the dominant theoretical positions and the associated methodologies used by the practitioner, and investigate further links with the coaches' background; and 3) to analyze the positive and negative effects of coaching, through the eyes of the coaching practitioners. In addition to the capability of replication that this study offers (Tsang & Kwan, 1999), and in accordance to the differences and similarities found among geographies (Hofstede, 2019), this study might not only be a representation of the Portuguese context but could also shed light on the coaching reality that

other geographies, at similar coaching stages, might be facing. Thus, this study informs future research about these differences, and seeks different solutions in order to better train and educate professionals around the world.

Workplace coaching, representing more than half of the total clientele according to the available records (ICF, 2020), is the most important segment of coaching. This branch of coaching has already proved its efficacy within the organizational setting, although there are still calls among scholars for research that is able to contribute to the explanatory mechanism of its effectiveness. Despite some meta-analytical studies that shed light on important variables that can explain coaching outcomes, research on mediation mechanisms is also necessary (Grover & Furnham, 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). The second study, (Chapter III) aims to contribute both to the theoretical and practical fields of coaching, including multi-source evaluations and a rigorous design where participants were randomly assigned either to an experimental group, or to a waiting list control group, contributing to the call for more rigorous and complete research in the field. We anticipate that the main contribution of this study is the theorization and empirical testing of the mediating mechanism for coaching's positive effects. The election of psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2006) resides in the attribution of individual changes to psychological resources and competencies (Theeboom et al., 2017). The variables that comprise PsyCap (self-efficacy; resilience, hope, and optimism) play important roles in the coaching process and can be stimulated through the goal setting process. Framed within the goal setting theory, it is thus expected to provide important contributions to the coaching literature, theoretically speaking, specifically with regard to explaining why coaching is effective as claimed by Theebom and colleagues (2014). Additionally, we believe an important contribution can be added to practice, giving theoretically routed guidance on how practitioners could design the coaching sessions in order to activate the necessary psychological resources that will influence the desired coaching outcomes.

Besides its proven effects immediately after intervention, coaching aims to ensure those effects are sustained over time and, moreover, to see the knowledge acquired applied in concrete work contexts. However, this concept, designated coaching transfer, has received very little attention from scholars. With a qualitative approach, we aim to contribute first by exploring the concept of coaching transfer, analyzing its manifestation within Kraiger and colleagues' (1993) framework of learning outcomes. Additionally, and in line with the literature about training

transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988), we study coachees' characteristics, design features and contextual features of coaching, from the perspective of the coachees, as suggested in recent literature (Baldwin, Ford & Blume, 2017). With the inclusion of reflective writing exercises in the design, stimulation of the cognitive and psychological resource gains was expected (Brown et al., 2011; Gilbert et al., 2018), which itself plays a role in coaching transfer. We believe this will make an important contribution towards expanding the concept of coaching transfer, thus informing coaching practice, and, in a broader scope, the Human Resource Development (HRD) domain, with theoretically based research.

Change is inarguably inherent to the coaching process and so is reflection. With reference to one of many definitions of coaching, it is a "reflective process between coaches and coachees which helps or facilitates coachees to experience positive behavioral changes" Lai (2014), and we can easily extract the relevance of those concepts. In fact, change can only occur as a result of that reflective process that is activated in the coachee (Theeboom et al., 2014). But change can take several forms. As per the authors who developed the taxonomy of change (Golembiewski et al., 1976) further applied in organizational settings, three types of change can take place as a result of a developmental intervention: alpha, beta and gamma change. The forth study (Chapter V) presents an innovative analysis that intends to prove the existence of different types of change in reflection as a result of a coaching intervention, thus answering the calls of some scholars (Ely et al., 2010; Theembom et al., 2014). It is important to note that this study, while providing a within-subject analysis, currently scant in the coaching literature (Jones et al., 2016), also offers a deeper understanding of the intra-individual process of change that coachees experience. As such, it sheds light on the cognitive mechanism involved in the self-regulatory processes inherent to attitudinal and behavioral changes at work (Bandura, 2001). Moreover, and knowing the relevance of individual characteristics in a developmental intervention, we intend to investigate whether Implicit person theories (IPT) can predict a specific type of change. This way, there can be clearer expectations about the intervention progress, for the coach, the coachee and the organization. Lastly, and giving relevance to the coachee's reactions post intervention, which speaks to the "success" of coaching through the eyes of the coachee (De Haan, 2021), we intend to know whether there is any correlation between the evident change types and the expressed reactions to the coaching intervention,

namely with regard to utility for work and self-development. By doing so, it would also be possible to uncover subsequent outcomes of the intervention.

This thesis intends to contribute to the wealth of coaching knowledge by providing answers for some of the gaps evident in the current literature. Having in mind the calls for both theory-driven studies and rigorous designs, table 1 summarizes the four studies that comprise this thesis, together with the correspondent research questions and methods. In the Discussion of this thesis (Chapter VI) this table will be further complemented with the findings and status of publications of each study.

Table 1.1 Research questions and methods in the four empirical studies

Chapter	Research questions:	Method
Chapter II	-What is the prevalent background of coaches in Portugal and what association does it have with the espoused theoretical positions and the use of specific techniques/tools? -What are the main features of the coaching process in Portugal? -What are the most frequent demands in coaching interventions in Portugal, and is there any association between these demands and coaches' background? -What are the most relevant consequences (positive and negative) observed and mentioned by coaches in Portugal?	Survey to professional coaches conducted online (snowball sampling)
Chapter III	- Is coaching effective in improving coachees' attitudes and job performance? -Will PsyCap be the mediating mechanism?	Experimental field study: within and between subject analysis
Chapter IV	-What type of learning do coachees report some time after the conclusion of the coaching program? -Can writing exercises stimulate the reflection on PsyCap dimensions, over the course of a coaching intervention? -What are the factors hindering coaching transfer?	Qualitative study with Content analysis
Chapter V	-What types of change can be found in reflection as a result of a coaching intervention? - Coachees with an incrementalist IPT will present a higher probability of experiencing an alpha change, followed by beta and gamma change. - Different types of change in reflection will predict different types of utility perceptions after a coaching intervention	Quantitative study with within-subject analysis

CHAPTER II

Quo vadis? A study of the state and development of coaching in portugal¹

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ABSTRACT

Although coaching programs are becoming increasingly widespread across the world, in some countries this practice was only introduced one decade ago. To better understand the coaching context in one such country, i.e. Portugal, and to identify future trends and directions, a survey was distributed to 255 coaches via social media, using the snowball approach. We aimed to uncover the predominant background of coaches and whether this is associated with features of their practice, most notably their theoretical positions and the use of any tools or instrument. We also explored aspects related to the coachees' most recurrent needs for coaching, and the positive and negative effects that coaches observe more frequently. The results of this descriptive study reveal, among other things, that there is room for more theory-driven methodologies that can be replicated and standardized and, therefore, ultimately contribute to coaching professionalization.

Keywords: Coaching; Portugal; Coaching effectiveness; Coaching profession

INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, coaching has become increasingly prevalent over the last decades (Bono, Purvanova, Towler, & Peterson, 2009; ICF, 2012; 2016). Even in those countries where coaching was introduced much more recently, such as Portugal, Spain, Italy, Austria, it is growing exponentially (Tulpa & Bresser, 2009). Especially because the coaching industry is still taking its first steps in some countries, we believe it is important to understand how it is developing and in which direction. We have undertaken, therefore, an investigation of coaching practices in Portugal, which may also benefit other countries where coaching is, similarly, a recent acquisition. The main areas on which we focused our attention are the coach, the process (and hence features of their practice), the coachees' and the consequences of coaching (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011).

A rapid increase in the demand for coaching may pose several challenges. While there is a wide variety of methods and approaches available for clients to choose from, not all are necessarily sound from the scientific standpoint (Grant & Cavanagh, 2004). At the same time, of the several bodies (i.e., associations, entities, institutions) that provide certifications or the like, each claims their method or approach to be superior. These are claims which, at times, are based more on dogmatism than on any firm scientific foundation. As mentioned by Cox and Clutterbuck (2009, p. 380), “they simply provide guidelines for ‘professional’ practice”. In such a scenario, it is difficult to build a reputation for a sound professional practice (Ciporen, 2015), either from the point of view of future professionals that may be attracted to the area, or from that of the clients (e.g., individuals, organizations) that decide to launch or undertake a coaching program (Grant & Cavanagh, 2004).

Despite the great dissemination of coaching, in Portugal and arguably in other countries at the same stage of development regarding this practice, some organizations and individuals still regard the coaching industry with suspicion and may prefer other – more traditional – forms of development. Some of the criticisms point to the high costs and to the idea that coaching is a panacea for virtually every problem in organizations but impossible to explain when it comes to how it works (Theeboom et al., 2014). Such stereotypes and preconceived ideas might work as barriers to coaching development in the future. Extant empirical studies (mostly conducted in the US) attest to the effectiveness of coaching, particularly organizational coaching (Grover & Furnham, 2016; Jones, Woods, & Guillaume, 2015; Theeboom et al., 2014). This is certainly an important element that contributes to coaching diffusion in other countries. However, more rigorous research designs are necessary, and there is still a need to clarify *how* and *why* coaching is effective (in other words, what the mediating mechanisms are - Grover & Furnham, 2016).

Only by achieving these scientific advances will it be possible to promote sound methodologies capable of having an impact on more proximal as well as more distal individual outcomes. In a similar vein, it is important to understand how diffuse a theory-driven practice is. This would allow a reduction in the subjectivity of the coaching interventions in favor of greater credibility, via the replicability of results that is essential in developmental initiatives (Dello Russo & Stoykova, 2015; Towler & Dipboye, 2001; Tsang & Kwan, 1999).

To strengthen coaching in Portugal and contribute to its diffusion as a sound professional practice, it is important to know what the current status of coaching is and to identify possibilities for further improvement. Therefore, the aim of this study is threefold: (1) to offer an overview of the coaching practice in the Portuguese context, especially with respect to the coaches' background, training or certification, areas of intervention and specific developmental needs addressed with their clients; (2) to investigate which are the dominant theoretical positions and the associated methodologies used, especially linked to the coaches' background; (3) to explore the effects of coaching as observed by coaches in Portugal, with respect to both positive and negative outcomes.

Previous similar surveys on executive coaching have inspired our work (Bono et al., 2009; ICF, 2012; 2016; Jenkins, Passmore, Palmer, & Short, 2012), and provide a template for comparing the results emerging in the Portuguese context with other countries. However, we also envision a number of ways in which our study is contributing to the literature, beyond being a replication in a different geographical context (Tsang & Kwan, 1999). First, we aimed to keep a broad focus on workplace coaching without restricting our investigation to executive coaching as in Bono et al.'s (2009) study. Moreover, their study, conducted in the USA and including American and international participants, compared psychologists and non-psychologists. We, on the other hand, have explored the background of Portuguese coaches to derive insights into whether, to what extent and with which features coaching is being taken up by specific professionals, such as psychologists, as has happened in other countries (Spence, 2007). Second, we did not sample coaches belonging to any specific association, unlike the surveys regularly conducted by the International Coaching Federation (ICF, 2012; 2016) that involve their affiliates and six other specific associations. We made this choice in consideration of our main aims, and because sampling from a specific association would likely limit the diversity of theoretical and methodological repertoires reported by respondents. Third, our focus on the theoretical positions and associated methodologies is unique to the context under investigation and – to our knowledge – relatively rare in these types of surveys (with partial exceptions; Bono et al., 2009; Jenkins et al., 2012).

Literature Review

In the following two paragraphs, we define the coaching field and contextualize it to Portugal. Next, we review the literature by focusing on four main areas, namely the coach, the process, the coachee and the consequences of coaching (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011). Each paragraph concludes with a specific research question that our study aims to explore.

Definition of the field

Since the first time the word coaching was used to define an instructor or trainer - in around 1830 at Oxford University (Cox & Clutterbuck, 2009) - coaching has had a long history worldwide. The popularity boost occurred in the 90s, mainly in the United States, when coaching emerged in modern anxious and ambitious societies to “offer” a service which, in the past, was provided by the older generations.

In 2015, a global survey of coaches conducted in 117 countries by the International Coaching Federation estimated that the coaching industry is worth more than \$2bn annually worldwide, representing an increase of 19% compared to 2011. Globally, over half of the coaches work in the field of business, executive or leadership coaching (Grover & Furnham, 2016).

Business coaching, according to Hamlin et al. (2008), is a process designed to improve existing skills, competencies and performance but also, broadly speaking, to achieve personal growth. It may be delivered by professionals external to the company or by those who work inside an organization, such as line managers or human resource specialists. Either way, it can be considered an important area of expertise among Human Resource Development (HRD) professionals who could: (i) serve as internal coaches; (ii) cooperate with external coaches; or finally (iii) assist managers with their coaching role (Ellinger & Kim, 2014). Indeed, coaching shares many aspects with other HRD practices in organizations, and the increase of coaching-related publications in journals within HRD, management and related fields, further attests to their overlapping aims (Ellinger & Kim, 2014). Although perceived at times as a solution for poor performance, coaching incorporates in fact a broader developmental and empowerment perspective, to the extent that it is even recognized as an organizational development intervention. Hence, consistent with other initiatives in the HRD field, it is aimed at the development of individuals, groups and organizations (Carter, Blackman, Hicks, Williams, & Hay, 2017; Hamlin, Ellinger & Beattie, 2008).

Coaching differs from other concepts, such as therapy or counselling and, in an organizational context, from consulting, mentoring and managerial coaching. When comparing coaching with psychotherapy, the differences and similarities are still a topic of debate (Theeboom et al., 2014). The most obvious of these is that the recipient (the coachee) is supposed to belong to a non-clinical population. Coaching, being a solution-focused intervention, differs from psychotherapy in that it does not seek extensive analysis or need to understand problems in order to create solutions (Berg & Szabo, 2005; Grant & O'Connor, 2010). This potentially results in a smaller number of sessions needed to make progress (Kim, 2008). Regarding counselling, several authors have investigated this parallelism (Newsom & Dent, 2011) and the main difference concerns the focus of the sessions. While counselling looks back to the past to analyze the reasons behind the actual status, coaching looks more into the future, pushing the coachee to find solutions (Ellinger & Kim, 2014; Theeboom et al., 2014).

In a comparison between consulting and coaching, the main difference lies in the kind of intervention that the coach is expected to make. Whereas in consulting, the agent should be a solution provider, in coaching, the coach should only be a process facilitator (Schein, 1999). Finally, when comparing coaching with managerial coaching or mentoring, the main difference lies with the formal authority over the coachee, which can affect the way he or she behaves in the process (Theeboom et al., 2014). Although the mentoring relationship is not necessarily characterized by a hierarchical difference (present in managerial coaching), there is a disparity in terms of experience within the specific functional area that is not necessarily present in coaching.

Evolution of Coaching: The Case of Portugal

Coaching grew rapidly in several geographies due to the absence of industry regulation. Without barriers to entry, practitioners established themselves relatively quickly and easily (Spence 2007). In Portugal, the appearance of coaching was registered in 2007, by the ICF, corresponding to the creation of the Portuguese unit of this association (Barosa-Pereira, 2008). Several other associations were created afterwards, with the goal of attracting new coaching trainees and associates. In 2019, ICF Portugal counts 81 accredited coaches, but the association recognizes that several other people act as coaches in the country, even though outside the scope of their association (Moura, 2019).

Within the national boundaries, coaching is already recognized by Human Resources associations, such the APG (Portuguese Association of People Management), and the national Institute of Employment and Professional Training (IEFP). This mirrors what Hamlin and

colleagues (2008) report for other countries, namely the UK and the USA. Finally, the Portuguese Professional Body of Psychologists (OPP), in an attempt to claim the exclusivity of the coaching area for psychologists, created in 2016 a specialization training area (equivalent to a Master) for psychologists to work as coaches. The OPP director denounced the lack of regulation in the coaching industry, where training courses that may extend over a single weekend, arguing that it is creating a public health issue (Rocha, 2018).

The slower evolution of coaching in Portugal (and in similar countries as well) has some economic, political and cultural explanations. Regarding the economic and political context, Portugal (and, similarly, Spain and Greece) had authoritarian regimes until the mid-1970s. Hence, those countries recuperated much later than other Western European countries from the destruction of the second world war and entered a phase of greater economic development. Such economic development brought with it, albeit slowly, the need for businesses to invest more in human capital and the associated HRM practices (including coaching and leadership development). However, several cultural features also contribute towards explaining the later diffusion of coaching. Portugal has one of the lowest performance orientations and future orientations in Europe (House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman & Gupta, 2004) and remains classified as a more collectivistic country with a higher power distance compared, for instance, to the US and the UK (where individualism is substantially higher and the power distance substantially lower; Hofstede, 2019). As a result, management practices that demanded greater focus on performance and objective results, may have been slow to develop (Swales, 2016). Indeed, managers in countries with a similar profile tend to exhibit higher levels of paternalistic behaviors, which likely limit (and delay) the diffusion of a coaching “culture” (Tulpa & Bresser, 2009). Furthermore, coaching promotes self-actualization and, in a way, reinforces an individualistic orientation (Rosinski, 2003), which may not have matched perfectly with the cultural cluster of Latin Europe (Hofstede, 2019).

The Coach

With the growth of this industry in recent years and due to concerns regarding the credibility of coaches, certification has become one of the cornerstones of the professional associations. As stated by the ICF (2016), 73% of practitioners worldwide had received accredited or approved coaching-specific training. At the same time, with regard to either certification or any other formal “authorization” to be a coach, 30% declared they had none, with that percentage increasing to 57% among managers using coaching skills. Also relevant is the percentage who mentioned having an ICF certification, which was 51%. Despite being the most

important professional coaching association, these percentages may also reflect an unintentional bias in that the ICF survey may have received more responses from among its members. In comparison Jenkins and colleagues' survey (2012) for the UK reports 42% with certification or equivalent.

Besides formal education and the certification required to become a coach, previous background and individual skills, often included in the coaching competencies, have become among the most discussed topics in the coaching field lately (Blackman, Moscardo, & Gray, 2018; Lai & McDowall, 2014; Lawley, & Linder-Pelz, 2016). This is because these competencies are considered key to coaching effectiveness via the impact they have on constructing a functional relationship with the client. The emphasis on these relational competencies underscores the strong link between psychotherapy and coaching, and the functional similarity between the two processes (Smither, 2011). Both intend to facilitate psychological and behavioral change through the medium of a collaborative relationship between a trained professional and a motivated client. The “active ingredients” to achieve this are mostly the same: 1) client/extra therapeutic factors (40%); 2) the relationship or alliance (30%); 3) placebo or hope (15%); and 4) theory and technique (15%) (McKenna & Davis, 2009). In fact, over and above having the technical or expert knowledge about a given subject proposed by the client, a coach needs to be able to establish a *working alliance* with the coachee (Graßmann, Schölmerich, & Schermuly, 2016), and to agree with the goals, the tasks and the means in an empathic way. However, this is also part of the reason why coaching (as well as psychotherapy) is criticized: the lack of standardized techniques and methods leaves too much room for subjectivity and raises issues about how to measure the effects of coaching and how to successfully re-apply it.

The ICF (2012) survey reported that Portugal had one of the most highly educated coaching communities, compared with all the rest of Western Europe, or even at the global level: 87% of coaches in Portugal have a Master's or a PhD, while Western Europe had 64%, and globally the level remained at 60%. Additional research in the UK (Jenkins et al., 2012) shows no more than 51% having a Master's degree or a PhD. Surprisingly, in the same ICF (2012) survey, there is no information about any specific field of study, and the only available information is that 79% of coaches had experience in training, followed by consulting (60%). However, in the study by Bono and colleagues (2009), at the international level the weight of psychologists was 40% *versus* 60% of non psychologists. In light of the above-mentioned parallelism with psychotherapy, this is an important aspect. As the authors put it: “there are many unanswered

questions about how coaches' educational background and training might impact their coaching practices" (Bono et al., 2009, p. 366).

Coaching Practices and Theories

Coaching research is based on several areas of psychology, including positive (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), humanistic and coaching psychology (Passmore, 2010). Similar to solution-focused therapy, coaching takes a constructivist, humanistic approach that focuses on the clients' strengths and gives emphasis to their development. Equally, the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2010), in positive and humanistic psychology, has made important contributions to the coaching process (Allison, Moranb & Gregory, 2014).

Another perspective is NeuroLinguistic Programming (NLP), which is also seen as an important source of knowledge for coaching practice. NLP was developed by Richard Bandler and John Grinder in the 1970s as a pragmatic school of thought that addresses the many levels involved in being human, and includes three components of the human experience: neurology, language and programming. NLP is a multi-dimensional process that involves the development of behavioral competence and flexibility, and also involves strategic thinking and an understanding of the mental and cognitive processes behind behaviors. It is an approach that uses techniques of linguistics, psychology, systems theory, cybernetics, and hypnosis to achieve rapid changes in individuals as well as in organizations. Thus, some common ground with coaching is easy to find, and coaches may also have a background in this (Bono et al., 2009).

The theoretical position is of paramount importance due also to its likely association with technical features of a coach's practice, particularly regarding the use of tools, techniques or broad methodologies during the sessions. In the ICF survey (2012), 48% of the coaches saw coaching as a skill-set more than a profession, and there is no mention of the theoretical positions or the techniques used during the sessions. As stated by Bono and colleagues (2009, p.364): "everyone is doing it, and everyone is doing it differently". This state of affairs poses a big challenge with regard to the replication and standardization of methods for similar needs. We believe that the techniques adopted as well as the theory behind them, cannot to be dissociated from the coaches' training and background since understanding the link between them is necessary in order to accompany the development of this area. With this investigation, we intend to answer the following research question:

Research Question 1: What is the prevalent background of coaches in Portugal and what association does it have with the espoused theoretical positions and the use of specific techniques/tools?

The Coaching Process

With respect to the specific areas where coaches are required, three areas are often reported in the literature: business /organization (22%); executive (23%); and life and vision engagement (22%). The remaining activities are widely spread among several other areas (ICF, 2012). Concerning the link with the organizations, while in Portugal and Western Europe, 90% are external coaches, at the global level the percentage decreases to 86%, with the remainder being internal coaches (ICF, 2012). In 2015, these percentages decreased to 79% globally and 83% in Western Europe (ICF, 2016).

There are different types of contact between coach and coachee such as face-to-face, telephone or online coaching, and these have different impacts on the budgets companies spend on coaching. However, firm conclusions about the effectiveness of the technology-mediated alternatives versus the face-to-face coaching cannot yet be drawn. Charbonneau (2002) found that telephone coaching is less effective than face-to-face, while Berry (2005) found no differences between the two methods. Ghods (2009) and McLaughlin (2013) reported that clients reacted positively towards telephone-based coaching, and Frazee (2008) mentioned that, despite the predominance of face-to-face contact, coaches were similarly positive towards e-coaching, anticipating it would most likely be its future development. Poepsel (2011), investigating online coaching effectiveness, found positive relations with goal attainment and well-being, and more recently Geissler (2014) recommended a combination of technology-mediated and face-to-face coaching. According to the ICF survey (2012), 96% of coaching in Portugal is still conducted face to face, while in Western Europe 85% is face-to-face, and globally it is only 67%. By 2015, those last percentages had evolved to 89% and 76%, respectively. The telephone is the second most used means for coaching sessions globally, varying according to the region. In Western Europe, the Audio-video platform is at 26%, with telephone use being 24% (ICF, 2016). Regarding the number of sessions, coaching is normally associated with brief interventions, being a solution-focused intervention. Taking into consideration all these aspects, we formulated our second research question:

Research Question 2: What are the main features of the coaching process in Portugal?

The Coachee

The needs the coachee brings to a coaching session can vary considerably and yet, because the majority of coaching studies are focused on managers (e.g., Arnaud, 2003; Bono et al., 2009) – to the extent that the process is renamed as executive or leadership coaching – one could infer that leadership development is the top priority. The American Management Association (2008)

reported that 46% of North American companies used external coaching for executives, 27% for managers, 13% for supervisors, and only 5% for all employees (Bono et al 2009). Also, looking at the ICF survey (2016), 66% of the clients are managers. However, the top five concerns of coachees seem to be, in order: personal growth (38%); interpersonal relationships (32%); self-esteem (28%); communication skills (26%); and team effectiveness (ICF, 2012). In Portugal, and according to the ICF study, the most important concern seemed also to be personal growth (55%) followed by interpersonal relationships (34%), self esteem/confidence (31%), work life balance (29%) and then team effectiveness (23%). The lack of correspondence between the coachees' hierarchical position inside an organization and their demands makes the absence of leadership skills quite striking. However, we should also consider that the classification used for coachees' needs/concerns is very broad (e.g. personal growth). So, there is a need to create a more homogeneous grid to classify the main questions for coaching, which would also enable a better comparison across contexts and time.

The use of competency models is one of the most common ways by which companies organize their value-driven behaviors and skills. Competency models specify the actions and behaviors necessary for success in a given organization and, hence, also often represent clear language for employees (Herrera, Henz, & Lankau, 2003; Hollenbeck, McCall, & Silzer, 2006).

One of our goals is to discover the most recurrent concerns brought to coaching sessions through a survey using a well-agreed upon competency taxonomy.

Research Question 3: What are the most frequent demands in coaching interventions in Portugal, and is there any association between these demands and coaches' background?

Coaching Consequences

A meta-analysis by Theeboom and coauthors (2014) analyzed 18 studies on coaching efficacy and reported significant positive correlations with five areas of outcomes, which they identified based on the extant empirical literature: performance; well-being; coping; goal-directed self-regulation; and work attitudes. In a subsequent meta-analysis that exclusively included interventions of workplace coaching, Jones and colleagues (2016) classified the coaching effects according to two theoretical models. The first was Kraiger and colleagues' (1993) three-component model of learning, and the second was Kirkpatrick's (1967) model for evaluating the effectiveness of interventions, distinguishing in particular between learning and results. They found positive effects on skill development (e.g., leadership and technical skills) and affective outcomes (e.g., satisfaction). Moreover, strong effects were found on individual

level results. However, no primary study had looked at team or organizational level results, making it impossible to test coaching effects at a higher level of analysis.

More recently, intra-individual changes in self-awareness, which can be considered a cognitive learning effect, were also found, although this area has received less empirical attention (Grover & Furnham, 2016).

Recent literature has shown that, notwithstanding the well-documented positive effects, coaching may also have less desirable side-effects that affect the clients, the coach or the organization (Schermuly & Graßmann, 2020). According to Graßmann and Schermuly (2016), 67.6% of the clients experienced at least one negative side effect, and on average three are mentioned per coaching intervention. In their study, the most frequent negative side effect is a decrease in job satisfaction and experiencing work as less meaningful. Other such side effects may appear and include seeing one's goals modified or having to deal with in-depth problems that could not be dealt with in the coaching sessions. Carter and colleagues (2017) also mentioned goal changing as one of the barriers mostly found by coachees. In the Portuguese context, we lack specific information on the positive and negative perceived effects of coaching, but it is important to explore both sides of the coin as they may have important repercussions on the way this professional activity is seen in society. Moreover, it is important to collect the coaches' perspective on coaching outcomes, as well as that of the coachees (Carter et al., 2017). Hence, we proposed our final research question.

Research Question 4: What are the most relevant consequences (positive and negative) observed and mentioned by coaches in Portugal?

METHOD

Participants and procedure

Data were collected via an online survey distributed via social networks. First- and second-degree contacts of the first author were approached with a personal message containing the link to the survey; contacts progressively increased following a snowball procedure. To find coaches in social network platforms, we used the keywords *coach* and *coaching* in the competencies and/or job position (current or past). All coaches had to be based in Portugal to be eligible. Purely sports' coaches, namely sports' trainers, were excluded. The survey was also sent to coaching groups and companies operating in the coaching area contacted, as well via LinkedIn and Facebook, with a request that the link be distributed among their affiliates.

A total of 255 coaches started the survey, but some progressively dropped out. One hundred and twenty-one completed it in all the different sections. Analyzing attrition rates, we found no

differences between those who dropped out of the survey and those who completed it, in terms of gender ($\chi^2(1, N = 227) = .01, p = .95$), in terms of geography ($\chi^2(1, N = 227) = 2.23, p = .82$) and also regarding age ($F(1, 227) = .44, p = .51$). Of the 121 respondents who finished the survey, 76 were women (63%), 43% had at least a bachelor's degree, 35% a Master's degree and 3% a PhD. The average age was 43 (SD 8.2). While our respondents operate primarily in Portugal's largest cities (Lisbon 63% and Porto 17%), all the Portuguese regions are represented, including the islands of Madeira and Azores (1%).

Measures

To develop our survey and to increase comparability while still adding new focuses of attention, we took inspiration from already published survey-based studies (Bono et al., 2009; ICF, 2012; 2016). The survey was piloted for content validity with two experienced coaches. Our survey has 22 questions grouped in six different sections: demographics (Section I); experience and training of the coach (Section II), coaching practices and theoretical approach (Section III); clients' characteristics (section IV); obtained results (Section V); and future trends (Section VI).

Section I, demographics, comprised three questions: gender, age and region of work.

Section II, the experience and training group, comprised four questions: the educational level; the type of coaching education received (e.g. coaching certification, other training and from which institution, etc.); number of years they had worked as coaching professionals; any other professional activity performed besides coaching (e.g. psychology, business management, education, consulting; human resources).

Section III, practices and theories group, comprised eight questions: which specific coaching areas they worked in (e.g., career, sport, organizational, educational, performance, leadership); what their relationship with the organization is (e.g., internal, external, etc.); the average number of sessions per week and per client; the means used (e.g., face-to-face, messenger, Skype); the price charged per session (answering this question was not mandatory); two questions about the techniques used and the theoretical position espoused. Regarding the techniques, we asked which, if any, technique is used during the sessions, and we specified three broad phases of the coaching process: the diagnostic phase, the development or intermediate phase, and the final phase. Examples were provided to specify what could be regarded as a technique (e.g., circle of life, G.R.O.W.), and coaches could provide up to three examples of tools per phase. The question regarding the theoretical positions they embraced was an open question, with three examples provided, namely NLP, behaviorism and positive approaches.

Section IV, the clients' characteristics group, comprised two questions: one about their professional status (i.e., owners/ entrepreneurs, directors, managers, employees, unemployed, students), and the other about the main issues they brought to the coaching sessions. Multiple options could be selected that were derived from the eight-domain competency model by Bartram (2005). The eight domains are: Leading and Deciding; Supporting and Cooperating; Interacting and Presenting; Analyzing and Interpreting; Creating and Conceptualizing; Organizing and Executing; Adapting and Coping; and Enterprising and Performing.

Section V, obtained results, comprised two questions about the consequences coaches could observe in their clients. The first asked which specific positive consequences coaches could observe in their clients, with a list of possible outcomes being offered (e.g., performance improvement, motivation to work, efficacy while dealing with change, higher motivation, self-awareness, self-efficacy, resilience, hope, commitment) based on previous studies and meta-analyses (Jones et al., 2016; Theebom et al., 2014). The second question asked whether and which side-effects they could observe as associated with coaching and a list was created based on previous literature (e.g., decreased satisfaction at work, decreased performance, worse relationships at work, worse work-life balance, objectives changed without their consent, deeper questions that appeared in the sessions and could not be solved with coaching; Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016). For both questions, the response options asked coaches to indicate the frequency with which they observed those outcomes: rarely (less than 40% of their clients), sometimes (between 40 and 60% of clients), and often (over 60% of their clients).

Section VI, future trends had three questions: what are the perceived barriers to the development of coaching in an organizational context?; what are the estimated trends of the coaching market in Portugal over the next few years?; do you have any further comments or observations?.

RESULTS

Our study is primarily descriptive, and the analyses conducted reflect this approach. We ran descriptive analyses and Chi-square tests (where appropriate) using SPSS version 25.

Attesting to the young age of the coaching industry in Portugal, the majority of our respondents (58%) have been working in this field for fewer than five years, with only 6% having worked in the coaching industry for more than 15 years. Forty-four percent report having a certification, followed by 28% who just have adequate professional experience, and 18% who had undertaken some form of education (e.g., short training courses) that nevertheless did not lead to any official accreditation as a coach. A further 3% of coaching practitioners mentioned not having received any specific training in coaching. Besides coaching, our coaches also have,

or have had in the past, other areas of activity, which speak to their background. As we can observe in table 2.1, the educational field (i.e., teaching and training) is the most represented (28%), followed by consulting (20%), with psychology ranking among the least prevalent areas of expertise and activity with 6%. By cross referencing the respondents' background against their specific training as coaches (Table 2.1), we can see no large differences among the interviewed professionals. There was, however, a slightly lower percentage of certified coaches among professionals from Management and Communication (29%) versus Psychology or Training (33%).

In addition to characterizing the coaches' education and background, our first research question aimed to characterize their professional practice by looking especially at the theoretical positions that guide their practice, and the related tools and methodologies they adopt. The theoretical positions that guide the coaches' actions are reported in table 2.2. In the overall sample, we can observe that NLP, mentioned by 43% of the coaches, was the most frequently used theoretical position. This was followed by the Positive Approach with 18%, and Behaviorism with 8%. It is important to highlight that 3% of the respondents indicated not using any framework and guidelines, 12% did not answer, despite having completed the survey, and 9% gave vague answers such as "I use several concepts" or "it depends a lot on the client". When matching the theoretical positions with the coaches' background (Table 2.2), we can detect a more homogenous distribution of psychologists across all the options, and they were also the highest percentage who reported using a theoretical position. We performed a chi-square test of independence to compare psychologists vis-à-vis all other groups taken together, and among psychologists there was greater adoption of cognitivism ($\chi^2(1, N = 121) = 17.12, p < .001$), humanism ($\chi^2(1, N = 121) = 5.39, p < .05$) and behaviorism ($\chi^2(1, N = 121) = 14.19, p < .001$).

Coaches from the training area, on the other hand, present significant differences when compared to all other backgrounds with respect to the tools and methodologies used. They report a greater use in all phases, namely the diagnostic phase ($\chi^2(1, N = 121) = 9.71, p < .005$); the development phase ($\chi^2(1, N = 121) = 4.36, p < .05$); and the final phase ($\chi^2(1, N = 121) = 5.31, p < .05$). Business managers and consulting professionals, on the other hand, mostly reported that they did not use any framework or specific tools. When looking at the specific tools used by coaches in each of the coaching phases, the most recurrent tool is the "wheel of life", which was mentioned by 26% of all the coaches. Other examples of tools include: for the diagnostic phase, "star of values"; for the development phase, the "(G)oal (R)eality (O)ptions

Table 2.1 Coaching education by coaches' background

	Total	Psychology (6%)	Business & Management (12%)	Training & Education (28%)	Consulting (20%)	Human Resources (7%)	Communication (8%)
1.Certification	44%	33%	29%	33%	32%	33%	29%
2.Training course without certification	18%	13%	19%	13%	13%	13%	17%
3.Professional experience considered adequate to be able to do coaching.	28%	21%	22%	21%	21%	22%	22%
4.Other	8%	33%	29%	31%	31%	33%	29%
5.Did not receive any coaching education	3%	0%	1%	2%	3%	0%	2%

Note: Total count is based on total responses from 121 respondents, allowing for multiple choices (e.g. a coach could have a certification plus a professional experience considered adequate to work in coaching, and work both in Psychology and Consulting)

Table 2.2 Theoretical Approaches and Tools used by Coaches' background

	Total	Psychology	Management	Training	Consulting	H. Resources	Communication
		%	%	%	%	%	%
1. Theoretical Approach							
Positive Approach	19%	21%	20%	19%	16%	12%	19%
Behaviorism	7%	21%	7%	5%	7%	6%	14%
Neurolinguistics							
Programing	43%	25%	30%	51%	40%	29%	38%
Cognitivism	4%	17%	0%	3%	4%	9%	10%
Humanism	3%	8%	3%	1%	2%	0%	0%
Vague answers	10%	0%	20%	5%	13%	3%	5%
None declared	4%	0%	10%	3%	4%	0%	0%
Missing	10%	8%	10%	13%	15%	41%	14%
2.Tools Usage							
Diagnostic	Yes	82%	93%	82%	91%	86%	84%
	No+Blank	18%	7%	18%	9%	14%	16%
Development	Yes	66%	87%	65%	80%	69%	72%
	No+Blank	34%	13%	35%	20%	31%	28%
Final Phase	Yes	56%	69%	60%	73%	64%	78%
	No+Blank	44%	31%	40%	27%	36%	22%

Note: Total count is based on total responses from 121 respondents, allowing for multiple choices, both for the background and theoretical approach

(W)rap-up model”; and for the final phase, “feedback”. The diagnostic phase seems to be, by far, the one in which more tools are used (88%), and the percentages decrease through the development phase (85%) and the final phase (69%).

Consistent with our first research question, we also aimed to explore the association of tools with the theoretical positions, and we observe in table 2.3 that the NLP adopters are those who use tools the most, namely 93% in the diagnostic phase, 85% in the development phase and 67% in the final phase. A chi-square test of independence supports the significant difference between NLP and other theoretical perspectives in the diagnostic phase, $\chi^2(1, N = 121) = 6.85$, $p < .05$, and development phase, $\chi^2(1, N = 121) = 4.73$, $p < .05$.

Our second research question aimed to explore specific features of the coaching practices. Concerning the areas of intervention, 17% of the coaches selected Leadership Coaching, and 16% selected both Career Coaching and Organizational Coaching. The least represented are the areas of Sports (4%), Parental Coaching (5%) and Health and Wellness (9%).

The average number of sessions that a coach performs per week seems to be below five (for 68% of the practitioners) or between 5 and 10 (25%). Only 7% mentioned having more than 10 sessions per week. Per client, the average number of sessions is 9. The sessions are mainly conducted face to face although there may be follow-up sessions by phone, Skype or messenger (41%). Twenty-two percent report having exclusively face-to-face meetings, while 7% conduct coaching exclusively via the digital medium. With regard to prices per session, slightly over 50% of the coaches charge between 50€ and 100€/hour, 32% charge less than 50€/hour and 17% more than 100€/hour.

The third research question concerned the coachees - who are they and what demands do they bring to the coaching sessions? The majority of the coaches have clients in positions of middle management (26 %) followed by directors (22%) and owners or entrepreneurs (19%). The areas of development that the coachees most frequently seek help in are Leadership and Decision (25%), Entrepreneurship and Focus on results (19%) and Organization and Execution (17%). The least required are Creation and Conceptualization (3%) and Analysis and Interpretation (5%).

Table 2.3 Tools used by theoretical position

	Total	NLP	Positivism	Cognitivism	Behaviorism
	%	%	%	%	%
1. Diagnostic					
Yes	82%	93%	79%	83%	80%
No+Blank	18%	7%	21%	17%	20%
2. Development					
Yes	66%	85%	64%	100%	100%
No+Blank	34%	15%	20%	0%	0%
3. Final Phase					
Yes	56%	67%	67%	80%	86%
No+Blank	44%	33%	33%	20%	14%

Note: Total count is based on total responses from 121 respondents, allowing for multiple choices, for theoretical approach.

In table 2.4, we can see how the development needs of the coachees intersect with the background of the coaches. The most relevant association seems to be between coaches with a background in management and human resources and clients needing the competencies of Leadership and Entrepreneurship and Focus on results. The last research question concerned the main consequences of the coaching process as observed by the coaches. Positive effects frequently found by the coaches are self-awareness, optimism and hope – reported by the majority of the coaches. Also reported as highly successful are: focus on objectives; performance; work motivation; and resilience (see table 2.5). Conversely, the most difficult positive consequences to achieve are: leadership; effectiveness while dealing with change; and commitment to the company. Regarding the negative consequences reported in table 2.6, the most frequent ones is that coachees have seen their goals changed without expressly wishing them to, and the fact that during the coaching sessions deeper issues may emerge that cannot be solved through coaching.

In conclusion, it is worth reporting that more than 83% of the interviewed coaches predict an increase in their business in the future, despite several challenges such as lack of knowledge or confusion with other practices among potential clients (34%), high costs (15%), cultural reasons (16%), lack of credibility of the profession (11%).

DISCUSSION

The primary purpose of this study was to describe the current state of workplace coaching in Portugal since it is a relatively young industry. Inspired by previous similar surveys (Bono et al., 2009; ICF, 2012, 2016; Jenkins et al., 2012), we aimed to contribute to the literature in a number of ways. First, we focused on Portugal as one of the countries where coaching has been introduced more recently, due to socio-economic as well as likely cultural reasons. Second, we did not focus on the specific backgrounds of the coaches, such as whether that be in psychology or some other, but aimed at exploring this aspect in relation to the features of coaching practices. Furthermore, we did not limit our interest to executive coaching or any specific association. Finally, our goal was to explore in depth four main aspects of coaching, namely: the coaches; the coachee; the process; and the results.

One of the most innovative contributions of our study is the exploration of the theoretical positions coaches adopt in this context, in conjunction with the specific tools and methodologies they use, and whether the theory and tools are associated with the coaches' education and background. We found that NPL is the most widely adopted theoretical approach, and especially chosen by those professionals who have a background in education. Psychologists

Table 2.4 Cross-tabulation of coaches' background and coachees' needs for development

	Total	Psychology	Management	Training	Consulting	H.Resources	Communication
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
1.Leadership and Decision	25%	20%	30%	23%	26%	27%	23%
2.Adaptation and Progression	12%	16%	10%	14%	15%	14%	11%
3.Entrepreneurship and Focus on Results	18%	16%	22%	17%	17%	20%	23%
4.Organization and Execution	18%	16%	15%	18%	16%	15%	19%
5.Creation and Conceptualization	3%	4%	2%	2%	4%	3%	5%
6.Analysis and Interpretation	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	5%
7.Support and Cooperation	8%	8%	8%	9%	6%	10%	6%
8.Interaction and Presentation	10%	14%	7%	12%	11%	5%	8%

Note: Total count is based on total responses from 121 respondents, allowing for multiple choices.

Table 2.5 Positive consequences of coaching

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Non applicable
	%	%	%	%
1.Greater optimism /hope	2%	6%	83%	10%
2.Greater Self-Awareness	2%	12%	79%	7%
3.Greater focus on career goals	4%	9%	74%	12%
4.Increased motivation at work	6%	10%	74%	10%
5.Performance Improvement	6%	12%	74%	8%
6.Greater resilience	5%	14%	71%	10%
7.Greater satisfaction with work	6%	14%	69%	11%
8.Greater Self-efficacy	4%	20%	70%	6%
9.Greater commitment to the company	7%	16%	58%	20%
10.Greater effectiveness in dealing with change	7%	20%	64%	9%
11.Improving leadership skills	10%	16%	62%	12%

Note: In columns we report the percentage of interviewed coaches that indicated for each consequence its respective success rate among their clients.

Table 2.6. Negative consequences of Coaching

	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Non Applicable
	%	%	%	%
1. The coaching sessions triggered deeper issues that could not be solved through coaching	56%	11%	10%	23%
2. Clients have seen their goals changed not expressing it voluntarily	34%	4%	8%	54%
3. Clients showed less balance between personal and professional life	32%	2%	3%	63%
4. Clients showed a decrease in job satisfaction	38%	7%	2%	53%
5. Customer relations with boss / colleagues worsened	36%	2%	2%	60%
6. Customer performance at work worsened	34%	1%	1%	64%

Note: In columns we report the percentage of interviewed coaches that indicated for each consequence its respective success rate among their clients.

seem to be the group with the largest percentage (and diversity) of theoretical approaches, while managers and consultants are the groups that report the least theory-driven practices. Secondly, we dedicated our attention to the most commonly addressed development needs of coachees in coaching interventions and in this, we concluded that leadership was by far the most relevant need.

Thirdly, we aimed to explore the features of coaching practice in Portugal. Our results showed that most interventions are conducted face to face, with follow-ups often conducted via digital means; the average duration of an intervention is nine sessions, and the average number of sessions coaches have per week is below five. Finally, we aimed to review which effects coaches observe in their clients, paying attention not only to the positive outcomes but also to the less desirable side-effects. Our findings suggest that individual psychological characteristics, such as hope, optimism, self-awareness and focus on goals are the main positive consequences. As for negative outcomes, we found mainly two: coachees have seen their goals changed without their express permission, and the coaching sessions triggered deeper issues that could not be solved through coaching. These results are in line with Graßmann and Schermuly (2016) who found the same side-effects among those ranked highest by the coachees. Similarly, Carter and colleagues (2017), again from the coachees' standpoint, found that the main barriers to coaching effectiveness were issues connected to the relationship with the coach.

In the following paragraphs, we comment in more detail on the contributions that our study makes to the field and to the practice of coaching. While these insights are based on a Portuguese sample, we believe that many of our findings elicit reflections that are valid beyond Portugal, and relevant in all those countries where coaching does not yet figure as a professionalized field and/or is still relatively new.

Insights into the status and trends of coaching in Portugal

Our findings concerning the educational level, background and certification of the coaches are important elements with regard to reflecting on the status, and possible future trends, of coaching in Portugal. We registered 38% of highly educated coaches (i.e., with a Master or a PhD), which is lower than the percentage reported in other countries (e.g., Bono et al., 2009, Jenkins et al., 2012) and in the ICF 2012 survey for Portugal. This difference, particularly with the previous survey conducted in Portugal, might have been due to a more diverse coverage of the respondents in our study, since we did not limit our sampling to coaches belonging to any specific association.

A background in the area of training and education is the most widely represented in our sample. This information gives us important indications about the fact that coaching is being established, in Portugal, as part of the HRD field, which aims to improve learning, performance, and meaning-of-work (Ellinger & Win, 2014). Indeed, in Portugal, two large associations (i.e., the Portuguese Association of People Management and the national body for Employment and Training) already included coaching as a relevant subarea of their activities. This suggests that both individual and organizational development are regarded as strictly interrelated. Thus, learning and development activities are recognized as being instrumental with regard to fostering strategic goal achievement.

In contrast to other countries, the psychological background of Portuguese coaches seems more limited, at least in this sample. Interestingly, the Portuguese Professional body of Psychologists (OPP) is attempting to make coaching a professional practice that should be conducted by psychologists only, its aim being to increase credibility. ICF Portugal, however, while not agreeing that psychologists should predominate, nevertheless acknowledges the credibility issues in this area (Moura, 2019). Related to this, we note that less than half of our sample has an accreditation as a coach, which is far behind global levels. These two facts (i.e., lower levels of higher education and lack of certification) in a growing business like coaching might generate a credibility issue in Portugal (Seligman, 2007), and the “power” struggles between several entities might be helping to increase it. We discuss this further in the following paragraph.

Implications for a professionalization of coaching

As stated by Bennett (2006) and Spence (2007), when assessed against the traditional criteria defining a “profession” it becomes clear that coaching has yet to achieve this status, since it fails to meet many of the basic criteria. Following Grant and Cavanagh (2004), coaching practitioners in Portugal currently operate within an industry in which: (a) coaches do not have an obligation to complete any formal training, nor possess any specific academic qualifications to call themselves a coach; thus they face no barriers to entry into the industry; (b) coaches are not subject to any form of state or industry regulation; (c) they are not bound by any particular code of ethics; (d) there is no established community of practitioners, despite the proliferation of associations, such as the ICF (the first professional body specifically related to coaching); (e) there is currently no general set of accepted, identifiable, and distinct skills for coaches; (f) the broader society does not recognize coaching as a profession or recognize its relevance and

credibility; and last but not least, since it touches on several other factors above mentioned, (g) coaches have no unique and defined theoretical position that serves as a basis for their practice.

Therefore, we echo the sentiment of other authors (Grant, Passmore, Cavanagh, & Parker, 2010) that this state of affairs is not beneficial to the coaching industry and that, in order to raise it to a professional status, more stringent hallmarks are needed. These should begin with accreditation and, what is more, an ethical code of conduct. Interestingly, this concern is also shared by the respondents of our survey who mentioned the lack of credibility as one of the main barriers to the further growth and spread of organizational coaching, together with the confusion between coaching and other practices.

We maintain that at the very core of coaching professionalization is the issue of having a theoretical position. While allowing for a multiplicity of views, as in other professions (e.g., psychotherapy), it seems that recourse to a theory-driven practice is of paramount importance (McKenna & Davis, 2009). However, a large number of professionals in the field still reported using no particular theory, or gave generic answers. Coaches have varying study backgrounds with different associations to specific theoretical positions, which naturally may be dependent on the discipline. The difference in their background is also associated with electing to go with no theoretical position at all. This is potentially very detrimental to the practice of coaching. As Carter et al. (2017) found, possible issues arising during coaching interventions, from the coachees' perspective, involve the coach being inflexible and overly focused on one area of business. We believe this may happen when a coach approaches the practice as something purely technical. Conversely, theoretical positions afford the possibility of exploring multiple areas and dimensions and equip coaches to manage the individual reactions and processes that underlie any significant behavioral change.

Implications for coaching education also arise from these results, since coaching education and training is a fundamental step towards its professionalization. If a multiplicity of theoretical positions should be allowed and guaranteed, coaching education should still provide specific sets of skills, possibly anticipating slight alterations around the same curriculum for people with different backgrounds. If a set of skills (transversal to theoretical positions) is identified, this could become the common core to be included in study curricula even when designed within different perspectives and disciplines.

Suggestions to improve the reproducibility of practice

The development needs brought by the coachees to the coaching sessions generally identify the main content of a coaching intervention. A shared and agreed-upon taxonomy of competencies

is necessary to compare results, just as in the literature others have advocated for more homogeneity when looking at the consequences of coaching (Grover & Furnham, 2016). We, therefore, used a competency framework developed by Bartram (2005) based on the five-factor model of personality because it “provides an articulation of the work performance domain that is consistent with a wide range of models used by practitioners in competency practice and supported empirically” (Bartram, 2005, p. 1187). It seems that a high percentage of coaches are approached with the demand to strengthen leadership skills. It is, therefore, striking that leadership is one of the most controversial effects that coaches report. Indeed, while generally successful, leadership is precisely the competence in which most variability is reported, with a few cases reporting a success rate as low as twenty percent. This observation should open the way to more empirical research on why such large variability exists and, more especially, how to reduce it.

Reducing variability in the effects of the interventions, pushing them toward the upper end of the scale, alludes to a more “standardized” approach. We anticipate that the issue of standardization in coaching may be received with skepticism. Nonetheless, having a theoretically sound practice would mean having sound theoretical explanations, not only for the success of the interventions but especially for the mechanisms that are activated and that function as mediators or proximal outcomes of coaching. That being so, we believe that the use of tools, informed by a clear and explicit theoretical choice, is essential to increase effectiveness, reduce variability in the success rate and boost reproducibility of the results. On the use of tools, we found that many are being used in the diagnostic phase, although many are qualitative and methodologies are less standardized than in other countries where the use of psychometric tools is much more widespread (Bono et al., 2009; Passmore, 2008; Jenkins, et al., 2012). Few tools are used in the development phase and even fewer in the final phase of coaching programs, which would be the ideal moment for a more structured assessment of the proximal outcomes or mediators of the intervention (such as psychological mechanisms including self-awareness) that may in turn lead to increased results.

The finding that coaches with a background in education and training use more tools is interesting from the perspective of increasing the reproducibility of coaching effects. These professionals, who happen to be also the largest group in our sample, may be more used to evaluating the results of their interventions (and indeed report a greater use of tools in all the coaching phases). Such an approach is likely beneficial for the overall profession, as it engenders more trust in the relevant stakeholders (i.e., clients, organizations).

Limitations and Future research

Our study has some limitations that we should acknowledge. The first is the relatively low number of respondents that completed the survey, with over 50% dropping out. This might have happened due to the length of the questionnaires, but it could also have been due to a lack of commitment to answer specific questions, most notably those about their theoretical approaches, which required greater reflection and involvement. Another limitation that should be pointed out is related to the way we recruited our sample. We opted for the snowball method via social media, since we did not want to limit our sample to specific coaching associations and introduce systematic bias. Nevertheless, it is difficult to argue for or against sample representativeness and we understand that recruiting via social media might limit the sample to a certain profile of coaches that uses this kind of tool. In this sense, our sampling procedure may be related to the finding that about two thirds of the respondents reported using mixed methods that include face-to-face and other technologically-based interactions (e.g., Skype or phone for follow-ups).

Finally, in this survey we chose to focus only on the professionals' point of view. It could be interesting to complement this with the clients' point of view, particularly when it comes to the positive and negative consequences. To this end, although questionnaires are still a valid research strategy, we also recommend experimental studies that evaluate the effects of coaching (both positive and negative) directly as a result of the intervention.

Additional research is needed in other countries similar to Portugal, both culturally and with respect to the status of the coaching practice development, in order to compare the results and place them under a broader cultural and institutional lens. This would help to predict future developments as well as to coordinate actions for strengthening credibility and raising the profession's standards.

A second direction for future research concerns the tools that are used after the diagnostic phase in the coaching process, and how they help achieve effectiveness. Indeed, this is an area of investigation that would add to the scientific soundness of coaching practices and their replicability.

A third fruitful area of research includes the investigation of possible side effects of coaching. As previously found (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016), and attested by our study, negative and unintended results may occur, and should be explicitly considered and measured when evaluating the effectiveness of coaching interventions.

CONCLUSIONS

As a result of our survey, we can say that coaching in Portugal is beset by issues regarding its credibility that are shared by the practitioners themselves and the relevant bodies and associations in the field. These stem from a relative paucity of certification, lack of common procedures, and approaches that allow too much room for the subjectivity of the coach in the process which, from the point of view of external observers, may be detrimental. The fact that the majority of coaches have a background in education and training should not be ignored, since it might allude to future developments driven by HRD professionals. The theoretical positions coaches adopt are not independent of their background and are differently associated with the repertoire of tools used in the sessions. The field would grow if professionals embraced tools not only in the diagnostic phase, but also in the maintenance of the process and the close-up preparation for the coachee's autonomous work. Also, the different bodies should focus on developing guidelines for theory-based practice and to identify a set of necessary coaching skills, in order to train better coaches and contribute to coaching professionalization. For clients and students, as well as future coaches, our recommendation is to engage in sound coaching training, which specifies the espoused theoretical position and leads to a recognized certification.

All in all, coaching appears to have very positive outcomes, especially regarding increased self-awareness and hope/optimism. However, our survey has contributed to the investigation of a much less explored aspect of coaching consequences, namely the side-effects. It seems that in Portugal, too, coaches observe side effects which should be better monitored and explicitly measured in future studies designed to ascertain coaching effectiveness.

CHAPTER III

An Experimental Field Study on the Effects of Coaching: The Mediating Role of Psychological Capital²

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ABSTRACT

Coaching is a developmental intervention implemented in organisations to improve individual attitudes and behaviours. Few studies, however, have tested these assumptions and explained the mechanisms involved. We propose psychological capital (PsyCap), a set of positive individual resources, as a possible mediator. We investigated whether coaching framed in goal setting and conservation of resources theories is effective in improving PsyCap and, through this, individual attitudes and performance, and whether its effects maintain over time.

We conducted an experiment with 56 employees in a marketing company, who were either randomly assigned to a coaching intervention or a wait-list control group. Measures of interest were collected before the program started (T1), and after the program, which lasted 4 months (T2). A follow-up measure for the experimental group was collected after a further four months (T3). ANOVAs showed coaching was associated with increases in PsyCap, job attitudes, and one dimension of job performance. The mediating role of PsyCap was supported for job attitudes. The effects on PsyCap and job attitudes lasted over time, as revealed by within-subjects repeated measures analyses.

This study fills a gap in our knowledge of the explanatory processes of coaching effectiveness by building on solid research design features.

Keywords: Coaching; coaching effectiveness; Psychological Capital; field experiment; COR theory; goal setting; positive organisational behavior

INTRODUCTION

A recent survey exploring what employees value the most in their workplaces revealed that successful companies are those that enable employees to thrive, by caring for their wellbeing and career (Mercer, 2020). One of the tools organisations can use to support employees' wellbeing in the workplace and the actualisation of their full potential is workplace coaching.

Workplace coaching can be described as a one-to-one custom-tailored intervention that aims to support individual development and goal achievement using a collaborative, reflective, and, in most cases, non-hierarchical relationship (Bozer & Jones, 2018). It is conceived as an intervention whereby a coach facilitates a coachee's self-regulatory process of change to attain meaningful results with respect to their work-related performance and well-being. Regardless of the different theoretical approaches, common features of coaching programs include: (1) the coachee setting goals with the help of the coach; and (2) the coach questioning, challenging and providing feedback to the coachee that would facilitate reflection and insight into his/her strengths and barriers, ultimately helping the coachee to find paths towards goals (Gregory et al., 2011).

Although the positive effects of coaching seem to be relatively well-established, scholars have pointed out several limitations in extant research (Jones, Woods & Guillaume, 2016), which inform the present study. First, scholars called for more rigorous designs to corroborate coaching effectiveness, with experimental and control groups being assessed both pre- and post-coaching intervention. Second, while research in the field is dominated by self-report study designs, to have multiple stakeholders assess coaching effectiveness, particularly coachees' behaviours, is highly advisable (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Ely, Boyce, Nelson, Zaccaro, Hernez-Broome, & Whyman, 2010). Third, there is still a need to gain a deeper understanding of the explanatory processes that account for coaching effectiveness, since this could possibly shed light on the likely psychological processes that are activated during coaching.

The present study aims to fill these gaps by leveraging empirical features as advocated by several scholars. First, we adopted a rigorous experimental design, with a "waitlist" control group and random assignment of participants to conditions (O'Shea, O'Connell & Gallagher, 2016) and second, we embraced a multi-stakeholder perspective by complementing self-report data with the available data in the company for performance assessment, which we believe adds to the external validity of the findings.

The purpose of this study is not only to incrementally fill the gaps in the literature, but also to give a specific contribution to the field. We anticipate that our substantial contribution

resides in the theorization and empirical test of a mediating mechanism for coaching positive effects, which has both theoretical and practical value. Regarding coaching as an intervention for individual development and growth, we share the view that any changes in observable attitudes and behaviours should be attributable to some changes in the person's mindset, psychological characteristics and competencies (Theeboom, van Vianen, & Beersma, 2017). Accordingly, we turn to Psychological Capital (PsyCap) as a set of positive, malleable, individual characteristics (Luthans, 2002) to explain how coaching interventions may exert their effects. As we shall argue in the following paragraphs, PsyCap identifies positive resources, both cognitive and affective, that prepare individuals to act. Those positive resources are positively affected by goal setting, mastery experiences, verbal persuasion and feedback (Luthans, Avey, Avolio, Norman & Combs, 2006), which are all important elements within a coaching program.

Building on goal setting as a theoretical framework, we designed a coaching intervention that explicitly aimed at strengthening PsyCap as a way to achieve coaching broader aims, namely performance improvement and attitudinal changes. As a consequence, the theoretical contribution we aim to make also constitutes a valuable contribution to practice in that we provide guidance on structuring coaching sessions, rooted in theory. We therefore contribute to coaching literature by showing why and how coaching can be effective, and to coaching practice by offering much-needed guidance on how to design interventions.

Effects of coaching

The main research question about coaching that has attracted scientific attention is whether it achieves what it is purported to, in other words whether it is *effective*. The very nature of coaching, however, makes this difficult to achieve since it is a customised intervention, with the goals every coachee sets being different. Several authors have investigated the outcomes of coaching and the way they identify and organise those outcomes is quite diversified.

Athanasopoulou and Dopson (2018) organised the coaching outcomes into three categories: focused on oneself (i.e., personal development); focused on others (i.e., interpersonal relationships); and focused on one's job tasks (i.e., job performance). Theeboom, Beersma & van Vianen (2014) in their meta-analysis looked at several outcomes that can fit under one of three categories, namely: cognitive, affective and behavioural. Other authors have also explicitly referred to these categories, which are common criteria of interest for many human resource development interventions (Holton & Naquin, 2005). Ely et al. (2010), for example, combined Kirkpatrick's (1976) and Kraiger and colleagues' (1993) learning evaluation models

to evaluate the effects of leadership coaching, and Jones and colleagues (2016) similarly applied a combination of Kirkpatrick's (1976) and Kraiger et al.'s (1993) models aimed at evaluating coaching effectiveness on four aspects: cognitive, affective, skill-based outcomes and results.

Of particular relevance for our purposes are attitudes and motivational outcomes, which are considered affective learning outcomes. Among these, Ely and colleagues (2010) identify self-efficacy and job attitudes and, most notably, organisational commitment and job satisfaction. Jones et al. (2016) similarly highlight self-efficacy, confidence, and satisfaction. Among the skill learning outcomes, on the other hand, authors have investigated a multiplicity of measures that are intrinsically related to the work-based application of the coaching development activity. These include examples such as transformational leadership skills (Cerni, Curtis, & Colmar, 2010) and safety communication skills (Kines, Andersen, Spangenberg, Mikkelsen, Dyreborg, & Zohar 2010).

All in all, Jones et al.'s (2016) findings point to moderate positive effects of coaching, especially for individual behaviours and affective outcomes. Although such effects rest on multiple theoretical underpinnings, we intend to focus on one specifically: the goal setting theory, because the goal setting phase is common to most coaching interventions regardless of their theoretical roots (Gregory et al., 2011; Grant, 2012).

Using goal setting as a theoretical perspective to frame coaching enables us to account for its positive effects on work behaviours as well as attitudes towards the job and the organisation (i.e., affective reactions such as job satisfaction and organisational commitment). The value of exploring attitudinal and behavioural outcomes rests with the multidimensional conceptualization of coaching effectiveness (Jones et al., 2018), with job performance as well as job- and organisation-related attitudes being especially critical when workplace coaching programs are implemented as organisational development initiatives (Bond & Seneque, 2013).

Goal setting theory rests on the principle that having specific, difficult goals leads to higher levels of task performance when compared to easy or vague goals (Locke & Latham, 1990). Goals would, therefore, be the strongest motivational drive, providing people with a direction to follow, fuelling their efforts and sustaining their persistence. They would also exert a motivational effect by stimulating the identification of cognitive strategies towards goal attainment (Seijts & Latham, 2005). The High Performance Cycle that inductively summarises the empirical research on goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990) proposed that a number of positive consequences result from achieving better performance. By achieving one's goals people likely attain intrinsic (e.g., pride in accomplishment) and extrinsic rewards which, in turn, increase job satisfaction (Borgogni & Dello Russo, 2013; Latham, Locke & Fassina,

2002). When people are satisfied with their jobs, they are also more likely to increase their commitment to the organisation (Tett & Meyer, 1993). We should note that, although the high-performance cycle indicates a specific direction in the relationships between performance, satisfaction and commitment, these are more complex since all variables are multi-determined in organizational contexts. Judge and colleagues (2001) tested seven different models in their meta-analysis and concluded there is a true correlation between job satisfaction and job performance, which is moderate in magnitude and most likely bidirectional “because it is plausible that several of the models coexist and thus are best considered in a unified framework” (Judge et al, 2001, p. 389). With regard to organisational commitment, similar reciprocal relationships with performance are likely to hold true (Ricketta, 2002).

Goal setting theory can be fruitfully applied to all self-regulated activities, such as health-promotion and therapeutic interventions (Matre, Dahl, Jensen, & Nordahl, 2013; Shilts, Townsend & Dishman, 2013) and has often been adopted as a framework for coaching (Grant & Cavanagh, 2004; Theeboom et al., 2014). The application of goal setting principles to the coaching domain can readily be seen. The coach’s role is to support a coachee in setting difficult and specific goals, which are value-based (Grant, 2014) or derived from any external feedback the coachees may have received (e.g., performance appraisal, 360° evaluation).

The positive impact of goals on performance also depends on a number of additional factors. Given the self-assigned nature of goals in coaching interventions, coachees are typically committed to them, which is one reason why coaches encourage the choice of meaningful goals that fit the individual’s values within the broader organisational context (Grant, 2014). Moreover, coaches provide feedback on goal striving, such that “goals and feedback towards goals are the core of effective coaching practices” (Latham & Arshoff, 2013, p. 338). The questioning and the feedback from a coach help give greater insight into how others may perceive one’s behaviour, and help the coachee reflect and look for other possible ways to act in given situations. The coach also provides a coachee with feedback from the early stages of the coaching process to train him/her to seek feedback on a regular basis (Gregory et al., 2011). Feedback is instrumental to supporting coachees’ beliefs with regard to being able to reach their goals (i.e., self-efficacy) and to obtaining positive outcomes as a result (i.e., outcome expectancies; Bandura, 1997).

Consistent with the theory, having goals to pursue will be motivating due to the psychological mechanisms that they activate (i.e., direction, effort, persistence and strategies; Borgogni & Dello Russo, 2013). Attaining the goals set during coaching is likely to lead to better overall job performance and have an impact on individuals’ job satisfaction and

organisational commitment (Latham et al., 2002). Not only will the goal progress lead to valued outcomes, such as personal development, increased skills, higher performance, greater recognition; it will also be satisfying to the extent that the discrepancy created between one's current state and the standard one is aiming for (represented by the goals) is reduced (Locke, 1991). By cumulating successes on one's goals trial after trial, the total satisfaction will be greater and greater (Locke & Latham, 2002).

Similarly, an individual's organisational commitment is expected to positively change in response to coaching interventions and to experiencing the progress made towards their goals. Since workplace coaching responds to developmental needs of both the coachee and the organization (Swart & Harcup, 2013), it is likely that self-set goals will gravitate around developmental areas that are also valued by the company. In this way, a person working on their goals will also find him/herself better aligned with the organisation's strategy and goals which, in turn, contributes to their identifying with them. When coaching is provided by an organisation, it is also likely perceived as an indicator of organisational support, which is known as a strong predictor of organisational commitment (Rhoades, Eisenberger, & Armeli, 2001).

Based on the reasoning above, we hypothesise:

Hypothesis 1: It is predicted that coaching intervention will have a positive effect on (a) job satisfaction, (b) organisational commitment and (c) job performance.

Mediation mechanisms of coaching effectiveness

Despite the available evidence on the positive outcomes of coaching, empirical research about the underlying mechanisms and processes of coaching is still scant. This was a serious concern raised by Theeboom and colleagues (2014), and one which they referred to as a "lack of rigorous examinations showing the causal mechanisms by which coaching interventions are effective" (p. 14). Years later, clarification of how and why coaching is effective or, in other words, what the mediating mechanisms of its effects are, is still needed (Grover & Furnham, 2016; Jones et al., 2016; Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). The variety or, in some instances, the lack of robust theoretical approaches in coaching practice is one of the reasons why it is necessary to conduct studies that attest to the mechanisms explaining its effectiveness (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Jones et al., 2016; Theeboom et al., 2014).

Coaching has roots in several disciplinary areas and from several perspectives (Theeboom et al., 2014), and positive psychology provides an especially relevant background (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Theeboom et al., 2014). Positive psychology suggests capitalising on strengths rather than repairing weaknesses; individuals are seen as decision makers, with

choices, preferences, and the possibility of becoming masterly and efficacious (Bandura, 1997; Seligman, 1998). Investing in accumulating or preserving one's resources serves an evolutionary human need for survival, according to Conservation of Resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018). Thus, people strive to gain valuable resources, particularly psychological resources, which will enable them to prevent stress and promote their well-being.

Psychological resources are “capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace” (Luthans, 2002, p. 698). Consistent with the conceptualization of resources in COR theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018) and the Positive Organizational Behaviour (POB) movement (Luthans, 2002), core psychological resources are: self-efficacy (the belief and confidence in one's domain-specific capabilities); hope (a motivational state characterised by agency and pathways towards goals achievement); optimism (a positive attribution style about the future); and resilience (the ability to bounce back quickly and effectively from adverse circumstances). These four psychological resources constitute the concept of Psychological Capital (PsyCap; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007).

This set of resources can be reinforced through developmental interventions such as: short training programs (Luthans et. al. 2006; Luthans, Avey, Avolio, & Peterson, 2010); online training programs (Luthans, Avey, & Patera, 2008); structured reading materials (Zhang, Li, Ma, Hu, & Jiang, 2014); and, as we argue, individual coaching. We first review extant empirical evidence regarding the effects of coaching (or other developmental interventions) on each of the PsyCap components, highlighting the connections with our theoretical framework. Next, we present our rationale which, being rooted in goal setting and COR theories, expects a positive effect of coaching on the overall construct of PsyCap, and its mediating role on attitudes and behaviors.

Self-efficacy beliefs are malleable and can be strengthened via leveraging its four main sources, namely: enactive mastery, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (Bandura, 1997). Research shows that individual self-efficacy increases by setting goals, particularly proximal goals (Latham & Seijts, 1999), as well as after coaching (e.g., Baron & Morin, 2010). Self-efficacy is enhanced not just by the process of goal establishment but also via successful experiences related to one's goals (Evers, Brouwers & Tomic, 2006). Meta-analytic findings also attest this is one of the most investigated affective outcomes of coaching and is positively impacted by it (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Jones et al., 2016).

Drawing on the definition and the two components of hope, namely agency and pathways (Luthans et al., 2010), we can observe consistent findings in the literature about the positive effects of coaching on conceptually close variables. One such variable is solution-focused thinking (Grant, 2014), which is concerned with generating strategies to achieve goals similarly to the pathways component. In fact, the articulation of goals stimulates hope (Snyder, 2000) since “thinking about goals immediately triggers the agentic and pathways thoughts that are both necessary for goal-directed behavior” (Green, Grant, & Rynsaardt, 2007, p. 26). The hope process implies determination, motivation and a proactive search for alternative pathways (Youssef & Luthans, 2007), and it is the role of the coach, through reflective questions, to help the coachee find those possible solutions. Another construct that is conceptually close to hope and its pathways component is implementation intentions (Gollwitzer, 1999). Indeed, Luthans and Jensen (2002) provide HRD professionals with suggestions to increase hope that are rooted in the theories of goal setting (e.g., splitting goals into distal and proximal) and implementation intentions (e.g., visualisation techniques). Finally, learning goal orientation could be conceptually associated with the dimension of agency; accordingly, it is sensible to expect a positive impact of coaching on the coachees’ belief that they can change. This assumption, however, has not yet been tested empirically (Bozer & Jones, 2018).

Resilience does not only encompass an individual’s response to external and potentially threatening events, it also includes those processes that enable a person to positively adapt, namely: to cope, re-appraise the external conditions, and seek help (Britt, Shen, Sinclair, Grossman, & Klieger, 2016). Resilience comprises elements of flexibility, adaptation, or even improvisation which are much needed in situations characterized by change and uncertainty (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). The change process initiated by coaching likely creates uncertainty. Hence, the coach would support the coachee to re-appraise the external conditions, find different coping strategies and assist in seeking help from others. A coaching intervention explicitly designed to improve middle managers’ resilience in the face of organisational change proved to be effective as participants’ levels of resilience increased after a 3-session coaching program (Sherlock-Storey, Moss, & Timson, 2013). Furthermore, the authors explored whether changes in other PsyCap components had also occurred because of the intervention, and reported significant increases in Hope and Optimism. In a randomised controlled trial study, Grant, Curtayne and Burton (2009) found that resilience of the executives in the experimental group increased vis-à-vis the control group after a short coaching program. The same was found in a study by Franklin and Doran (2009) where self-efficacy and resilience significantly increased after a coaching intervention. A recent meta-analysis further attests to the benefits of

developmental interventions in the workplace to increase resilience, particularly when conducted one-to-one as in the case of coaching (Vanhove, Herian, Perez, Harms, & Lester, 2016).

Optimism, from a POB perspective is a realistic, flexible kind of optimism, “which can be learned and developed through recognized approaches such as leniency for the past, appreciation for the present, and opportunity seeking for the future” (Youssef & Luthans, 2007, p.778). Interventions conducted on the general population proved effective at reducing pessimism (Littman-Ovadia, H., & Nir, 2014) and increasing optimism (Meevissen, Peters, & Alberts, 2011). A meta-analysis reports significant, albeit small in magnitude, effect sizes, which become larger for in-person versus online interventions. This was also the case for programs that use the best-possible-self exercise versus other techniques (Malouff & Schutte, 2017); the best-possible-self exercise, being focused on future-oriented expectancies, seems to fit well with goal setting, which is also geared toward the future. Interventions in the workplace mostly include training programs aimed at increasing overall PsyCap, but when the results distinguish among the four components, there is an observable increase in each of them (Dello Russo & Stoykova, 2015; Sherlock-Storey et al., 2013). Moreover, a study of supervisory coaching reported a positive association with individual optimism (Xanthopoulou, Bakker, Demerouti, & Schaufeli, 2009), thus supporting the role that coaching plays in boosting positive expectancies about the future.

The literature reviewed above already indicates that coaching is an effective intervention to improve PsyCap dimensions. However, the PsyCap literature recommends considering PsyCap as a single factor, rather than as its single components (Avey, Reichard, Luthans & Mhatre, 2011; Dawkins, Martin, Scott, & Sanderson, 2013), due to its stronger predictive power (Luthans et al., 2007). Moreover, COR theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018) suggests that individual resources tend to go together, in packs or caravans; hence, psychological resources are more likely to be present together and to trigger and support one another. Our main argument rests on the theoretical position that individuals capitalise on their inner resources to be able to reach their developmental goals and, ultimately, perform better (Luthans, 2002; Theeboom et al., 2017).

Specifically, we propose that coaching framed in the goal setting and COR theories is well suited to supporting individuals in strengthening overall positive beliefs and perceptions about themselves and the future. This is because it is intended to facilitate self-reflection about one's goals, possible strategies to achieve them, chances of success and any support available. In

other words, it supports people in obtaining, retaining and fostering psychological resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018). In the following, we present our rationale in more detail.

First, goals exert an intrinsically motivating effect (Locke, 1991). By setting personally valued and challenging goals at the start of a coaching program, the coachee prepares him/herself to master increasing levels of difficulty in their chosen endeavour, which will boost their self-efficacy. At later stages in the coaching program, pursuing difficult goals activates the envisioning of different pathways towards goal achievement (which subsume the dimension of hope), as well as the belief that one will eventually succeed by implementing one of those strategies (optimism). Having set a goal keeps the person focused on finding solutions and oriented toward the future, which in turn sustains motivation and action even in the face of obstacles (resilience; Grant et al. 2009).

Second, reflecting on one's feelings, thoughts and behaviors stimulated by the coach during the sessions (Jones, 2019), is paramount for PsyCap development. When coachees reflect back on past actions and successes, they derive a certain level of self-efficacy (Luthans et al., 2006). This is possible thanks to the processes of symbolising, forethought, and self-regulation (Bandura, 1997) that similarly help them to hold a positive belief about goal achievement (optimism), and envision ways to succeed also in the future (hope) and when facing challenges (resilience; Luthans et al., 2006). This reflection process does not just simply make the coachees aware of their own current resources (e.g., their PsyCap); it also instigates a resource spiral (Hobfoll et al., 2018) insofar as coachees are invited to figure out ways to enlarge their pool of psychological resources and identify possible helpers in this process.

Third, the feedback offered by the coach acts as a critical reinforcing factor. This is in line with research findings by Luthans and colleagues (2011) who found that positive behavioral feedback predicted higher subsequent PsyCap. Such feedback, stemming from a supportive relationship between the coach and the coachee, reinforces positive beliefs about oneself succeeding (i.e., self-efficacy) and about a rosy future (i.e., optimism), by acting as verbal persuasion. Furthermore, when the first attempts at goal achievement prove unsuccessful, the coach's feedback helps to maintain a set direction, adjust effort and support persistence, which equates to saying that it promotes resilience in the event of setbacks and the identification of alternative pathways (i.e., hope).

All in all, coaching designed in the goal setting and COR frameworks fosters coachees' PsyCap because it keeps individuals future-oriented and goal-directed (hope); encourages them to exert their agency (self-efficacy) even when facing difficulties (resilience), and to preserve a positive outlook about their future expectancies (optimism); pushes them to reflect and act on

feelings, thoughts and behaviours within a self-regulatory cycle that will result in preserving and gaining more resources.

Studies consistently show positive correlations of PsyCap with job attitudes and performance (Avey et al., 2011; Luthans et al., 2007). The theoretical explanation of these associations is the motivational effect of PsyCap and the consequent greater engagement that it may generate. The PsyCap dimensions rest on both common and unique motivational and cognitive processes, that are complementary and enhance one another; hence, considering the overall PsyCap is more informative than looking at the separate dimensions. In fact, PsyCap is a system of beliefs about the self and the future, a mindset that predisposes the person to act and approach the context differently. People who feel more energised, confident and positive about the future are more likely to perform well in their job. Furthermore, as people believe they have the internal resources to influence the context, they will be more satisfied and emotionally attached to their workplace (Luthans et al., 2007).

Based on the arguments presented above about the likely impact of coaching interventions framed under goal setting and COR theories on PsyCap, and the established relationship between PsyCap and job attitudes and performance, we propose the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 2: It is predicted that the coaching intervention will have a positive effect on psychological capital

Hypothesis 3: It is predicted that psychological capital will mediate the positive effect of the coaching intervention on (a) job satisfaction, (b) organisational commitment, and (c) job performance

METHOD

Participants and procedure

The participants were professionals working in a digital marketing agency. The top management of the company agreed to the study, its design and the timing of the intervention. All employees were invited to a plenary session during which the individual coaching intervention was explained. On this occasion, employees completed the pre-intervention questionnaire and were asked whether they wished to enrol in the individual coaching program; hence, participation was voluntary. The research procedure and coaching intervention followed the APA policy on the ethical treatment of participants.

A total of 83 employees took part in the open session and filled in the first questionnaire (T1). Of these, only five employees decided not to sign up for the program, and a further 11 individuals left the company before the beginning of the program, which started four months after the open session because the summer holiday period would have led to participants having different starting dates. Those who signed up for the program ($n = 67$) were attributed numbers and then were randomly assigned to the experimental or the waitlist control group. When the intervention had already started, seven additional individuals either left the company (for maternity leave) or dropped out of the program, so that the final number of participants was 56 (experimental group $n = 32$ and control group $n = 24$). The lack of previous reviews or primary studies on the effects of coaching on PsyCap makes it difficult to speculate about the likely magnitude of its effects. However, we ran calculations in G*power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner & Lang, 2009), and we concluded that a sample size of 56 would be sufficient even to detect small effect sizes (as found in a meta-analysis of PsyCap training interventions; Lupşa, Vîrğa, Maricuţoiu, & Rusu, 2019). Hence, under a restrictive assumption, we concluded that the sample size was appropriate.

Forty-three percent of the participants were female ($n = 24$) and fifty seven percent male ($n = 32$), their average age being 33 years ($SD = 6.359$). Participants had an average job tenure of 41.66 months ($SD = 47.178$). A detailed presentation of the demographic characteristics of the participants (experimental and control group) is shown in table 3.1. Participants held quite diverse job positions: from web developers to social media, account executives and administrative functions. The organization has a relatively flat structure with no more than three hierarchical levels. Those who had management functions lead teams comprising three employees on average (minimum one and maximum six people).

Both, the experimental and the waitlist control group were given a second questionnaire post-intervention (T2). The experimental group also received a third questionnaire as a follow-up, four months apart from the second (T3). This follow-up questionnaire was not administered to the waitlist control group due to the necessity of starting the coaching sessions with them for ethical concerns, and to guarantee the greatest possible similarity with the experimental group. Finally, job performance ratings, collected by the organisation by means of a multi-rater system, were made available to the researchers. Performance ratings were available for both the experimental and control group and were collected before the coaching program started and at the end, therefore with a 6-month time lag. Three out of the 56 employees did not have a performance rating at time one (T1), since they had recently arrived at the company.

Table 3.1 Demographic characteristics of the experimental and control group

Description	Experimental Group	Control Group
Number of participants	32 (57%)	24 (43%)
Gender		
Male	19 (60%)	13 (40%)
Female	13 (54%)	11 (45%)
Age (years)	33.66 (SD=6.93)	32.13 (SD=5.53)
Organizational tenure (months)	49.22 (SD=54.34)	31.54 (SD=33.97)

Note: The only significant difference between the two groups concerned organizational tenure ($t = -1.4, p = .03$)

The coaching program

The coaching program consisted of four individual face-to-face sessions led by an external professional coach with a background in psychology and considerable experience in corporate contexts; the coach had not previously worked with the company where this study was conducted. To minimize the actor/observer bias and to control for process variance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2001), the same coach met with participants and followed the same structure. The sessions had an average duration of 60 minutes and they were scheduled once a month. The session duration is consistent with regular practice (Jones et al., 2016), and the time gap between sessions is also common in executive coaching (McKenna & Davis, 2009).

The session articulation was designed in accordance with the GROW model (Whitmore, 2003), where the “G” stands for goal setting; the “R” for reality check or assessment of one’s actual status with respect to the defined goal; the “O” stands for evaluating options: the coach helps the coachee to find alternative possibilities to achieve the goals; finally, the “W” stands for willpower: the coach helps the coachee to actually implement the envisioned strategies. Moreover, we took inspiration from the PsyCap development literature (Luthans et al., 2006) to design specific activities in each session that targeted one or more of the four PsyCap dimensions (i.e., hope, optimism, self-efficacy and resilience).

In the first session, coachees defined their goals and reflected on their current situation and characteristics. To do so, they used the report produced by the coach based on the self-report questionnaire they had answered in the open session, which explored individual characteristics. Moreover, they brought their latest performance appraisal to the session with the aim of reflecting on strengths and weaknesses and in order to set goals that were relevant to their work context. The goals that were set could be segmented into very diverse categories, from stress management and motivation to leadership skills and assertive communication, and from organizational skills to time management. In the second session, possible strategies and resources to achieve the goals were identified, primarily to strengthen hope and optimism. Some of the questions that could be asked to prompt coachees to reflect on their strategies and resources were: “What options do you have?”, “Who/what can help you?”, “What would be an ideal scenario?” and “What can be done to achieve that?”. During the third session, self-efficacy and resilience were stimulated, building on successful episodes and routines to be replicated, but also on possible obstacles and ways to prevent them. For self-efficacy, some of the questions used to stimulate the sense of being able to orchestrate their resources were: “What were the ingredients for that successful episode?”, “How could you replicate your behaviours in future situations?”. Regarding resilience, coachees were encouraged to anticipate obstacles and find strategies to overcome and prevent them: “What could go wrong?”, “What strategies would you use to overcome that obstacle?” and “How could you prevent that from happening?”. The last session aimed at reviewing the progress made, building confidence, and motivating the autonomous re-application of the strategies. Typical questions were: “What can you do to achieve better performance from now on?”, “What routines are useful to keep the focus on this goal?”. At the end of this last session the second questionnaire was collected.

Measures

Psychological Capital

The Psychological Capital Questionnaire short form (PCQ-12) was used to measure psychological capital (Luthans et al., 2007). Permission to use the Portuguese version for research purposes was obtained from www.mindgarden.com. The answering scale was on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*). This scale was validated to measure the overall construct of PsyCap rather than its separate sub-dimensions, such that the items were selected based on their shared commonalities (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017); therefore, we computed a single score. Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficients

for T1 and T2 were .78 and .83, respectively. The reliability alpha coefficient for T3 (i.e., only for the experimental group) was .85.

Job Satisfaction

Three items were selected from the overall job satisfaction scale (Judge, Locke, Durham & Kluger, 1998): 'I feel fairly well satisfied with my present job'; 'Most days I am enthusiastic about my work'; 'I find real enjoyment in my work'. All items were answered on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*). The Cronbach's alpha was .82 at T1 and .91 at T2. The reliability alpha coefficient for T3 (i.e., only for the experimental group) was .92.

Organisational Commitment

Organisational Commitment was measured with the affective organisational commitment scale (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The following four items were selected based on factor loadings and content: 'I feel like 'part of the family' at my organisation'; 'I feel 'emotionally attached' to this organisation'; 'This organisation has a great deal of personal meaning for me'; 'I feel a strong sense of belonging to my organisation'. The participants answered using a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*). Cronbach's alpha for this scale was .77 at T1 and .93 at T2. The reliability alpha coefficient for T3 (i.e., only for the experimental group) was .94.

Job Performance

The company had a multi-source evaluation process in place, whereby each employee is evaluated by their direct supervisor, his/her peers and him/herself. Selecting the peers is the supervisor's choice and should include at least one person from the same team and one person from other teams. The 360° evaluation was performed online using the company's platform. The evaluation criteria were defined by the company according to their competence system. The rating was expressed on a 10-point scale, from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 10 (*totally agree*). We decided to exclude self-assessment as previous studies have shown significantly different correlations between self- and other-ratings when examining coaching effectiveness (Jones et al., 2016). Moreover, our aim was to complement the self-ratings of other variables (i.e., PsyCap, job satisfaction and organisational commitment) with ratings from additional stakeholders.

We then conducted an exploratory factor analysis to better understand the dimensionality of the job performance measure. Four factors emerged, explaining a total of 74% of variance,

which we labelled Problem Solving (10 items), Communication (5 items), Emotion Management (3 items) and Collaboration (1 item). The alphas for these factors are: .94 at T1 and .95 at T2 for the Problem Solving competence; .85 at both T1 and T2 for the Communication competence; .83 at T1; and .87 at T2 for the Emotion Management competence. The fourth factor, Collaboration, only included one item. Sample items for each factor are: “This person easily integrates different types of inputs into problem solving” (Problem Solving); “This person is a good communicator who can easily captivate audiences” (Communication); “Generally, in stressful situations this person is able to remain calm, think and not explode (Emotion Management); “I feel the best of this person comes up when he/she works in a group (vs. when working alone)” (Collaboration).

RESULTS

Preliminary checks

Using T1 data, we investigated pre-intervention differences between the intervention and the waitlist control group. A one-way ANOVA indicated no significant differences in PsyCap ($F(1,56) = .74, p = .39$), job satisfaction ($F(1,56) = .45, p = .5$), organisational commitment ($F(1,56) = .65, p = .42$) and job performance indicators, namely problem solving ($F(1,53) = .82, p = .37$), communication ($F(1,53) = 1.48, p = .23$), emotion management ($F(1,53) = .03, p = .86$) and collaboration ($F(1,53) = .20, p = .89$).

Hypotheses Testing

From the correlation matrix reported in table 3.2, we can see significant and positive correlations between the intervention and most of our dependent variables, specifically PsyCap, attitudes and one dimension of job performance. Even more telling, the significant correlations occurred only with the variables measured at Time 2 as expected, and not at Time 1. Other significant positive correlations exist among job attitudes and performance dimensions.

To assess the effects of coaching on individual outcomes (Hypothesis 1) and PsyCap (Hypothesis 2), we conducted an ANOVA with repeated measures, with time as the within-subject variable, and group (experimental vs. control) as the between-subject variable.

The findings show that the interaction between time and experimental condition was significant for PsyCap ($F(1,54) = 15.026, p = .00; \eta^2 = .22$), job satisfaction ($F(1,54) = 10.469, p < .01; \eta^2 = .16$) and organisational commitment ($F(1,54) = 5.464, p < .05; \eta^2 = .09$). With respect to the four dimensions of job performance, we found non-significant effect on Problem Solving ($F(1,51) = .096, p = .76$), Communication ($F(1,51) = .085, p = .77$) and Emotion

Management ($F(1,51) = .615, p = .44$); however, we found a significant effect on Collaboration ($F(1,51) = 5.447, p < .05; \eta^2 = .10$). Thus, Hypotheses 1a and 1b were supported, as well as Hypothesis 2, whereas Hypothesis 1c was only partially supported.

To test the mediating role of PsyCap (Hypothesis 3), we ran a conditional process analysis using 95% bootstrap confidence intervals (CI) with 5,000 bootstrap samples (Shrout & Bolger, 2002) and with the SPSS PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2013), controlling for initial levels (T1) of PsyCap and individual outcomes. These analyses revealed that the confidence interval for the indirect effect of the intervention on job satisfaction, mediated by PsyCap, was significant (95% CI [.11, 1.10]), and the same happened for organisational commitment (95% CI [.12, .85]). Hence, hypotheses 3a and 3b were supported. Because the intervention only showed effects on one factor of job performance, namely Collaboration, we ran the mediated regression exclusively on this dimension, and no significant mediation was observed, since the confidence interval includes zero (95% CI [-.17, .55]), thus failing to support hypothesis 3. Details of the mediated regression analyses, including the regression coefficients, are reported in table 3.3.

Additional analyses

We conducted a within-subjects ANOVA with repeated measures on the experimental group only, for whom the T3 follow-up measure was available. The findings are reported in table 3.4. This analysis showed that the means of PsyCap differed significantly between time points ($F(2, 58) = 17.265, p < .001$). Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that PsyCap increased from T1 (i.e., pre-intervention) to T2 (i.e., post-intervention) ($p < 0.001$). At the follow-up, four months after the end of the coaching program (T3), the mean of PsyCap slightly reduced but was still significantly greater than at T1. Job satisfaction showed a statistically significant difference between time points ($F(2, 56) = 4.606, p < 0.001$) and a similar trend: again, we observe an increase from T1 to T2, which reduced at T3 but stayed statistically significant when comparing T1 and T3. Regarding organisational commitment, the difference between time points was statistically different ($F(2, 56) = 5.167, p < 0.05$). The post-hoc tests showed an increase in commitment at T2 ($p < 0.01$). However, at T3 the mean of organisational commitment decreased, being no different than the starting point at T1.

Table 3.2 Correlation matrix and descriptive statistics

Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
1.Intervention	1.57	0.50																	
2.Gender	1.43	0.50	-.05																
3.Age	33	6.36	.12	.06															
4.Tenure	41.64	47.17	.19	-.09	.31*														
5.PsyCapT1	5.1	0.74	.12	-.29*	-.01	-.07													
6.PsyCapT2	5.43	0.77	.52**	-.15	.01	.03	.61**												
7.J.Satisfaction T1	4.97	1.07	.09	-.09	.06	-.08	.67**	.51**											
8.J.Satisfaction T2	5.33	1.23	.42**	-.09	.25	.09	.47**	.68**	.61**										
9.O.Commitment T1	5.57	0.94	.11	.09	.23	.28*	.34*	.38**	.58**	.48**									
10.O.Commitment T2	5.74	1.18	.31*	.06	.24	.19	.10	.45**	.44**	.61**	.67**								
11.Problem Sol.T1	8.18	.79	.13	-.19	.13	.24	.16	.29*	.20	.27	.28*	.12							
12.Problem Sol. T2	8.38	.74	.23	-.30*	.22	.20	.15	.30*	.24	.51**	.26	.29*	.61**						
13.Communic. T1	7.72	.88	.17	-.27*	-.06	.15	.41**	.48**	.31*	.39**	.25	.19	.70**	.50**					
14.Communic. T2	8.02	.84	.24	-.36**	.04	.03	.30*	.39**	.29*	.50**	.18	.35**	.45**	.80**	.70**				
15.Emotion Mgmt T1	7.92	1.04	-.02	-.14	-.04	-.18	.11	.09	.26	.20	.06	-.03	.25	.32*	.22	.37**			
16.Emotion Mgmt T2	7.93	1.07	.05	-.22	-.11	-.15	.14	.11	.26	.24	.03	.10	.12	.48**	.24	.58**	.74**		
17.Collaboration T1	7.20	1.09	.02	-.01	-.19	.00	.17	.10	.22	.06	.15	.09	-.11	-.05	.10	.16	.04	.19	
18.Collaboration T2	7.40	1.16	.35**	-.16	.21	.02	.15	.32*	.37**	.36**	.18	.32*	.08	.36**	.21	.45**	.22	.52**	.46**

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$; intervention (0 = no intervention, 1 = intervention); gender (1 = male, 2 = female).

$N = 56$, except for correlations involving performance factors where $N = 53$

Table 3.3 Results of mediation analyses by PsyCap for the three outcomes

Predictor Variables	Mediator: PsyCap T2					Dependent Variable				
	B	SE	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>	R ²	B	SE	<i>T</i>	<i>p</i>	R ²
Job Satisfaction T2	<i>F</i>(3,52)=25.04***				.59	<i>F</i>(4,51)=18.25***				.59
Constant	1.4	.50	2.77	.00		-.62	.86	-.71	.48	
Coaching Intervention	.70	.14	5.04	.00		.39	.27	1.44	.15	
PsyCap T2						.71	.22	3.16	.00	
<i>Indirect Effect</i>						.49	.24			
Organizational Commitment T2	<i>F</i>(3,52)=25.84***				.60	<i>F</i>(4,51)=18.61***				.59
Constant	.95	.55	1.71	.09		.70	.89	.79	.43	
Coaching Intervention	.68	.14	4.97	.00		.22	.26	.86	.40	
PsyCapT2						.57	.22	2.62	.01	
<i>Indirect Effect</i>						.39	.18			
Performance T2 – Collaboration	<i>F</i>(3,49)=24.53***				.60	<i>F</i>(4,48)=5.81***				.33
Constant	1.34	.64	2.09	.04		2.11	1.32	1.60	.12	
Coaching Intervention	.75	.15	5.20	.00		.57	.35	1.60	.12	
PsyCapT2						.25	.28	.87	.39	
<i>Indirect Effect</i>						.19	.18			

Table 3.4 Within-subjects Repeated Measures ANOVAs for the experimental group

	T1Pre Intervention		T2Post Intervention		T3 Follow up		Repeated Measures		
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	F	df	p value
PsyCap	5.14 ^a	.62	5.76 ^b	.56	5.52 ^b	.71	17.265	2.58	<.001
Job Satisfaction	5.03 ^a	1.04	5.74 ^b	.85	5.70 ^b	1.03	4.606	2.56	<.001
Organizational Commitment	5.71 ^a	.89	6.14 ^b	.95	6.04 ^{ab}	1.10	5.167	2.56	<.05

Note: Different letters indicate statistically significant differences across times.

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to contribute to the literature on coaching not only by filling the gaps on important outstanding issues (most notably, the mediating mechanisms behind its effectiveness; Grover & Furnham, 2016; Jones et al., 2016), but also by contributing an original theoretical perspective rooted in goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990) and positive psychological resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018; Luthans, 2002).

The results showed a positive effect of coaching intervention on job satisfaction and organisational commitment and, as well, on one of the job performance factors, namely collaboration. This supports our first hypothesis and corroborates the findings of previous studies on coaching and job attitudes (Jones et al., 2016; Luthans & Peterson, 2003). Coaching is likely to create a better alignment between the individual and the context, ultimately exerting a positive impact on coachees' organisation-related attitudes and attesting to the view of coaching as an aid for organisational development via individual development (Bond & Seneque, 2013).

With respect to job performance, it is more burdensome to draw direct comparisons with extant literature due to the different ways of measuring it. Even when comparing studies which, similarly to ours, used multi-source ratings of job performance, we find mixed results (e.g., Cerni et al., 2010; Grant, Green, & Rynsaardt, 2010). Multi-source ratings of performance, although less strongly affected by coaching (Jones et al., 2016), present two main strengths. The first, involving other stakeholders (i.e., supervisors and peers) in the evaluation of coaching effectiveness, responds to the call for greater rigor in evaluation studies (Ely et al., 2010). And the second is that multi-source evaluations reflect what a specific company truly values in an

individual's performance (MacKie, 2007) and thus enhances the validity of the intervention. As mentioned above, we observed a significant post-coaching increase only in one dimension of performance, namely collaboration, which is the same dimension that Kochanowski and colleagues (2010) also found improved after coaching.

Most interestingly, our findings also supported the second and third hypotheses, showing a significant increase in PsyCap as a result of the coaching intervention, which maintained also at follow-up, and its mediating role on job attitudes. The way we designed the coaching intervention gives us confidence regarding the psychological mechanisms that it activated. While we adopted the general GROW method (Whitmore, 2003), which is widely recognized among coaching practitioners, we enriched the sessions with specific instructions that reinforced the activation of positive psychological resources. Goal setting at the starting phase prepares the ground for increasing overall PsyCap by providing the opportunity for mastery experiences after attempts and errors. The reflection facilitated by the coach should raise coachees' self-awareness about their actual strengths and resources, as well as provide opportunities to develop those via symbolisation and forethought (Bandura, 1997). With a special focus on positive episodes, such reflection would also increase all dimensions of PsyCap: confidence in the possibility to change, the ability to identify alternative pathways in advance, being optimistic about one's ability to change, and resilience when faced with obstacles. If no positive episodes are found, PsyCap could still be reinforced during the coaching sessions by reformulating the way failures and negative events are attributed, and by throwing light on contextual factors and how one can exercise agency in those conditions (Youssef & Luthans, 2007). Finally, the active role of the coach is critical throughout the intervention phases. In addition to facilitating self-reflection, through questioning the coachee, its role is to provide feedback and verbal persuasion. Given the collaborative nature of the coaching relationship, this feedback is more likely to positively impact PsyCap than other forms of feedback. It is important to note that, although we propose a specific order of the sessions and each of them is more geared towards one or more of the PsyCap dimensions, these resources effectively travel in caravans (Hobfoll et al., 2018), and they trigger and support one another. For example, promoting reflection on one's strategies and possible pathways also enhances the ability to identify possible obstacles and ways around them, the confidence in one's capabilities and optimistic attributions about future success.

By defining paths to achieve the goals and creating positive beliefs about the future (i.e., increasing hope and optimism); as well as by becoming masterly and anticipating strategies to bounce back from difficulties (i.e., increasing self-efficacy and resilience) people improve their

relationship with their context. Thus, insofar as we show that an attitudinal change follows from a change in PsyCap (i.e., a mediation process), we believe this is an important theoretical contribution. Recently, other authors have suggested that a change in mindset and competencies is the successful ingredient for coaching (Theeboom et al., 2017), and this has long been an implicit idea in coaching practice. We lend support to this assumption and argue that: the coach's feedback and encouragement to pursue the goals; the cognitive-motivational boost tied to a solution-oriented reflection, induced by the questions raised in the sessions; and finally the goal setting process that starts a self-regulatory cycle leading the coachee to developing action plans, find personal resources and anticipate strategies to overcome and prevent obstacles. This very process of setting and working towards one's goals has a dramatic impact on increasing a set (or caravan) of positive resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018), which have the potential to change one's relation with the environment (Luthans & Peterson, 2003). People with increased PsyCap develop a stronger sense of control over their life and their experience in the workplace, which then leads them to act differently in their environment, both physically and symbolically (Bandura, 1997). It is possible that the symbolic interaction with the environment, in the form of perceptions and affects towards it (i.e., the cognitive and affective components of job attitudes), follows more closely from changes in PsyCap.

On the other hand, behavioural changes (i.e., in one's job performance) may need more time to unfold, and for this reason the mediating role of PsyCap may not have been detected in our data – as there was an upward trend in other performance dimensions but not one that reached the level of significance. Moreover, with respect to collaboration, it may be that the presence of moderators and buffering conditions obstruct the transmission of strengthened PsyCap to collaboration. For example, external conditions such as supervisor and peer support, may play an important role in facilitating or hindering the use of one's resources (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). In the training transfer literature, lack of support is indeed identified as one of the largest obstacles to implementing the acquired skills or knowledge (Burke & Hutchins, 2007). Peer and supervisor support seem especially relevant for our dimension of performance, because collaboration implies interdependence and rests on a complex, interactive process involving multiple individuals (Wood & Gray, 1991).

Further comment warrants the finding that the other three dimensions of performance were not positively impacted by coaching, regardless of the mediation of PsyCap. We interpret this with the proviso that collaboration is a competence that is probably more visible to external observers than other competences that may be less visible to either all or at least some observers. For example, emotion management and problem solving may be less directly observable as they

imply a different approach to a person's work that does not necessarily translate into actions visible to others. Communication, on the other hand, may be visible only to some colleagues or to the supervisor. Moreover, collaboration is a competence that directly impacts others, which would make it a dimension that colleagues and supervisors are more sensitive to in their evaluation. The different "nature" of the collaboration competence would therefore explain why other competences, while showing a general trend toward increasing, did not reach the level of statistical significance. In further support of this interpretation, we recall that the research on multi-source performance ratings reports higher correlations between sources when evaluating interpersonal dimensions (Conway & Huffcutt, 1997), ultimately indicating that "interpersonal behaviours are relatively observable to all sources" (p. 350). It may also be the case that other competences need more time to change. We could not, however, test this idea due to the lack of follow-up measures on job performance.

Practical implications

This study offers straightforward implications for coaching practice. The effect sizes of the relationships we tested are medium to large for PsyCap (i.e., .53), and medium for job satisfaction (i.e., .43), organisational commitment (i.e., .31) and collaboration (i.e., .34) (Cohen, 1988). They indicate that an average person in the experimental group would score higher in the outcomes of interest than most of the control group members (higher than 70%, 67%, 62% and 65% of the control group, respectively, for the four dependent variables). Based on these findings, we can derive strong support for coaching intervention.

The increase in PsyCap and, most importantly, its mediating effects on job attitudes, shows professionals a clear direction to pursue when designing and delivering coaching interventions. As our results show, the greatest changes occur in individual PsyCap, and these then translate into better relationships with the context. Thus, we recommend that the focus of coaching professionals be to support individuals in reflecting about themselves, encourage goal setting, and consequently find the pathways towards those goals (hope) with positive beliefs about the future (optimism). Coaches should also assist coachees to accept feedback as an external perspective that can help them build self-efficacy when faced with success, as well as help them find their own ways to deal and cope with significant difficulties they encounter in pursuing their developmental goals (resilience). With that in mind, in the methods section we provided details of how we designed the articulation of the sessions as well as each individual session, together with other features in line with the same inspiring principles in the PsyCap development literature (Luthans et al., 2006).

Although people differ in their plasticity levels, such that they show differential sensitivity to positive interventions (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017), our study corroborates previous research showing that positive resources can be effectively developed. Differently from previous studies that used group-based methodologies aimed at both efficacy and efficiency of investments (Dello Russo & Stoykova, 2015; Luthans et al., 2010), we have now shown that individual-based interventions, which are longer and more resource-consuming but also more tailored, are just as, if not more, effective.

Limitations and Future Research

The first limitation we acknowledge is the sample size and the fact that all participants worked in the same company. To guarantee that we had the exact same procedure and to limit the effects related to the professional conducting the coaching, the coach was the same for all participants. Having in mind that the design included four sessions in the intervention phase plus one in the follow-up phase, with a waiting list control group, this required a large number of hours for the intervention, which limited the possibility of increasing the number of companies and participants involved. Moreover, we note that we were able to test the effects on job performance, precisely because we could use the company data. This would not have been possible if we had had multiple organisations involved in the study. An alternative could be for researchers to provide and use a more generic scale of job performance. This would have the advantage of being a validated scale but the disadvantage of losing external validity as it would not be the one used for a company's decisions. Future studies may try to balance and compensate the choices we made in this study, for example by increasing the sample size even if at the expense of collecting organisational and multi-source data on performance.

A second limitation worth mentioning is the absence of additional waves of data for job performance. With that kind of information, one could test whether the effects of coaching on behaviours maintain or even manifest themselves after some time, as well as whether they can be explained, and therefore become visible, not only via changes in PsyCap but also in job-related attitudes. We therefore encourage future studies to explore models of serial mediation, by collecting data at multiple time points and for longer periods after intervention (e.g. one year).

Additional directions we envision for future research include (1) studying moderators of the main mechanisms we uncovered in our study, and (2) replicating the mediating mechanism by PsyCap. Contextual moderators seem particularly relevant, not only from a practical, but also a theoretical standpoint. PsyCap is a very powerful set of resources, and the literature in

support of it is abundant. However, it is also important to fully elucidate how contexts (in terms of organisational structures, cultures and, more broadly, social support) can facilitate its full use, or trigger its development (Avey, 2014; Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). On a different note, the conceptual replication of our results is necessary in order to build a solid base of evidence (Schmidt, 2009), and we recommend an extension and generalisation using alternative measures, most notably implicit measures of PsyCap that are becoming very popular and hold the promise of being less subject to social desirability and, thus, well suited for organisational research (Harms, Krasinova, & Luthans, 2018). Finally, future studies could explore to what extent PsyCap mediates the effects of coaching on different dimensions of job performance. We recommend the use of established theoretical models and validated empirical measures of job performance; this would enable researchers to ascribe any observed differences across job performance dimensions to strong conceptual explanations.

CONCLUSIONS

The use of an experimental design, with a control group and multiple points and sources of data, allowed the corroboration of coaching effectiveness and the identification of its underlining mechanisms. We showed that job attitudes and collaboration benefit from an intervention designed around the principles of goal setting theory. Pursuing goals and receiving feedback is motivating and helps a coachee act physically and symbolically on their environment in a different way. This happens via the mediating role of PsyCap. Coaching is beneficial because it strengthens those psychological positive resources that are at the core of an individual's development, and to develop more positive attitudes towards their job and the organisation. We believe this study also helps coaches better frame their interventions once the underlying mechanisms of its positive effects have been clarified, ultimately taking another step towards coaching professionalization (Fontes & Dello Russo, 2019). Furthermore, the finding that the change in positive psychological resources is maintained over time is encouraging for it implies this is a sustainable change that will lead to continued improved attitudes and behaviours provided that coachees autonomously bring forward their goal setting process.

In conclusion, we hope that our work has contributed to reaffirming the relevance of coaching in the workplace by rigorously showing its positive impacts on relevant criteria for any company and one explanatory mechanism underlying them.

CHAPTER IV

A qualitative study of coaching transfer: Exploring factors regarding the coachee, the design and the work environment ³

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ABSTRACT

Our qualitative study intends to contribute to the knowledge of coaching transfer, taking into account particularly a feature of the design of a coaching program, the characteristics of the coachees and the workplace environment. It involved 63 participants who overall completed 171 reflective writing exercises (over the coaching program and four months after the end of the program). Our findings showed that three types of learning occurred. We also found evidence of factors, mostly individual and organizational, that could hinder the transfer process. The novel element in this study is that there are exercises in between coaching sessions that help activate PsyCap, which is an individual characteristic that seems to contribute to the coaching transfer process. We believe these results not only contribute to the coaching literature, by adding to our knowledge of coaching transfer; they also contribute to the broader HRD domain, both theoretically and practically, by expanding the spectrum of the transfer construct through empirically investigating it the coaching area.

Key words: Coaching, Coaching transfer, Psychological capital, Reflective learning

INTRODUCTION

Workplace coaching can be described as a one to one intervention, based on a collaborative relationship where the coach encourages clients to achieve their goals (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Gregory, Beck, & Carr, 2011). The coach, through questioning and feedback, facilitates intra personal change in the coachee, resulting in cognitive and affective learning as well as behavioral outcomes (Prywes, 2012; Theeboom, Beersma, & van Vianen, 2014). These outcomes, that define the efficacy of workplace coaching, have been attested in several primary studies and meta-analytic research (Jones, Woods & Guillaume, 2016; Theeboom et al, 2014). Despite the multiple ways of classifying coaching outcomes, learning is indubitably recognized as a crucial part of the coaching process and its consequences. We could say that, for coaching to produce its effects, learning must occur (Griffiths & Campbell, 2009; Jones, Woods & Zhou, 2019; Whitmore, 2017). However, it is also important that it is sustainable and long-lasting learning, which in the literature is typically referred to as learning transfer.

We believe it is important to know more about coaching transfer for two reasons. First, understanding how to improve coaching transfer speaks to the durability of the effects of coaching found in previous studies (Stewart, Palmer, Wilkin & Kerrin, 2008; Theeboom et al., 2017). While achieving long-lasting effects of coaching is a primary concern for professionals, being able to predict when and how those long-lasting effects can be achieved is a concern for researchers too (Athanasopoulou & Dopsonb, 2018; Blackman, Moscardo & Gray, 2016). Second, since coaching is based on self-regulation, it is of paramount importance that coachees can proceed autonomously in pursuing their personal development. In this perspective, coaching transfer is intrinsic to successful coaching interventions.

Mirroring the training transfer concept (Ford, Baldwin & Prasad, 2018), coaching transfer can be defined as the sustained application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes acquired during coaching in the workplace. Coaching transfer implies the application of insights gained during coaching to specific work situations; the generalization of those insights to similar but different situations at work; and the maintenance of the acquired knowledge about oneself as well as the maintenance of new behaviors over time and across situations. To the best of our knowledge, only one study so far has aimed at explicitly investigating the transfer process in coaching (Stewart et. al, 2008). The pioneering work of Stewart and colleagues explored the factors responsible for a successful coaching transfer by extending the most agreed-upon model of training transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Other research work could be considered contributions to the study of coaching transfer, although they are not framed as such. For example, Jones and colleagues (2019) focused on the characteristics of coachees that make

coaching more impactful, and Griffiths and Campbell (2009) showed how the learning process is co-constructed by the coach and the coachee. No prior study has so far explored how the coaching design could contribute to the transfer process. Yet, echoing Baldwin and colleagues (2017, p. 22) we believe “the time is right to shift some focus back to learning design”. This is more especially true in the case of coaching design than in other learning-related activities, since extensive variability exists among coaching practices (Terblanche, 2020).

We propose that one way to favor the transfer of learning in coaching is to include reflective writing exercises in the design of a coaching program. These exercises would bridge the sessions and aid in transferring knowledge and learning during the coaching intervention itself, while simultaneously supporting the coachee’s autonomous work. The choice of reflective writing exercises lies with the cognitive and psychological resource gains that they foster (Brown, McCracken & O’Keane, 2011; Gilbert, Foulk & Bono, 2018). In this way, a coaching design feature would facilitate the strengthening of coachees’ specific psychological characteristics, which themselves play a role in coaching transfer. Furthermore, we aim to study not only factors that may facilitate coaching transfer but also factors that may hinder it. This is especially important since previous studies reporting null findings regarding the longer-term effect of coaching (e.g., Jones et al., 2019) require that we understand what may “go wrong”. Our study adopts a qualitative approach and draws on the analysis of written materials produced by coachees participating in a coaching program.

All in all, we believe our study will make a fourfold contribution. First, we add to the growing literature on coaching (Bozer & Jones, 2018) by offering one of the few studies on coaching transfer and, by approaching the topic with a qualitative methodology we are able to expand the spectrum of the transfer construct (Blume, Ford, Surface & Olenick, 2019), which is greatly needed since in coaching it is an understudied phenomenon. Second, answering a call by Baldwin and colleagues (2017), we focus on an element of the program design, and this makes the contribution of our study relevant not just to the coaching domain but to the broader HRD domain, both theoretically and practically. Third, by exploring the interplay between coaching design and developmental coachee characteristics we offer a contribution not only on what is important for coaching transfer but also how and why such features are beneficial. Fourth, we embrace the perspective of the coachees (i.e., those directly involved in the development intervention) as recommended in recent literature (Baldwin et al., 2017), and preserve a balanced view on the factors that either facilitate or hinder coaching transfer.

From training to coaching transfer

Training transfer has been a paramount concern of scholars and practitioners for a long time (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Blume, Ford, Baldwin & Huang, 2010; Ford et al., 2018). Transfer of training is defined as the degree of knowledge, skills and attitudes, gained in training and successfully applied to job activities (Baldwin & Ford, 1988); the generalization of knowledge and skills to the job and the maintenance and enhancement of learning over time are considered key elements to transfer.

Coaching, that implies a developmental initiative whereby a coachee is supported by a coach in pursuing developmental professional goals (Jones et al., 2016), can be analyzed in a similar way to training. Coaching also implies the acquisition of knowledge – in this case, knowledge about the person him/herself, about the available resources, the paths to achieve certain goals, or about ways on how to overcome identified barriers to personal change. Such knowledge, to produce effective results, needs to be transposed to the workplace context and into the new episodes that occur in the coachees' working life. Indeed, in the literature, coaching transfer has been defined as the “sustained application of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other qualities acquired during coaching into the workplace” (Stewart, et. al., 2008, p. 87).

Furthermore, the transfer of learning acquired during training is a crucial element for establishing its effectiveness, since effective training programs are those that exert a change in individuals' skills, behaviors and motivations in their real work contexts (Blume et al., 2019). In this perspective, learning transfer is a precondition for training effectiveness. A similar reasoning applies to the transfer of learning acquired from coaching, which should be considered indispensable for coaching effectiveness. Research on coaching effectiveness is abundant and quite consistent (Jones et al., 2016) in reporting positive outcomes in all three areas of learning, namely affective, cognitive and skill-related (Kraiger, Ford & Salas, 1993). The affective dimension of learning includes both motivational and attitudinal outcomes, which are important predictors of behaviors and, often times, the ultimate goal of developmental initiatives such as coaching. The cognitive dimension comprises outcomes such as new declarative and procedural knowledge, including new cognitive strategies. Such strategies are especially important in coaching as they constitute the core of an individual's development path. Finally, skill compilation and automaticity are included in the skill-based dimension, and both are applicable to coaching too, to the extent that the new behavior and strategies in dealing with contexts become individuals' preferred and automatic ways of reacting.

However, research on the long-term effects of coaching is still scant. Bozer and Jones (2018) report in their review that only a few studies have assessed the effects of coaching over

an extended period of time. From a methodological standpoint, collecting data after some time has elapsed since the end of the intervention (as opposed to immediately after the conclusion of the program) is necessary to ascertain whether the effects of coaching are maintained in the longer run (Jones et al., 2019). As stated by Stewart and colleagues (2008), evidences of coaching transfer may be the application of knowledge, its maintenance and generalization. This is especially relevant when considering coaching as a method aimed not simply at modeling behaviors, but most of all as one that provides opportunities and tools to think differently about oneself and one's environment. Some authors have advocated in favor of expanding the scope of transfer measures, particularly by resorting to more qualitative designs (Baldwin et al., 2017). We believe this pertains also to coaching transfer, in that coaching is an encompassing development program and coachees' subjective experiences of coaching transfer are important to shed light on how coaching transfer can manifest itself. In light of the literature reviewed so far, and the areas that still require further exploration, we formulate our first research question:

RQ1: What type of learning do coachees report some time after the conclusion of the coaching program?

Factors fostering coaching transfer

Baldwin and Ford (1988) identified characteristics of trainees, training design, and the work environment as the three key categories of factors that affect the transfer of training. Within the coaching domain, the study of the transfer process has lagged behind. We found only one exploratory study about coaching transfer (Stewart et. al., 2008). In their study, Stewart and colleagues applied to coaching the same factors proposed by Baldwin and Ford (1988). From among the coachees' characteristics, they focused on individual motivation and found a positive correlation with coaching transfer. Previous evidence had attested to the important role of motivational factors in coaching, which determine the type of goals set as well as the level of personal engagement in, and ultimately the success of, the intervention (Jones et al., 2019). The finding by Stewart and colleagues therefore complements such a pattern of results by showing that individual motivation is also important with regard to maintaining the positive effects of coaching.

The emphasis on coachees' motivation is in line with the training transfer literature as well, and particularly the meta-analytic finding that post-training self-efficacy mediates the effect of other individual characteristics on transfer (Colquitt, LePine & Noe, 2000). We propose that coaching research should explore the impact on transfer exerted by self-efficacy and other

personal characteristics that feed and sustain the motivation to apply, maintain and generalize the learning achieved during coaching. This is all the more germane to coaching because it is a development program that rests on intra-individual change; hence, several individual characteristics are by definition developed via coaching (Theeboom et al., 2017).

In one recent experimental field study, Fontes and Dello Russo (2020) found that a coaching intervention increased psychological capital (PsyCap) which, in turn, mediated the positive effect of coaching on work-related attitudes. PsyCap comprises four psychological resources (Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007): self-efficacy (the confidence and belief in one's domain-specific capabilities); hope (a motivational state that incorporates agency and pathways towards goals achievement); optimism (a positive attribution about the future); and resilience (the ability to prevent and/or bounce back effectively from adversities). The way these resources may be developed and therefore contribute to coaching transfer speaks to the second broad category of factors that facilitate learning transfer, namely aspects of the intervention design.

In the training transfer literature, the design is the factor that has so far gathered the greatest attention from scholars (Blume, Ford, Baldwin & Wang, 2010). One of the most important findings was that distributed practice increased retention of learning (Donovan & Radosovich, 1999), which opened the way to training program designs that included multiple sessions spaced over time, and also included follow-up sessions. In coaching, the literature is relatively silent on the role of design, which may be due to the already complex constellation of techniques and approaches (Bono et al., 2009; Fontes & Dello Russo, 2019).

Regardless of their theoretical underpinnings, coaching interventions typically unfold along a number of sessions, either face-to-face or online, that see the co-presence of the coach and the coachee. Key elements in these sessions are the coach's questioning and feedback that stimulate the coachee's reflection (Griffiths & Campbell, 2009). Indeed, the reflection process does not just promote the coachees' awareness of their own current resources; it also instigates a recurrent loop of other resources (Hobfoll, Halbesleben, Neveu, & Westman, 2018), which represent the basis for a self-regulatory process conducive to goal achievement (Theeboom, Van Vianen & Beersma, 2017). Thus, the very essence of coaching revolves around the ability to reflect, which becomes paramount for an effective transfer of learning. Any attempt at addressing the coaching design to improve coaching transfer should, therefore, be aimed at augmenting the potential for reflection. The question for us is how to design coaching programs in a way that keeps coachees reflecting about their goals and resources. Coaching sessions are typically spaced over time; therefore, differently from training, an aspect of design that could improve their longer-term impact would not be to spread them out even more, but rather it

would be to bridge them and ensure that the coachee continues his/her own process of reflection. To this end, we propose the inclusion of written reflection exercises that coachees complete autonomously in-between coaching sessions. By incorporating a reflection tool into the coaching design, we can assist in the strengthening of psychological resources (Gilbert et al., 2018) as well as facilitate the transfer process (Brown, McCracken & O'Kane, 2011). Previous studies in the training field show that reflective writing does increase training transfer (Allan & Driscoll, 2014; Knipfer, Kump, Wessel & Cress, 2013; Sparr, Knipfer & Willems, 2017).

In sum, we propose to look jointly at coachees' characteristics and coaching design features as factors that are critical to coaching transfer. The review offered above suggests that PsyCap is an important individual resource to strengthen during coaching because it accounts for other individual changes (i.e., in work-related attitudes; Fontes & Dello Russo, 2020). Hence, it may well enable a successful transfer. An individual resource such as this could be activated via greater reflection stimulated by specific writing exercises (Gilbert et al., 2018), which represent an innovative and promising feature of coaching program design. Thus, we pose our second research question:

RQ 2: Can writing exercises stimulate the reflection on PsyCap dimensions, over the course of a coaching intervention?

Factors hindering coaching transfer

Several studies have investigated the conditions that may act as either facilitators or barriers to training transfer (Ford et al., 2018), with greater attention being paid to the facilitating conditions rather than the barriers. Blume and colleagues (2010) in their meta-analysis identified three main factors of the work environment that impact the transfer of training: the transfer climate, the support (from supervisor and peers) and the organizational constraints (including, for example, lack of autonomy). Their findings also show that, while the correlations of transfer climate and support with training transfer are high, those involving organizational constraints were of negligible magnitude but, most importantly, were based on just a few investigations.

Evidence from other developmental interventions and surveys, reveals that organizational constraints may be particularly powerful in hindering learning transfer. Ellinger (2005) studied the negative organizational contextual factors that influence the transfer of informal learning and identified such factors as having leaders and managers uncommitted to learning, micromanagement behaviors, and an internal culture that inhibits and suppresses informal learning. Lohman (2000), in a sample of teachers also engaged in informal learning, found that

environmental inhibitors to workplace learning included lack of time for learning, lack of proximity to learning resources, lack of meaningful rewards for learning, and limited decision-making power. Through a survey carried out among managers, Belling, James and Ladkin (2003) explored how organizations can support transfer of learning, and identified 26 perceived barriers and 17 facilitators to the transfer of learning. The top three barriers concern pressure to give priority to short-term, financial targets; day-to-day pressures of work and lack of time for planning. In another study Crouse, Doyle and Young (2011) interviewed Human Resources practitioners to identify learning strategies, barriers, facilitators and outcomes. Regarding the barriers, the authors grouped their findings into nine categories: resource constraints, lack of access, technological constraints, personal constraints, interpersonal constraints, structural and cultural constraints.

The coaching literature presents a dearth of empirical research on transfer in general, and hence also on the factors that may act as barriers to it. The pioneering study by Stewart and colleagues (2008) evidenced especially two factors that can aid transfer, namely the psychosocial support provided to coachees by managers and peers, and other situational factors, which include an organizational culture supportive of development. Once more, as in the broader training transfer literature, we observe a tendency to focus on the factors that can facilitate coaching, even though they may not be the exact opposite of potentially hindering factors.

All in all, our knowledge of the conditions that can hinder coaching transfer is still scant, and yet it is important that we accrue such knowledge in order to guarantee that those conditions are properly identified and then minimized (Jones et al., 2019). For this reason, we formulate our last research question:

RQ 3: What are the factors hindering coaching transfer?

METHOD

Sample

The participants were professionals working in a digital marketing agency. During a plenary session, organized in agreement with the top management that supported the intervention, we explained our intention to all employees before inviting them to sign up for an individual coaching intervention.

The coaching program consisted of four 1-hour individual face-to-face sessions. The intervention lasted four months overall, with monthly sessions being led by a professional coach from outside the company with a background in psychology. The same coach met all

participants, and this feature is likely to guarantee that the same procedure was followed (De Haan & Duckworth, 2013).

In between each monthly face-to-face session, a written reflective exercise was assigned as “homework” (HW). Hence, three HW assignments were previewed according to the coaching design. Coachees were informed about the design of the program and the existence of the homework at the beginning of the first session. Finally, four months after the end of the program, participants were invited to a brief follow-up session where they were asked to register their progress in written form, before giving the coach their comments orally. This fourth exercise is therefore identified as FU (i.e., Follow-Up). All four written reflective exercises were not mandatory but highly recommended.

Out of the 68 people who participated in the coaching intervention, 63 participants completed at least one exercise (41 men, 22 women). Their average age was 32.3 years ($SD = 6.7$), and the average tenure with the organization was 3.3 years ($SD = 4.2$). Overall, the total number of exercises, which constitutes our sample size, is 171: 29 for the first homework (HW1); 37 for the second (HW2); 57 for the third (HW3), and 48 for fourth (FU).

Procedure

The coaching sessions were designed to foster the strengthening of a coachee’s psychological resources (Gilbert et al., 2018), namely self-efficacy; hope; optimism; and resilience. The reflective writing exercises were aimed at keeping the coachee’s focus on their goals between the sessions, feeding the next session with concrete examples, and preparing the coachee to continue autonomously pursuing their goals after the program had ended. Hence, these exercises were also designed to reinforce the same psychological resources that were addressed during the face-to-face sessions.

All the exercises were sent to the participants and collected via Qualtrics, except the last one, which was collected manually before the face to face follow-up session. The first exercise (HW1) was sent two weeks before the second session. One week before the second session another reminder of the exercise was sent to the coachees. The instruction for the homework was: “Based on what happened in the last few weeks, please choose an event related to the objective you defined in our coaching session, and describe in detail what happened, and what your behavior, your thoughts and your feelings were”. Here we intended to increase the coachee’s reflection about the goal, translated into specific episodes to be further discussed in the second session. The emphasis on behaviors, thoughts and feelings allowed reflection on the PsyCap components.

Between the second and the third session, following a similar procedure, the second homework (HW2) was sent. The instruction read: “Based on what happened in the last few weeks, please choose at least one positive event related to the objective you defined in our coaching session; describe in detail what happened, and what your behavior, your thoughts and your feelings were”. This exercise was similar to the first but explicitly asked them to report a positive event since positive focus is core to the PsyCap construct (Luthans, 2002).

Between the third and the fourth session, we sent two reminders at the same intervals for completing the third homework (HW3), which was: “Write the progress made towards the achievement of the defined objective(s), what results you achieved, what behaviors you adopted, what you did, how you felt”. In this way we intended to stimulate reflection again on all the four psychological resources comprising PsyCap. In the same HW3, we also asked in a separate question for the coachees to “anticipate the possible obstacles that might limit achievement of the objective”. This part of the homework was meant to focus on the possible obstacles to coaching transfer.

Four months after the final coaching session, we scheduled a brief follow-up session that started by asking the participants to write about the progress they had made since the end of the program. The instruction for this exercise (FU) was similar to the one for the final homework: “Write the progress made towards the achievement of the defined objective(s), what results you achieved, what behaviors you adopted, what you did, how you felt”. Here we intended to assess the ability of the coachees to progress autonomously and thus to discover whether coaching transfer had occurred.

DATA ANALYSIS

The coding of all written reflective exercises was carried out with Nvivo12.

For the first two research questions, we used content analysis with an *a priori* theoretical framework. Content analysis allows for both inductive and deductive research and can be found “at the intersection of the qualitative and quantitative traditions” (Duriau, Reger & Pfarrer, 2007, p.5). With this method, we can summarize data in thematic categories and then represent them numerically (Harper & Thompson, 2012).

To answer the first research question, namely whether coaching transfer had occurred, we content-analysed the 48 FU exercises that coachees completed at the follow-up sessions and we used a mixed approach with both deductive and inductive coding (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). This hybrid approach started with the categories identified by Kraiger and colleagues (1993) as learning outcomes, whilst simultaneously allowing for relevant sub-themes to emerge from the

analysed data. Thus, operating deductive coding based on parent nodes that corresponded to the three categories of learning outcomes (i.e., affective, skill and cognitive; Kraiger et al., 1993). The child nodes were created through inductive coding, since the data related to emerging dimensions were constantly compared to other data until dimensional patterns became evident, in a repetitive process. Following the deductive analysis, a frequency analysis of the learning categories was performed using summative content analysis. Summative content analysis involves counting occurrences of predefined instances in the data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

For the second research question, we content-analysed the 123 HW assignments completed by the coachees between sessions, and used the PsyCap dimensions as the theoretical framework behind the coding process: self-efficacy, hope, optimism and resilience. A codebook was created, listing the definitions of the four dimensions, inclusion and exclusion criteria for quotes to be coded as one of the categories, as well as abstract examples to illustrate each of the PsyCap dimensions. All four dimensions were coded as either “high” or “low”, as instances in which the PsyCap dimensions were respectively manifested or lacking. This codebook was shared with a second coder. The first author coded all the materials pertaining to the three sets of HW, and a second coder from the same department, but not involved in the research, coded a randomly selected 10% of the data in order to test for interrater reliability. The Cohen’s Kappa was .79. Overall, while analysing the episodes and progress described by the coachees, we intend to understand their reflection about the personal resources reinforced by the coaching program, and whether such reflection is activated by the written exercises. At the end, we quantify both the positive and the negative evidences for all four dimensions.

To answer the third research question, aimed at exploring possible obstacles to coaching transfer, we analysed the 57 HW assignments completed between the third and the last session and, more specifically, the answers to the question about the obstacles or barriers. We also adopted the content analysis approach although without any theoretical background. The coding process started by selecting a subset of homework and creating the first structure of nodes. The process of coding continued and all the material was organized into the same nodes or in some others that emerged. Those emerging themes were then organized into meaningful clusters, defining how they relate to each other within and between groupings. This included hierarchical relationships, with themes nested within broader ones, if necessary. As the last step, we quantify the evidences found for each concept.

FINDINGS

In this section, we report the findings of our analyses organized in three subparagraphs. We first focus on whether coaching transfer occurred in coachees and what type of transfer was more frequent or salient to participants (RQ1). In the second paragraph, we focus on the original element of our coaching design (i.e., the reflective exercises used as homework between sessions) to explore whether they would activate reflection on individual characteristics, namely PsyCap, that are paramount for learning, and therefore coaching transfer (RQ2). Finally, we focus on expected obstacles to coaching transfer as identified by the coachees (RQ3).

Coaching transfer

The last written reflective exercise that we asked participants to complete, speaks to coaching transfer in that participants were invited to report their progress in the four months elapsed since the end of the coaching program. Following Kraiger et al.'s (1993) framework of learning outcomes, we categorized coachees' text segments as belonging to one of the three parent nodes, namely cognitive, affective and skill-based learning. Within each individual's text, multiple segments could be identified and coded. The subsequent inductive coding process allowed for the identification of subcategories of learning outcomes in each of the main categories (see table 4.1).

Cognitive dimension. In this dimension, we included outcomes such as the coachees' identification of their actual cognitive mechanisms; for example, *"After realizing what my problems were and identifying the goals, I began to change my behaviors on a daily basis"* (P41- FU4). We also included the identification of new cognitive strategies that might help or enable finding the best ways that will lead to the prosecution of their objectives; for example, *"Now I can proudly say that I can already identify situations in advance, think about them and act more rationally"* (P24- FU4).

Affective dimension. In the affective dimension, the experience of positive emotions was included; for example, *"I feel happy and calm with my performance"* (P28- FU4). Furthermore, the control of negative emotions was a sub-dimension also observed, for instance: *"I feel that since the coaching sessions I had, I've worked a lot more on my impulsiveness, especially the way I react to certain situations of stress and conflict or negative criticism"* (P8 – FU4). Other relevant sub-dimensions included self-efficacy and confidence as in this sentence: *"I have been more comfortable expressing what I think and that makes me feel good and confident."* (P42- FU4), and the manifestation of motivational factors - such as, *"I feel more optimistic and willing to continue and improve at work"* (P17 – FU4).

Table 4.1 Summary of coaching transfer evidences, by type of learning

Type of Learning	Number of Segments
Affective (total)	65
Self-efficacy & confidence	27
Self-control/lower stress	24
Wellbeing at work	11
Positive mindset	8
Motivation	3
Work-life balance	1
Cognitive (total)	96
Self- awareness	27
Reflection	24
Resource activation	19
Focus on goals	16
Role clarity	15
Context awareness	11
Focus on solutions	9
Openness to feedback	8
Skill Based (total)	56
Communication	19
Cooperation	14
Leadership skills	9
Organization & time management	9
Preparation & anticipation	6
Overall results	4
Techniques implementation	3

Skill-based dimension. In the skill-based dimension, we included the implementation of new specific procedures and/or the automaticity of actions that were assimilated, for example: “When I feel confronted (...) I try to make people deconstruct more their arguments, and then I will have time to elaborate the answer and also so that the other person is more conclusive in his observations” (P8-FU4); we also included the development of new skills as in this quote: “I feel a clear evolution and more fulfilment of my leadership goals, with regard to the construction of my own team (calm, collaborative, unique) both to the development / orientation of the individual problems of each team member.” (P38-FU4). Finally, we included all instances referring to visible outcomes in work results, as mentioned by this participant, “Not only has the level of work gone up considerably, but the team itself has grown a lot at a professional level, making it easier to understand where the bar is and what goals to achieve.” (P35- FU4).

Altogether, as we can see in table 4.1, the majority of the evidences of learning outcomes that emerged from the data were cognitive in nature (96 segments). If we rank the main

categories, we find self-awareness (27) to be the most frequent; for example, *“There was an awareness that my natural resistance to greater involvement with the employees was counterproductive for the organization”* (P33-FU4); then reflection, with slightly less frequency (24); for example, *“Since the beginning of the coaching sessions, I have been doing more reflection after each working day on the goal I set”* (P58-FU4); and resource activation (19); for example, *“For these changes to happen I took action and spoke to those responsible in a clear and direct way about my plan, asking for help to put it into practice”* (P4-FU4). Regarding affective learning outcomes (65 segments) most of the evidences found were related to self-control (24), for example *“Throughout this process I learned to deal with and overcome some issues that concerned me in my relationship with others, especially the control of impulsivity”* (P24-FU4); self-efficacy and confidence (27) for example *“I didn't display any particular behavior, I just regained my self-confidence.”* (P42-FU4); and wellbeing (11), for example: *“[allowed me] to improve my personal status, personal relationships and relationships with my department colleagues”* (P6-FU4). Concerning the skill-based learning transfer evidences (56 segments), the majority were related to the competences of communication (20): *“Without a doubt, the way I communicate with people and the care with which I do it has brought me many positive surprises”* (P35-FU4). This was followed by cooperation (14), for example: *“I have been more proactive and tried to help the team and all colleagues. I give more feedback and try to keep the “boss” more up to date with what we are doing.”* (P30-FW4), and leadership (9): *“as a director of a newly created team, I stimulate the close but professional relationship of all the elements that comprise it, having already had some feedback from my employees that I am managing them in a positive, integrative and, in the end, formative way”* (P12, FU4). Finally, competences such as organization and time management were also referred to (9), for example *“I feel that I have improved a lot, I started to dedicate more time to learning and to organizing myself much better”*. (P59-FU4).

Reflective writing exercises and PsyCap

To show that reflective writing exercises, as an additional element of coaching program design, can stimulate reflection about the coachees' psychological resources, we needed to start with a clear definition of the four dimensions of PsyCap: self-efficacy, hope, resilience and optimism (Luthans et al., 2007).

Self-efficacy. Following the literature definitions (Luthans et al, 2007), in order to be coded as a self-efficacy belief, a segment would need to report at least two of the three main ingredients: a positive belief about oneself, the conviction one has the abilities to succeed, and

reference to specific courses of action. An example of positive belief about oneself is: “I started to talk more with colleagues since it is easier to start with those who already know each other. *I started to trust my instincts more and it has been going well.* I feel closer and that makes my job easier.” (P42-HW3). An example of personal conviction, in addition to a positive belief about oneself, is: “*I managed to take some projects to the end. I felt good and fulfilled*” (P51 – HW3). Finally, for the courses of action, this example is well illustrative: “*I listened to him, I asked him some questions, I gave him some suggestions. (...). I felt good about myself, and empowered*” (P20- HW2). In coding instances of the lack of self-efficacy, the same (inverted) ingredients could be found. The sentence: “I start to think that *I am not able to do that* and I am devastatingly demotivated. I'm sad and my *self-confidence goes down the drain*” (P20 -HW1) is a good example of lack of conviction with regard to possessing the abilities and having a negative belief about oneself. A good example that expresses the lack of courses of action is: “the conversation was going on and what was on my mind – *I need to say lots of things and I am not finding a way / opportunity to say them*” (P11- HW1).

Hope. In the concept of hope, the mandatory components, according to the literature (Luthans et. al, 2007) are: willpower or agency, conceiving concrete pathways and goal orientation. The following example effectively sums up all three elements: “It also proves that *the more prepared we are for a meeting, whatever it is, the better our performance*, which increases our self-esteem. *Personal appreciation is a way to go. I am ready to continue!*” (P28 HW2)”. The same elements, but reversed, can be found as indicators of the lack of hope, for example: “The data science course is now ending (...) and in the last module *the fear of not being able to apply that knowledge in "real life"* has become even more present (...), and at the same time, I have been, (...) trying to find a "problem" at the agency to work on data science and make a case of it. And *it seems that whenever an idea comes up, I detect the problems and obstacles first*” (P20- HW1). We considered fear as the opposite of willpower, and the focus on problems as the contrary of the ability to find pathways.

Resilience. To be considered as resilience, the quotes should include: reference to an obstacle, the strategies to avoid or prevent it, and/or the anticipation/enhancement of resources that enable a person to positively cope and bounce back from adverse events (Luthans et. al, 2007). For example: “I forced myself to experiment a little more and refine the pieces *instead of settling for the first solution I designed. It is a difficult exercise considering my tendency to want to get things out of the way*, and then I can breathe with relief.” (P13-HW2); this sentence gives emphasis to the strategy of preventing known obstacles. Another example is: “I was wondering whether I should speak up or not. And I decided to speak. *And, they didn't agree.*”

And I spoke again. And they disregarded my opinion. And I spoke again. And they started agreeing. (...) it doesn't hurt to speak. So that at the end of the day, I don't feel weird (...) But even proud to have managed to have a positive intervention in the final result.” (P50- HW2). In the latter quote we can see the bouncing back behavior that the participant enacted to overcome the shyness of intervening in a group discussion even after initial disagreement. In the negative expression of resilience, we find (a) the lack of strategies to overcome or prevent obstacles, for example: “Due to the many resistances that I have developed, *I can't help hating* it when they ask me “oh, just do it this time”. It pisses me off“ (P19- HW1); and (b) the regret for not having implemented some strategies as in the quote “*I regret not being more assertive, or rather not having stood my ground* in relation to the remarks he was making, which seem to me totally unreasonable and above all very unethical” (P8- HW1).

Optimism. In the optimism dimension, the main element is the positive expectation of success (Luthans et. al, 2007); for example, “I think that *from now on I'll get to collect the fruits.*” (P49- HW2). It might also include an explanatory attribution style for positive events that is internal, stable, pervasive, and for negative events one that is external, unstable and situation-specific. An example of such an attribution style is: “It is good to feel that *sooner or later the knowledge I acquire will bear fruit*, I will have to put it into practice *and it will be very useful to me*” (P59 HW2). The lack of optimism, or even the expression of its conceptual opposite, pessimism, manifests via having negative expectations about the future: “And whenever something positive happens to me and that I think I have done a good job, *there is always an accompanying thought: this is so good that something very bad should happen soon*” (P20 HW2). Table 4.2 reports the number of segments found in the data that represent “high” PsyCap dimensions, which increases across the three sets of homework; the segments reporting instances of “low” PsyCap dimensions, instead, decrease.

Table 4.2 Summary of instances in which the PsyCap dimensions were evidenced by reflective writing exercises

	1 st HW (N=29)	2 nd HW (N=37)	3 rd HW (N=57)
Self-efficacy+	14%	43%	35%
Self-efficacy-	86%	14%	2%
Resilience+	41%	51%	53%
Resilience-	14%	0%	0%
Optimism+	7%	5%	7%
Optimism-	7%	5%	0%
Hope+	28%	46%	35%
Hope-	21%	0%	0%

Contextual obstacles to coaching transfer

When assessing contextual obstacles to coaching transfer, four main categories emerged from the data: a) the macro level or the organization in general, b) the relationships at work, c) the design of the work including the ratio of job resources/demands that compose it and d), the individual level. Among organizational factors, we found aspects related to the way the company was managed: *“the agency doesn't have a vision and a plan”* (P30 HW3) or *“the misalignment at the top”* (P31 HW3). The relationships at work involve multiple actors, such as clients: *“the insanity and disorganization of the client”* (P56 HW3); colleagues: *“the work of the creative team is not of high enough quality”* (P25 HW3), or unspecific interactions: *“managing destructive conversations”* (P8 HW3). In the design of work and its implications, we found topics like lack of time, planning or organization: *“new priorities constantly appearing”*, but also high pressure and tiredness: *“physical and psychological tiredness resulting from responsibilities and work effort / tasks”* (P38 HW3). Among the individual factors there are several categories, in which we include the risk of falling into old habits, *“Usually on these occasions I can quickly return to old habits”* (P12- HW3); the lack of mastery, for example: *“Feeling insufficiently prepared for the way I want to convey the message”* (P11- HW3), being tired or not motivated enough, among others. In table 4.3 we report a detailed illustration of the categories and subcategories that emerged from our analysis, together with the respective quantification.

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to fill an important gap in the coaching literature by exploring what coaching transfer is, and what the factors are that may foster or hinder it. We did so by conducting a qualitative study with participants in a workplace coaching program.

As a first research question, we asked ourselves what type of learning coachees would recount some time after their participation in the coaching program. After a 4-month lag, participants reported transferring learning of all three types according to Kraiger et al.'s (1993) taxonomy, namely: cognitive, affective and skill-based. Our findings showed that cognitive learning was the most frequent, followed by affective and skill-based. This result is even more revealing when considered in combination with the meta-analysis by Jones and colleagues (2016). The researchers could not include in their meta-analysis any study that examined cognitive dimensions of learning, suggesting that it is a category of effects relatively overlooked

in the studies of coaching effectiveness, which typically collect data right at the end of the coaching program. Our analysis shows, however, that from the coachees' perspective cognitive

Table 4.3 Contextual Factors considered as possible barriers to Coaching Transfer

Factor	Number of Segments
Relationships (total)	41
Lack of cooperation	9
Lack of competence (others)	7
Negative social environment	7
Different background	4
Different opinions	4
Injustice	4
Clients approval	3
Attributions about me	2
Interruptions	1
Job design (total)	47
Lack of time	10
High demands	8
Lack of innovation	7
Lack of organization/ priorities definition	7
Too much work	7
High pressure/stress	5
Lack of planning	3
Macro/organizational (total)	13
Lack of leadership/unclear vision	11
Bad Results	1
Lack of resources	1
Individual (total)	52
Falling into old habits	12
Lack of mastery	8
Tiredness	8
Lack of motivation	6
Lack of goal focus	4
Overthinking	4
Lack of self trust	3
Self critiques	2
Anxiety	1
Fear	1
Lack of flexibility	1
Lack of positive perspective	1
Want to please others	1

learning is the most prevalent area of coaching transfer. In light of the very nature of coaching, this should not be surprising as the ultimate goal is to bring about a change at the intra-individual level of meta-cognitions (Theeboom et al., 2017). Indeed, the sub-categories emerging from our analysis comprise some of the most relevant theoretical mechanisms assumed in the coaching literature - including goal setting, reflection (Grover & Furnham, 2016), self-awareness (Bozer & Sarros, 2012) and solution focus (Grant & O'Connor, 2010). This finding also suggests that cognitive learning dimensions should be systematically measured at the end of a program – and after time has elapsed since its conclusion; otherwise, some of the coaching effects may remain unobserved and contribute to the null findings reported in the literature (Jones et al., 2019).

With respect to the other two types of learning, our findings are in line with previous studies. The most frequent areas of affective learning that emerged from our data are self-control and self-efficacy/confidence that recur in the literature as coaching effectiveness criteria (Jones et al., 2016; Theeboom, Beersma, & van Vianen, 2014). Regarding skill-based learning, many classical workplace competences were cited by our participants. Mostly, these competences were related to the individual goals set, even though others, such as communication and cooperation, appear to be transversal to many participants. Our findings support the well-established transfer taxonomy (Ford et al., 2018) also in the coaching domain. Irrespective of the type of learning, we could observe that the coachees' quotes alluded to transfer in its different manifestations, namely the application of concepts acquired during the coaching process after several months; the generalization of the knowledge acquired to other fields and contexts; or the maintenance of that knowledge, shown through their consistent behaviors over time and across multiple situations.

Our second goal was to explore factors that could foster coaching transfer by focusing on two important elements according to Baldwin and Ford (1988), namely a coaching design factor associated with coachees' characteristics (personal resources). In particular, we proposed the inclusion of reflective writing exercises as a way to bridge the coaching sessions and give continuity to the work of developing individual coachees' PsyCap. There is consensus in the literature concerning the role of writing exercises to stimulate reflection and gain cognitive and psychological resources (Gilbert et al., 2018; Woerkmom & Meyers, 2018). Psychological resources are key mechanisms in coaching (Theeboom et al., 2017), because they are malleable. Each person is directly engaged in pursuing and accumulating them, and there is a reciprocal

loop between resource activation and reinforcement via successfully interacting with the environment. Moreover, PsyCap proved to be a mediator of the effects of coaching (Fontes & Dello Russo, 2020). Our findings attest that writing exercises did stimulate reflection on all PsyCap dimensions. Throughout the exercises, and hence the unfolding of the coaching program, participants reported more instances of a positive manifestation of PsyCap dimensions and fewer instances of a lack of PsyCap. Although we cannot claim that PsyCap mediates the effects of coaching and coaching design in particular on transfer, we argue that there are sound theoretical reasons why it is likely to be the case. First, reflection is a prerequisite for transfer (Brown et al., 2011), and incorporating a reflection tool into a program design would strengthen the reflection conducted during the face-to-face sessions. Hence, by introducing reflective writing exercises, we increased the number of opportunities for the coachees to reflect – in between (and beyond) the coaching sessions. Moreover, by engaging in reflection alone, without the support or intervention of the coach, coachees would likely reinforce their capacities for reflection, hence maximizing the effects of the exercises and the coaching itself. Second, PsyCap is at the core of a “prospective self-regulatory strategy” (Theebom et al., 2017). Therefore, since our study shows that reflective writing exercises help coachees focus on their PsyCap dimensions, and PsyCap is an important proximal outcome of coaching (Fontes & Dello Russo, 2020), it may well be that it also plays a role in learning transfer. With our exploration of the reflective writing exercises, we believe we have joined a broader conversation in the HRD field that invites scholars to re-focus on the intervention design features (Baldwin et al., 2017).

Finally, in our third research question we explored the factors that may hinder coaching transfer. While this may be loosely linked to the third factor of Baldwin and Ford’s (1988) taxonomy, namely the work environment, we also observed the emergence of aspects not related to the work environment. Previous studies had largely focused on facilitating factors for learning transfer (i.e., social support and transfer climate) and much less so on the constraining factors (Blume et al., 2010). We reasoned that facilitating and hindering factors are not always, or not necessarily, conceptual opposites. Indeed, we found aspects that can be considered opposites of social support, such as lack of cooperation and negative social environment; likewise, we found a category of aspects that we named Macro-factors, which resembles and further refines the transfer climate construct (Blume et. al 2010), the culture (Stewart et al., 2008) or the organizational politics and hidden agendas (Belling et. al, 2003). However, we also observed many other aspects in our data and, in particular, while the relational domain is very salient among our coachees, an even more salient group of aspects is the job design. In the job

design category, factors like high level of job demands, lack of time or lack of priorities or planning are included, similarly to what was found by Belling and colleagues (2003). We also note that this category of aspects would match what Blume and colleagues (2010) called “constraints” in their training transfer meta-analysis. As such, we concur that it is important to study these factors in order to be able to fully assess their contribution since, at present, they are overlooked in both the training and coaching literature. Another finding worth noting is the relevance of individual factors that the coachees identify as important limitations to transfer. Because coaching is an individual development intervention, the emergence of this category that falls outside the traditional “work environment”, may not be totally surprising. People likely focus on their own characteristics that may affect or get in the way of their personal changes (Jones et al., 2019). Within this category, the most relevant aspects are those related to the lack of mastery, motivation, goal focus, and the repetition of old habits. One can readily see how those factors (e.g., the inability to discover new routines and new solutions to cope with circumstances, the lack of motivation and lack of goal focus) can inhibit the transfer of either affective or cognitive learning.

Contributions and Implications for Practice

We believe our findings could help towards a better understanding of the process of coaching transfer in the workplace and provide indications for maximizing it. First of all, our findings clearly indicate that when interested in assessing the coaching transfer, practitioners should use a broad spectrum of indicators. The learning reported by our coachees referred mostly to cognitive learning, but also to affective and skill-based learning. Moreover, since transfer may take the shape of application, generalization or maintenance, all three possible meanings should be contemplated.

The second of our recommendations pertains to the coaching design and that is to include tools, such as the reflective writing exercises, that can assist in extending the work done during the sessions. In our case, the specific reflective writing exercises were helpful for coachees to focus on, activate and reinforce their positive psychological resources. However, this class of exercises is very flexible (Gilbert et al., 2018) and could be adapted to different theoretical approaches that may underly the structure of a coaching program. These exercises can also be employed as self-coaching techniques, or as a way to continue the work autonomously after a number of sessions with the coach (Sue-Chan & Latham, 2010).

Finally, we draw the practitioners’ attention to some factors that could function as obstacles to coaching transfer. These obstacles could fall under the control of the individual or the

organization, hence leaving the coachees with more or less power to act upon them. The individual factors are relevant mainly for the coaches to know, so they can adapt their coaching program and help the coachee develop strategies that can prevent or overcome those obstacles. Regarding the organizational factors, we believe that both the HRD professionals working in a company, as well as the coaching practitioners, would benefit from this knowledge. When planning a coaching program, they should be aware of them and, if possible, act in advance to prevent or remove them, or reduce their impact. Alternatively, if those factors are deeply entrenched in an organizational culture or are under the exclusive control of the top management, practitioners should at least, level out the expectations about the likely effects of the coaching program due to the presence of those factors.

Limitations and Future directions

This being a qualitative study, it is subject to certain constraints when it comes to the sample size (Ritchie, Lewis & Elam, 2003). However, it is important to note that, while the number of coachees that took part in the study was just over 60 individuals, we analyzed their written materials at several moments in time, which boosts our actual sample size for the analyses, at least with respect to our second research question (Anderson, 2017). Also, our study relied exclusively on self-report data and it would be interesting to have the perspective of the managers and 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 the generalizability of our findings, given that all data were collected from a single company. This calls for a replication and extension of this study in other organizations and cultural contexts to understand whether similar conclusions would be reached (Tsang & Kwan, 1999). Nevertheless, we underline that this was an exploratory study, and its ultimate value lies with its pioneering contribution in the area of coaching transfer.

Future studies can build on our findings and further explore the role of psychological resources as mediators of coaching transfer in the same way that they appear to be mediators of coaching effectiveness (Fontes & Dello Russo, 2020). Likewise, we believe that there is room and a need for future studies that more systematically investigate different coaching design features and their effects on coaching transfer. This would greatly help HRD professionals define their interventions (Baldwin et al., 2017). In parallel, it would also contribute to the professionalization of coaching by requiring coaches to make choices which, with regard to the structure of their program, require theoretical and methodological alignment. And, it could

possibly lead to the adoption of tools that make the programs more replicable and comparable (Fontes & Dello Russo, 2019).

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 in continuity with training transfer, but also other aspects that make coaching transfer more unique and worth studying. We hope therefore that our study will stimulate further research about coaching transfer in the near future.

CHAPTER V

What changes with coaching? Investigating within-person changes in reflection, the predicting role of implicit person theory and the effects on perceived utility of coaching⁴

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ABSTRACT

Coaching literature assumes that people undergo personal change through coaching, but empirical evidence on within-person changes is still scant. We contribute towards filling this gap by studying the different types of change in reflection (a key competence in coaching) that might occur as a consequence of a coaching program. We further examine Implicit Person Theory as a predictor and perceived coaching utility as a correlate of the three types of change. Results from our sample of 61 coachees indicate that the three types of change (alpha, beta, gamma) were homogeneously distributed. We also found a higher probability that incremental IPT will associate with alpha change versus other types of change, and that beta and gamma changes correlate positively and negatively, respectively, with perceived utility for work. No significant correlations were observed between types of change and perceived utility for personal development. Our study contributes to a better understanding of the within-person changes in reflection following coaching intervention, and has implications for both theory and practice, which we discuss along with indications for future directions.

Keywords: coaching, change, reflection, IPT, reactions, perceived utility

INTRODUCTION

Workplace coaching is increasingly used as a tool for individual and organizational development (Grover & Furnham, 2016). Workplace coaching⁵ is a customized intervention that implies learning and development through reflection and goal orientation, producing positive outcomes for the coachee's professional life. As this type of coaching occurs in organizational contexts and applies to all hierarchical levels, it differs from other designations currently used, such as leadership or executive coaching (normally directed at people who manage others or have a higher level of responsibility in an organization (Bozer & Jones, 2018). The main actors of the coaching process establish a working alliance (De Haan, Culpin & Curd, 2011) that is instrumental to coachees' goal achievement. Ultimately, the role of the coach is to facilitate coachees' development aiming for several possible outcomes, like higher performance and greater job satisfaction; in short, more adequate functioning and well-being at work (Theeboom, Van Vianen & Beersma, 2017).

Although individual change is at the core of coaching interventions, and notwithstanding calls for a better understanding of the intra-individual process of change (Ely, Boyce, Zaccaro, Hernez-Broome & Whyman, 2010; Theeboom, Beersma & Van Vianen, 2014), there is very little empirical research on within-person changes linked to coaching interventions (Jones, Woods & Guillaume, 2016). Furthermore, the concept of change is ambiguous and requires specifications. Golembiewski and colleagues (1976) introduced a tripartite model of change, distinguishing three types that might be observed as a consequence of a development intervention. In this taxonomy, change can take the form of alpha, beta or gamma change. Alpha change reflects a substantive change in the level of a given construct; beta change reflects the calibration of the scale used to measure a construct, and gamma change implies a reconceptualization of the construct under analysis.

This approach, originating in the organizational development field, has been applied to Human Resource Development (HRD) research (i.e., on Assessment Centers; Brodersen & Thornton, 2011). However, to our knowledge, no study has empirically applied this taxonomy in the field of coaching. Despite alpha change being the common form of change examined in pre-post coaching intervention studies, we contend that beta and gamma change should also be analyzed as relevant possible outcomes of coaching in themselves and not just because they might interfere with what is commonly considered "pure change" (i.e., alpha change; e.g., Spurk, Abele & Volmer, 2011). In fact, by "considering multiple types of change, it becomes

⁵ Throughout the paper we use "workplace coaching" or simply "coaching" interchangeably. Moreover, we review and draw from the theoretical and empirical literature on any form of coaching that falls under the definition of workplace coaching.

possible to better identify the specific effects of the process on participants, thus facilitating a more accurate conception of how the process operates” (Brodersen & Thornton, 2011, p.26). We propose this would greatly contribute to the study of coaching which, by definition, is a process of change (De Haan, Culpin & Curd, 2011; Peterson, 1996).

We intend to apply this change taxonomy to reflection within the coaching program. Reflection is critical to inducing the change coaching is meant to stimulate (Gray, 2006); to be effective, reflection needs to be conscious (Ellis, Carette, Anseel & Lievens, 2014) and needs to happen in interaction with others (Rodgers 2002); thus, it is promoted by the coach questioning the coachees (Cushion, 2018; Theeboom et al., 2017). Considering reflection as one of the key processes in coaching, we intend to better understand how individual coachees’ reflection changes.

Literature on coaching consistently shows that not all coachees respond in the same way (McKenna & Davis, 2009; Jones et al, 2019). Traits can play an important role in an individual’s motivation to engage in developmental interventions (Heslin, Vandewalle & Latham, 2006; Jones, Woods & Hutchinson, 2014; Klockner & Hicks, 2008; Sue-Chan, Wood, & Latham, 2012), and even in moderating coaching effectiveness (Grant, 2012; Jones et al 2019; Schermuly & Graßmann, 2019). Individual implicit person theory (IPT; Dweck & Leggett, 1988), asserts that individuals differ in how they view their abilities. People can either see these as fixed and immutable (i.e., they hold an entity theory), or as more malleable and open to development (i.e., they hold an incremental theory). Such beliefs are rather stable; hence are regarded as traits. Moreover, they are closely related to motivational patterns and influence the way change is perceived (Smith & Brummel, 2013) and how people respond to interventions, such as coaching (Sue-Chan et al., 2012). Hence, we intend to investigate IPT as predictive of the different forms of change reported by coachees in their reflection process.

When exploring the benefits of workplace coaching in organizational contexts, most studies adopt an organizational perspective, often investigating outcomes such as performance and job-related attitudes (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). This is not surprising, since organizations often financially support coaching programs and need to know whether their requirements (e.g., for more committed, better performing employees) are met. However, the individual perspective of the coachee, the program’s main receiver, needs to be considered too; we concur with authors who recommend that coaching success is defined according to multiple outcome measures and from the vantage point of multiple stakeholders (De Haan, 2021). Consistent with Kirkpatrick’s model of training evaluation (1967), individual reactions immediately following a development program should be evaluated first. Such reactions can be divided in two categories, namely affective reactions (i.e., typical satisfaction with the program measures) and utility reactions

(i.e., the subjectively perceived utility or usefulness of the program) (Alliger, Tannenbaum, Bennett, Traver, & Shotland, 1997). A similar distinction may well apply to coaching interventions, which can engender affective states in coachees (e.g., positive emotions about the program, its features and the coach), and perceptions of the utility of the program. In training literature, a meta-analysis has shown that utility reactions are positively correlated with learning immediately following the training and transfer of learning (Alliger et al., 1997), and more strongly than affective reactions. Because of this connection with subsequent beneficial effects, we propose to focus also on utility reactions in the study of coaching. Specifically, we aim to investigate whether the type of change in reflection coachees experience through intervention, is associated with their different reactions to the program's perceived utility.

Overall, we believe our study will contribute in innovative ways to coaching literature and practice, as well as to the broader HRD research field. First, by examining different types of change that may occur as a result of coaching, our study offers a deeper understanding of the intra-individual process of change that coachees experience. This is an important lacuna in coaching research dominated until now by between-subjects designs (Jones et al., 2016) while theoretically relying on within-subject argumentations (with few notable exceptions; De Haan, Molyn & Nilsson, 2020). Second, we focus on reflection which, as better elaborated below, is an essential competence to be developed in coaching (Theeboom et al., 2017). It is the cognitive process that enables the self-regulation responsible for changing attitudes and behaviors at work (Bandura, 2001). Third, understanding the impact of individual characteristics on an intervention is paramount, especially an individualized one such as coaching. Knowing the role IPT plays in influencing the different types of change in reflection may help both coach and coachee develop realistic expectations regarding the intervention's likely progress. Additionally, different types of change may culminate in coachees having diverse reactions to the program. Our fourth and final contribution, exploring individual reactions to coaching programs, speaks to another way of looking at the "success" of coaching (De Haan, 2021). Different reactions may depend on the type of change coachees experience during their coaching program and are important to uncover due to their further consequences.

Coaching, Reflection and Change

With workplace coaching defined as an intervention oriented to help coachees achieve results, the coach acts as facilitator of the coachee's goal-attainment. The coach assumes the role of change agent to support the coachee through a self-regulatory learning cycle (Grant, 2003; Theeboom et al., 2017). Indeed, a successful coaching intervention implies change in the

coachee which, in turn, leads to several attitudinal, skill-based and cognitive outcomes (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Grover & Furnham, 2016; Jones et al., 2016).

In most studies, to evaluate change in those outcomes, measurements are taken in two moments: before and after the coaching intervention. Some exceptions are found in longitudinal studies, where additional measurements are taken over time, but still after the coaching program has ended (Allan, Leeson, De Fruyt, & Martin, 2018; Jones et al., 2019; McGonagle et al., 2020). This way of measuring outcomes reflects the coachee's perception at the exact moment of data collection (i.e., before and after the coaching), and assumes that a substantive change has occurred in the "level" of any given construct in coaching participants in comparison to non-participants. However, as previously anticipated, there are different types of change (Golembiewski et al., 1976) and we argue that in coaching those changes are particularly relevant.

Alpha, beta and gamma changes comprise the most well-known taxonomy of change (Golembiewski et al., 1976) and were first applied to organizational development initiatives. Since then, the model has been used in different contexts, all related to developmental processes (Brodersen, & Thornton, 2011; Jellema, Visscher & Scheerens, 2006; Porras & Silvers, 1991). Alpha change could be defined as the traditional representation of change, meaning the difference between pre- (T1) and post- (T2) measurements in a certain variable. Most studies on coaching interventions investigate alpha change; for example, whether an individual's leadership skills increase after coaching (e.g., Mackie, 2014; Nieminen, Smerek, Kotrba, & Denison, 2013). Beta change involves the participant recalibrating the scale between two assessments, thus making any alpha change negligible (i.e., changes in mean values). For example, a person who before a coaching intervention reports having high (vs. low) levels of leadership skills could realize after the intervention that their leadership skills were not that high (or low) after all. Consequently, they would assess themselves in a way that is inconsistent with the previous use of the scale. Finally, gamma change refers to a complete redefinition of a certain construct, which happens between the two assessments. In this case, again, the difference between a pre and post-intervention measure would not reflect the real variance because the two measurements would capture almost different concepts (Brodersen & Thornton, 2011; Golembiewski et al., 1976; Thompson & Hunt, 1996). Continuing our example, a coachee experiencing this type of change would conceptualize effective leadership skills differently after the coaching program than before it.

Applying Golembiewski and colleagues' (1976) taxonomy of change to coaching has been previously suggested (e.g., Ely et al., 2010; Peterson, 2003), but to our knowledge it has never been conducted. Ely and colleagues (2010), for example, mentioned the different types of

changes to highlight the difficulty in evaluating the results of leadership coaching. Similarly, Peterson (1993) compared the traditional difference scores between pre- and post-coaching measures with the “retrospective degree of change ratings”, directly asking coachees about their perceived degree of change in a certain variable. However, Peterson (1993) did not calculate alpha, beta and gamma change indexes. Finally, Theeboom and colleagues (2014) explicitly called for research on the tripartite model of change in coaching; saying: “more insight into alpha, beta, and gamma changes and their underlying cognitive structures (Thompson & Hunt, 1996) is needed because this may help researchers and practitioners to better design a coaching intervention and measure its impact” (p. 14).

Therefore, we aim to fill this gap in the literature by examining for the first time the three types of change that result from coaching. Many authors view coaching as an intervention that fosters a coachee’s change (Grant, 2003). This change, being self-directed since the coach acts merely as facilitator, is essentially an intra-individual change (Theeboom et al., 2017). In other words, scholars seem to agree that the locus of change resides mostly in the individual’s self-regulation, cognitive skills and psychological resources, which in turn make behavioral changes possible in many life domains (Fontes & Dello Russo, 2020; McGonagle et al., 2020; Wenson, 2010). Thus coaching, more than directly targeting a behavioral change, is primarily concerned with equipping coachees with the necessary competencies to self-regulate (Theeboom et al., 2017). Reflection is one of the most relevant competencies to achieve this (Bandura, 2001).

Lai and McDowall (2014) include reflection in the very definition of coaching as a “reflective process that facilitates coachees to experience positive behavioral changes”. Also, Theeboom and colleagues (2017) acknowledge it as being principally responsible for maintaining longer-term effects of coaching, while other authors stress its critical role throughout the coaching program (Grant, et al., 2002; Wenson, 2010). We aim, therefore, to study the different types of change that may result from coaching in reflection.

Reflection comprises a process of pondering, reviewing and questioning of past (work) experiences to extract meaning from them (Ong, Asford & Bindle, 2015; Theeboom et. al, 2017). This enables a sense-making process about past events and behaviors, from which individuals can proceed to anticipate and symbolize new possibilities for the future. The content of one’s reflection mostly revolves around the self, work relations and one’s tasks (Ong et al., 2015). Thanks to the coach, whose input involves specific questions that lead coachees to reflect on their work goals and the methods and approaches selected to pursue them; how their own characteristics and emotions play a role in their results and how their behaviors affect and are affected by other people in their work context. To be effective, reflection must be a conscious

process (Gray, 2006) and, as such, works well as a shared process with the coach (Rodgers, 2002).

Applying the tripartite model of change to reflection, we may say that alpha change represents a change in the level of reflection as a consequence of coaching intervention. The coach's questioning directly activates a reflection process that could increase over the sessions, inducing some coachees to reflect more and hence report an alpha change in reflection when the coaching program ends. A beta change in reflection, however, means a recalibration of the coachee's perception about their reflection levels before and after the coaching program. Some coachees may experience this type of change from being prompted to reflect by the coach during sessions; that is, a coachee may recalibrate their level of reflection from exposure to greater levels of reflection by the coach. The third type, gamma change, implies a redefinition of the concept of reflection. We predict that some coachees would reconceptualize their understanding of what reflection is and means after experiencing guided or collaborative reflection throughout the coaching intervention, thus reporting gamma change.

Based on the above we hypothesize:

H1: Three types of change in reflection, namely (a) alpha (b) beta and (c) gamma changes will be observed across participants in a coaching program.

Implicit Person Theory and Change in Reflection

The different types of change coachees might experience during coaching may be influenced by their personal characteristics, such as personality and motivational factors. Since coaching is an individualized intervention, the role these factors play cannot be neglected (Rank & Gray, 2017). Several studies have investigated how individual traits influence the learning process, but few focused on coaching interventions. They point to the positive impact of the Big 5 personality traits on coaching effectiveness, and specifically: openness to experience (Klockner & Hicks, 2008; Jones, et al, 2019; Stewart, Palmer, Wilkin & Kerrin, 2008); extraversion (Jones et al., 2014); conscientiousness (Klockner & Hicks, 2008) and emotional stability (Stewart et al., 2008). Besides the Big 5, other traits influence a coachee's motivation and ability to change, such as adult dispositional hope and personal growth initiative (Klockner & Hicks, 2008). Equally, Implicit Person Theory (IPT), which describes two individual perspectives about change, can play a role in the coaching process, although only a few studies tested this assumption (Lin, Lin, & Chang, 2017; Sue-Chan et. al., 2012).

According to Dweck and Leggett (1988), IPT identifies two implicit beliefs about oneself: entity and incremental theories. Individuals holding an entity belief see their characteristics as fixed and regard behavioral change as nearly impossible. For them, feedback either confirms a

given attribute or becomes disapproval. In development contexts, entity theorists tend to embrace performance goal orientation, meaning they tend to seek opportunities to show their abilities or prevent failures rather than to improve and learn (Smith & Brummel, 2013; Heslin et al, 2006). Conversely, individuals with incremental belief see their attributes as malleable and open to development through effort and persistence and perceive feedback as an opportunity to grow and improve their skills. In development contexts, incrementalists tend to be learning goal oriented, interested in developing their competence and abilities and not just in proving themselves (Dweck & Legget, 1988; Smith & Brummel, 2013; Sue-Chan et. Al, 2012; Tabernero et al, 1999).

These two beliefs strongly influence how people respond to interventions designed to improve their performance (Van-Dijk & Kluger, 2004). We contend they should also strongly influence how coachees respond to coaching, which is an individual learning intervention that rests on self-regulatory abilities and motivation to change (London, 2002; Harakas, 2013). We know that IPT can moderate the effects of coaching on performance (Lin et al., 2017) and that in a coaching intervention, individuals with incremental beliefs present a better regulatory fit than those with entity beliefs (Sue-Chan et al., 2012). However, previous studies that only considered traditional alpha change did not indicate any possible relationship between IPT and beta or gamma changes.

Consistent with the main tenets of IPT (Dweck & Leggett, 1988), incrementalist individuals, tending to see change as positive and desirable, believe they can change. Therefore, we expect them to be more open to experiencing alpha change than entitist individuals because an alpha change in reflection entails substantively changing the reflection process they engage in. In other words, incrementalist coachees would venture to reflect more on their work experiences, even risking “failure” or revealing incompetence to the coach and themselves. Entitist coachees, however, would suppress greater reflection to protect their self-concept and perceived competence.

We expect incrementalist coachees to also report greater beta and gamma changes than entitist coachees; nonetheless, we expect a weaker association between incremental theory and beta and gamma changes when compared to alpha change. While these still constitute changes, hence an alteration compared to a previous (stable, safe and known) state, they represent less substantive change than alpha change. Our reasoning relies on considering a recalibration of the scale (i.e., beta change) and a reconceptualization of the reflection process itself (i.e., gamma change) as more cognitive types of change. Thus, incrementalists, who tend to embrace and enact change, would be more likely to change the “quantity” of reflection they engage in

(i.e., alpha change) than to re-assess their own reflection levels or redefine the concept of reflection. Accordingly, we posit our second hypothesis:

H2: Coachees with an incrementalist IPT will present a higher probability of experiencing an alpha change, followed by beta and gamma change.

Change in Reflection and Perceived Utility

Meta-analytic investigations on the effects of coaching have shown that while most studies largely rely on self-report data (Theeboom et al, 2014; Jones et al, 2016), a few involved sources such as peers, managers, the team or 360° evaluations to measure the coaching outcomes (Fontes & Dello Russo, 2020; Jones et al., 2019; Luthans, & Peterson, 2003). In all cases, however, the effects of coaching were investigated using the organization as main stakeholder; that is, addressing consequences mostly beneficial for the company (e.g., work performance, job satisfaction, skills acquisition). However, coaching being an individual development tool, with the coachee as direct receiver, we consider it extremely relevant to embrace the perspective of the coachee as stakeholder (Ely et al., 2010; Taylor, Russ-Eft & Taylor, 2009)

In his seminal work on training evaluation, Kirkpatrick (1967) defined reactions as the degree to which participants find training favorable, engaging and relevant to their jobs. Analyzing the reactions of those being trained (or coached) is a necessary step towards improving any training construct validity and usefulness (Morgan & Casper, 2000). Reactions received the attention of several scholars investigating training and development and meta-analytic evidence reveals they are positively related to other aspects that define a program's effectiveness (Alliger et al., 1997). Alliger and colleagues (1997) were the first to propose a refinement to Kirkpatrick's (1967) model regarding the reaction construct, which involves distinguishing between purely affective reactions and perceived utility reactions. The authors also empirically supported the value of having two separate factors for reactions that relate differently to learning immediately after the training program as well as to transfer of learning. In particular, it is the perceived utility dimension that has greater predictive power of learning and on-the-job use of the training content.

In coaching literature, Kirkpatrick's model has been consistently applied to analyze coaching effectiveness (Ely et al. 2010, Jones et. al, 2016; MacKie, 2007). Meta-analyses especially have used it as a theoretical framework to systematize primary studies. Nevertheless, few coaching studies have focused analysis on the reactions level, even though researchers typically collect data immediately after coaching, and this time frame is the most appropriate for assessing reactions rather than learning or behaviors (Blackman et al., 2016). In research conducted among executive coachees, a positive relationship was found between satisfaction

with coaching and self-reported learning (Albizu, Rekalde, Landeta, & Fernández-Ferrín, 2019). Thus, as in the training literature, there appears to be evidence that reactions to coaching may also be predictive of other meaningful outcomes and should be studied in greater depth.

Referring to coaching reactions, Ely and Zaccaro (2011) indicated they can be used to “assess participants’ satisfaction with their coaching experience as well as perceptions of coaching effectiveness” (p. 395), thus recalling to some extent factors of affective and utility perceptions (Alliger et al., 1997). However, measuring reactions as “perceived effectiveness” of a coaching program may be problematic. Individuals may start with different implicit and explicit expectations and evaluate the program’s “effectiveness” using those as reference points (De Haan, Culpin & Curd, 2011). Furthermore, assessing perceived effectiveness (e.g., Ely et al., 2010) alludes to the fact that some consequences may have already occurred; whereas, the original formulation of reactions rests with effects and perceived utility of the program before its application (Alliger et al., 1997). We suggest, therefore, focusing on perceived utility as a cognitive evaluation of the program and to further distinguish within the perceptions of coaching utility.

Due to its nature as an individualized development intervention, coaching is often reported to positively affect task related as well as personal matters (Hall, Otazo, & Hollenbeck, 1999). This is because coachees are typically invited to set developmental goals relevant to their work that also involve a deep level of personal change (and this is true in every subfield of workplace coaching, including but not limited to executive coaching; Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). Consequently, one could reasonably explore the perceived utility of coaching regarding coachees’ perceptions of either its practical usefulness at work or its relevance for personal development (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). We are further interested in understanding how different coaching program experiences, notably different types of change in reflection, relate to perceptions of coaching utility for work and personal development.

Considering the definitions of alpha, beta and gamma change in reflection, we elaborate on likely different relationships. Alpha change being a more substantive form of change, is likely related to perceptions of coaching utility for work. By engaging in greater (or more frequent) reflection thanks to coaching, coachees may identify its potential for improving task-related issues; conversely, since this is a “quantity” not “quality” change – that is, they have not changed the way they conceive reflection or their own score of self-perception in reflection – they may see it as less useful for personal development. A similar, but reverse reasoning is applied to beta and gamma change. Because beta change implies recalibrating the scale used to “assess” reflection, coachees may perceive this change as more novel than alpha change (Thompson & Hunt, 1996). As such, beta change may signal an insight to the person about

themselves in relation to the reflection process that could be useful both for work practice and personal development. Lastly, gamma change, which implies a complete reconceptualization of the reflection process, is likely perceived as novel – like beta change. Unlike beta change, however, it may be perceived as too unsettling. We maintain that experiencing gamma change may cause discomfort (Sherman & Freas, 2004) such that coachees may lose their reference points and feel more vulnerable and afraid of losing their identity (Reams & Reams, 2015). In these cases, the change would be so radical (i.e., starting with reframing the very concept of reflection) that it may be regarded as having little practical utility; hence, we expect a negative impact of gamma change in reflection on the perceptions of coaching utility for both personal development and work. Accordingly, we formulate the following hypothesis:

H3: Different types of change in reflection will predict different types of utility perceptions after a coaching intervention, and specifically:

- a) Alpha change in reflection will be positively related to perceived coaching utility for work but not for personal development;*
- b) Beta change will be positively related to perceived coaching utility for both work and personal development;*
- c) Gamma change will be negatively related to perceived coaching utility for both work and personal development.*

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

The 61 participants in this study (57% men and 43% women), worked in a Marketing agency and voluntarily enrolled in a coaching program. Their average age was 31.80 years old ($SD=6.38$) and the average tenure in the company was 3.14 years ($SD=3.99$).

The organization provided the coaching program as a developmental opportunity to all employees wishing to participate, the goal being to contribute positively to their wellbeing at work. It comprised four, once monthly hour-long individual sessions, face to face and in-house. The coach was an external professional with no previous connection to the company. After a group presentation explaining the coaching program, participants voluntarily enrolled and completed a pre-intervention questionnaire. Participants were also told that topics discussed in the sessions would be work related, since the program involved workplace coaching. Although the volunteer participants were hierarchically diverse, the program followed the same structure and stages for all, with no differentiation between executives, managers or regular employees. At the end of the program, in the fourth coaching session, participants again completed a

questionnaire containing some of the same variables collected before the program, plus the satisfaction survey.

Measures

Data was collected in two moments, pre and post-intervention. In the first questionnaire (pre-intervention) we included the Implicit Person Theory and Reflection at Work scales (described below). The post-intervention questionnaire included some questions about coachees' reactions to the program and again the Reflection at Work Scale. Here, following the procedure suggested by Terborg and colleagues (1980), for each item of the scale we asked coachees to answer by referring to two different moments: 1) "currently", participants had to respond according to how they perceived their level of reflection in that moment (in our study we named this the "Post" measure); and 2) "before the coaching sessions" where coachees were instructed to think retrospectively about their reflection prior to the coaching and rate it accordingly (this data was designated "Then" in our study).

The *reflection at work* scale (Ong, Ashord & Bindl, 2015) comprised 16 items, measuring four dimensions of individual reflection (goals, methods, self, and relationships) loaded on a single factor. For each item, respondents were asked how much they engaged in different types of reflection at work, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*a great deal*). Reliability analysis of the scale was investigated and showed the scale was highly reliable: $\alpha=0.83$ for the pre-intervention measure; $\alpha= 0.98$ for the post-intervention measure; and $\alpha= 0.96$ for the "then" measure also collected post-intervention.

The Implicit Person Theory was measured using a 3-item scale (Levy, Dweck & Stroessner, 1998), and participants expressed their agreement, from 1 (*completely disagree*) to 7 (*completely agree*) to statements like "People can do things differently, but who they intrinsically are can't really be changed". Two items were reverted so that the composite variable would measure incremental and entity beliefs along a continuum. Specifically, higher values indicate incremental beliefs and lower values indicate entity beliefs. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of internal reliability was $\alpha = 0.81$.

Reactions to the coaching program were collected using two single items measuring the perceived utility of the program for work and for personal development, respectively. Both items were rated on a 1 (very little) to 5 (very much) scale.

Data analysis

We followed the procedure proposed by Terborg and colleagues (1980) and previously applied by Brodersen and Thornton (2011) to assess participants' alpha, beta and gamma changes in

reflection. As the authors recommend, the different types of change should be tested in order, so that if gamma change is established for an individual, the other two types of change would be ruled out. If gamma change is not supported, then beta change should be explored, followed by alpha change.

To establish gamma change we considered the following criteria (Terborg, Howard & Maxwell, 1980):

a) the correlation between Post and Then measures should be statistically significant while the correlations between both the Pre and Then and Pre and Post measures should not.

b) The Post/Then correlation should be at least 50% greater than Pre/Then and Pre/Post correlations.

c) The Post/Then correlations should be statistically greater in magnitude than the Pre/Then and Pre/Post correlations (according to a *t*-test).

d) The standard deviations of the Post and Then scores should not substantially differ from each other, but each should differ from the standard deviation of the Pre scores. More specifically, the standard deviations of the Post and Then measures should differ from the standard deviations of the Pre measure by at least one quarter.

In general, gamma change was concluded when two of the four above conditions were satisfied. However, all decisions were considered case by case.

For beta change, we analyzed the difference between the mean scores of the Pre and Then measures of reflection. For those individuals where no evidence of beta change was found, alpha change was finally assessed by comparing their mean scores of Post and Then measures of reflection (Terborg et al., 1980). Pairwise *t*-tests were run for each individual, with *n* equal to the number of items of the reflection scale, to test for significant differences.

Once we established which (if any) type of change in reflection had occurred for each individual, we ran three logistic binary regressions with IPT as predictor and each of the three types of change as binary dependent variables (Pituch & Stevens, 2016). To investigate whether the type of change was correlated with individuals' reactions to the program (i.e., their perceived utility for work and for self-development) we used Pearson's correlation coefficients.

RESULTS

Type of change

Table 5.1 shows the detailed individual information for assessing gamma change. As mentioned before, we evaluated the presence of gamma change by analyzing correlation values, their difference and also comparing the standard deviations. We ascertained that with at least two criteria out of four, 14 individuals (23% of the participants) showed gamma change.

Table 5.1 Test of Gamma Change

	Correlations					Std. deviations			Gamma Change
	(1)	(2)	(3)	t (1,2)	t (1,3)	Pre	Post	Then	
	Post/Then	Pre/Then	Pre/Post						
P1	0.64**	-0.13	0.09	5.84**	3.72**	1.05	0.73	0.86	X
P2	0.88**	0.78**	0.75**	2.45*	3.22**	0.89	0.85	0.95	
P3	0.64**	0.25	0.51*	3.93**	1.19	1.46	0.72	0.93	
P4	0.52*	0.61*	0.21	-0.8	3.17**	0.85	0.87	1.26	
P5	0.39	0.59*	0.27	-1.63	1.1	0.81	0.4	1.18	
P6	0.12	0.60*	0.23	-3.68**	-0.96	1.09	0.48	0.77	
P7	0.5*	0.29	0.34	1.63	1.21	0.72	0.62	0.51	
P8	0.29	-0.07	0.05	2.09*	1.31	0.72	0.5	0.34	
P9	-0.46	-0.36	0.24	-0.73	3.66**	0.96	0.63	0.72	
P10	0.39	0.39	0.45	0	-0.48	0.77	0.58	0.89	
P11	0.50*	0.14	0.18	2.48*	2.16*	0.63	0.4	0.58	X
P12	0.2	-0.21	-0.61*	1.79	5.03**	0.79	0.4	0.68	
P13	0.81**	0.76**	0.76**	1.01	1.01	0.66	0.77	1.03	
P14	0.70**	0.44	0.70**	3.6**	0	1.06	0.62	0.81	
P15	0.23	0.39	0.2	-1.06	0.21	0.93	0.5	0.81	
P16	0.17	-0.05	0.04	1.23	0.69	0.5	0.4	0.62	
P17	0.61*	0.34	0.31	2.25*	2.53*	0.83	0.4	0.63	X
P18	0.35	0.33	0.13	0.13	1.55	0.85	0.45	0.75	
P19	0.29	0.43	-0.1	-0.86	3.01**	0.68	0.5	0.34	
P20	0.51*	-0.37	-0.10	5.66**	3.28**	0.7	0.34	0.58	X
P21	0.83**	0.60*	0.52*	3.43**	4.74**	0.5	0.52	0.77	X
P22	0.77**	-0.06	-0.03	6.91**	6.56**	0.85	0.54	0.95	X
P23	-0.45	0	0.58*	-4.49**	8.17**	0.58	0.25	0.45	
P24	0.35	0	0.22	2.29*	0.77	0.52	0.58	0.5	
P25	0.58*	-0.08	0.18	4.95**	2.65**	0.4	0.68	0.63	X
P26	-0.01	-0.06	0.23	0.31	-1.29	0.66	0.48	0.75	
P27	0.26	0.38	0.09	-0.76	1.2	1	0.77	0.58	
P28	-0.59*	0.1	-0.33	-4.02**	-1.94	1.03	0.51	0.7	X
P29	0.70**	0.02	-0.02	5.08**	5.49**	0.75	0.5	0.62	X
P30	0.47	0.56*	0.49	-0.85	-0.19	0.89	0.58	0.62	
P31	0.26	0.11	0.16	0.92	0.6	0.52	0.4	0.6	
P32	0.82**	0.17	0.51*	10.12**	4.25**	0.82	1.13	1.44	X
P33	-0.23	0.4	-0.12	-3.57**	-0.79	0.4	0.25	0.79	
P34	0.11	0.15	0.43	-0.29	-2.07*	0.96	0.45	1.69	
P35	0.26	-0.1	0.19	2.26*	0.38	0.68	0.52	0.5	

Note: NA- Individual was omitted from analysis due to zero variance on the Pre, Post, and/or Then measures;

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Table 5.1 Test of Gamma Change (cont.)

	Correlations					Std deviations			Gamma Change
	(1) Post/Then	(2) Pre/Then	(3) Pre/Post	t (1,2)	t (1,3)	Pre	Post	Then	
P36	0.75**	0.1	0.32	6.58**	3.98**	0.81	0.45	0.5	X
P37	0.29	0.5	0.54*	-1.93	-2.26*	0.57	0.62	1.02	
P38	-0.18	0.1	-0.05	-1.5	-0.75	0.51	0.34	0.4	
P39	0.63**	0.66**	0.52*	-0.35	1.33	0.72	0.51	0.79	
P40	NA	0.29	NA	-	-	0.34	0	0.5	
P41	0.48	-0.52*	-0.31	5.99**	3.95**	0.63	0.51	0.82	
P42	0.83**	0.21	0.25	6.91**	6.36**	0.77	0.52	0.93	X
P43	0.45	-0.36	0.16	6.11**	1.63	0.62	0.25	0.45	
P44	0.49	0.62*	0.21	-1.14	2.83**	0.63	0.5	0.68	
P45	0.07	-0.35	0.52*	3.67**	-2.57*	0.93	0.63	0.96	
P46	0.21	-0.02	-0.01	1.26	1.2	0.79	0.54	0.5	
P47	0.3	0.29	0.51*	0.08	-1.59	0.7	0.48	0.58	
P48	0.63**	0.26	0.55*	3.86**	0.75	0.63	0.48	0.81	
P49	0.57*	0.24	0.1	2.34*	3.54**	0.73	0.89	0.57	X
P50	-0.26	0.19	-0.42	-2.12*	1.08	0.44	0.51	0.66	
P51	0.42	0.42	1**	0	-	0.7	0.7	0.73	
P52	0.08	-0.08	-0.27	0.77	1.89	1.06	0.75	1.02	
P53	0.59*	0.33	0.33	2.15*	2.15*	0.97	0.63	1.26	X
P54	0.18	0.85**	0.52*	-12.16**	6.81**	0.52	0.5	0.83	
P55	NA	0.49	NA	-	-	0.5	0	0.68	
P56	-0.2	0.1	0.15	-1.8	-2.06*	0.79	0.34	0.72	
P57	0.18	0.07	0.27	0.71	-0.53	0.68	0.48	0.63	
P58	0.1	0.32	0.08	-1.31	0.13	0.5	0.6	0.77	
P59	0.11	0.38	-0.05	-1.55	1.11	0.83	0.75	0.68	
P60	0.19	0.28	0.05	-0.53	0.9	0.73	0.45	0.6	
P61	0.27	0.09	-0.19	0.93	2.77**	0.85	0.63	0.68	

Note: NA- Individual was omitted from analysis due to zero variance on the Pre, Post, and/or Then measures;

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

Consistent with previous research that also showed a greater ability to assess gamma change based on the correlation criteria (Brodersen & Thorton, 2011), we note that the standard deviation criterion was respected in only two cases.

The test for beta change is reported in table 5.2, together with the test for alpha change. It is worth repeating that individuals exhibiting gamma change were not included in the test of beta change, and if beta change was observed, individuals were not screened for alpha change. As can be observed, 24 individuals (39.3%) showed beta change and 19 (29.5%) showed alpha change. Finally, we note that at the conclusion of the coaching program, 4 individuals (6.5%) presented no change in reflection at all. These results confirm our first hypothesis attesting to the existence of all three different types of change.

Predicting change

Correlations between variables can be found in table 5.3, together with means and standard deviations. Since no significant correlations were found between age or gender and the variables under study, these were not included as control variables in subsequent analyses. In the logistic binary regressions, the dependent variables were the three types of change and were analyzed separately (see table 5.4). In all cases, the independent variable was IPT, with lower scores indicating entity belief and the higher scores incremental belief. To evaluate the goodness of the models, we used the Nagelkerke (1991) R^2 statistic since it is one of the most commonly used indexes of model fit for logistic regressions and, like the traditional R^2 from Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) linear regression, ranges between 0 and 1. Starting by alpha change, the model presents marginally significant values (chi square (df 1) = 2.962, p = 0.085). Regarding the case classification, we can see that this model with IPT as predictor correctly classified 68% of cases, presenting a Nagelkerke R^2 value = 0.072. Analyzing the odds ratio, IPT positively contributes to the model with marginally significant values (B = 0.390, SE = 0.232, $Wald$ = 2.831, p = .092). Every unit increase in IPT corresponds to an alpha change odds ratio of nearly 48% ($Exp(B)$ = 1.477, 95% CI (0.938, 2.325)).

Converting the odds into probability, we could say that for every unit increase in IPT there is an increase of nearly 60% in the probability of presenting an alpha change. Regarding beta change, the model did not show a significantly good fit (chi square (df 1) = 1.378, p = 0.240), and IPT was not a significant predictor (B = -0.253, SE = 0.219, $Wald$ = 1.333, p = .248). Equally, the regression model predicting gamma change displayed a poor fit (chi square (df 1) = 0.276, p = 0.599), and IPT was not a significant predictor (B = -0.128, SE = 0.246, $Wald$ = 0.272, p = 0.602). These results lend only partial support to our second hypothesis.

Correlates of change

For the third hypothesis, we intended to investigate the correlations between the three types of change and two perceptions of coaching utility (for work and personal development) as indicators of reactions to the coaching program. As table 5.3 shows, a significant positive correlation was found between beta change and utility for work (r = 0.254, p = .05), as hypothesized. Also as hypothesized, gamma change negatively correlated with utility for work (r = -0.257, p = .047). Contrary to expectations, no significant correlations were found between alpha change and utility for work. Regarding utility for personal development, and again contrary to expectations, there were no significant correlations with either type of change. Overall, we conclude that only hypotheses 3b and 3c were partially supported.

Table 5.2 Test of Beta and Alpha change

	Mean			Pairwise comparison		Beta/alpha Change
	Pre	Post	Then	t (Pre, Then)	t (Post, Then)	
P2	3.56	3.94	3.69	-0.81	2.24*	A
P3	4	4.38	3.94	0.16	2.41*	A
P4	3.06	3.69	2.13	3.76**	-	B
P5	4.44	4.81	1.94	10.35**	-	B
P6	3.56	4.69	2.94	2.83*	-	B
P8	4.13	4.63	4.13	0	3.88**	A
P9	4.13	4.44	3.88	0.72	1.95	A
P10	3.75	4.25	3.00	3.22**	-	B
P12	3.31	4.19	2.94	1.31	5.84**	A
P13	3.19	3.75	2.44	4.39**	-	B
P14	3.06	4.13	3.38	-1.23	5.20**	A
P15	3.06	4.63	3.56	-2.07	4.98**	A
P16	3.63	4.19	3.13	2.45*	-	B
P18	3.94	4.75	3.19	3.22**	-	B
P19	3.75	3.63	3.13	4.04**	-	B
P23	4.25	3.94	3.25	5.48**	-	B
P24	3.50	4.25	3.63	-0.70	4.04**	A
P26	3.81	4.69	3.19	2.44*	-	B
P27	3.94	4.06	3.25	2.91*	-	B
P30	3.56	4.25	3.38	1	5.65**	A
P31	4.50	4.81	4.31	1	3.16**	A
P33	4.81	4.94	4.31	2.74*	-	B
P34	3.44	4.75	3.06	0.82	3.97**	A
P35	3.25	4	3.38	-0.57	4.04**	A
P37	4.06	4.13	3.63	1.96	1.94	-
P38	4.56	4.13	3.19	8.89**	-	B
P39	3.88	4.44	3.31	3.58**	-	B
P40	3.89	4.00	3.38	3.87**	-	B
P41	3.5	4.44	4.00	-1.58	2.41*	A
P43	4.38	4.94	4.75	-1.70	1.86	-
P44	4.00	4.38	3.75	1.7	4.04**	A
P45	3.94	3.56	3.38	1.45	0.68	-
P46	3.31	3.81	2.63	2.91*	-	B
P47	3.69	4.31	3.75	-0.32	3.58**	A
P48	4.50	4.69	4.13	1.7	3.58**	A
P50	3.94	4.56	2.81	6.26**	-	B
P51	4.31	4.31	4.56	-1.29	-1.29	-
P52	2.94	3.81	2.63	0.81	3.88**	A
P54	4.5	4.63	4.19	2.61*	-	B
P55	4.63	5.00	4.25	2.42*	-	B
P56	3.69	4.13	3.38	1.23	3.5**	A
P57	4.06	4.69	3.56	2.24*	-	B
P58	4.13	4.31	3.06	5.51**	-	B
P59	3.81	4.19	3.06	3.5**	-	B
P60	4.44	4.25	3.31	5.58**	-	B
P61	4.06	4.56	3.25	3.11**	-	B

Note: B- beta change; A- alpha change. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; participants with NA and Gamma change (Table 1) were not included in these tests

Table 5.3 Means. Standard Deviations and Correlations

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
(1) Gender	61	1.43	.50	1	2								
(2) Age	61	31.8	6.38	21	46	.13							
(3) IPT	61	4.20	1.25	2	7	-.12	.07						
(4) Alpha	18	.28	.45	0	1	-.12	-.15	.23	1				
(5) Beta	24	.39	.49	0	1	.05	.08	-.15	-.52**	1			
(6) Gamma	14	.25	.43	0	1	.16	.05	-.07	-.35**	-.44**	1		
(7) Utility for work	60	4.75	.54	3	5	.16	.02	-.04	-.10	.25*	-.26*	1	
(8) Utility for personal development	60	4.73	.48	3	5	-.08	-.01	-.08	-.09	.03	.02	.195	1

Gender: 1 (male) ; 2 (female); * $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .001$

Table 5.4. Logistic Regression on the Binary Outcome Change (alpha. beta. gamma)

Variable	Unstand. beta-weights (Est β)	Odds ratio	χ^2 (Wald)	<i>p</i>	R2 (Nagelkerke)
IPT- Alpha change	.390	1.477	2.831	.092	.072
IPT- Beta change	-.253	.777	1.333	.248	.033
IPT- Gamma change	-.128	.880	.272	.602	.007

DISCUSSION

Our study aimed to contribute to the understanding of within-person change processes in coaching and, in particular, change in reflection. Reflection is a competence of paramount relevance for self-regulation (Bandura, 2001), and a key element in coaching practice (Lai & McDowall, 2014). Coaching literature has traditionally assumed that within-person changes occur with coaching (Luthans & Peterson, 2003; Theeboom et al., 2017), yet most research is conducted with between-person designs (Jones et al., 2016), which makes our study particularly warranted. We contend, therefore, following Golembiewski and colleagues' (1976) taxonomy, different types of change are most likely present.

Other coaching scholars had previously indicated this (Ely et al., 2010; Theeboom et al., 2017), but to our knowledge no empirical test of alpha, beta and gamma change had previously been conducted in the coaching domain. Consistent with one previous application in the HRD field (Brodersen & Thornton, 2011), we examined the presence of the three types of change in each single participant. As expected, we found all three types of change in reflection in our sample, with only four participants showing no change at all after the coaching program. It is worth noting that alpha, beta and gamma changes were fairly homogeneously distributed, suggesting that beta and gamma changes are just as frequent likely outcomes of coaching as the most traditional alpha change. We believe this happens because the questioning process initiated by the coach, prompts the coachee to reflect. For some coachees, this induced an increase in reflection (alpha change), for others a recalibration in their assessment of reflection (beta change), and in others a reconceptualization of the reflection activity itself (gamma change). In summary, if the coaching process is designed to produce change, through reflection

and the stimulation of cognitive aspects by the coach, it is likely to produce different types of change. Additionally, any change in reflection presents crucial relevance in the coaching process since it is an enabler of symbolization, anticipation of possible future selves and self-regulation (Bandura, 2001; Theeboom et al., 2017).

The second goal of this study was to predict the three types of change with IPT - one of the most pertinent personality traits when it comes to change processes (Dweck & Leggett, 1988; Sue-Chan et al., 2012). Our results show, there is a greater tendency for coachees with an incremental belief to experience alpha change in reflection than for coachees with an entity belief. This was consistent with our expectations, because incrementalists see themselves as developable, perceive feedback as an opportunity to change and present a learning goal orientation (Smith & Brummel, 2013). Contrastingly, entitists perceive themselves as having fixed characteristics and present a performance goal orientation, meaning they seek opportunities to either show their abilities or prevent failures. The characteristics of incrementalists likely lead those individuals to embrace challenges and put themselves to the test (Heslin et al., 2006) by engaging in more reflection - as stimulated by their coaches – even though this may mean failing at first and being unable to show their abilities. Indeed, we observed that coachees with incremental belief showed an observable increase in reflection (alpha change). This is in line with previous literature about reflection in the workplace that showed positive outcomes of reflection are more salient in individuals who present higher learning goal orientation (Anseel et al., 2009).

However, against expectations, we observed no difference between incrementalists and entitists regarding beta and gamma change. Our findings revealed that coachees with entity or incremental beliefs could experience beta and gamma change with equal probability. This may be due to the small sample size, but may also be related to the fact that beta and gamma changes are more cognitive in nature than substantive and visible alpha change. They do not entail behavioral change, but recalibration of assessment or reconceptualization of the construct, respectively. As such, they may depend less on IPT and an individual's inclination to take risks (Sue-Chan et al., 2012); in other words, IPT could not predict “qualitative” changes in reflection induced by the coaching process.

This study's third goal was to investigate whether the different types of change in reflection were associated with individual reactions to the program, namely perceived utility for work and personal development. Analyzing reactions to coaching is a way of looking at the success of coaching from the coachees' perspective (De Haan, 2021). Significant correlations

with types of change were observed only for perceived utility for work. No significant correlations were found for perceived utility for personal development.

We offer two explanations for these non-significant correlations. First, the restriction imposed at the beginning of the program regarding the scope of the objectives to set (which needed to be work related), might have limited coachees to set goals *exclusively* relevant for work; consequently, they may have perceived the program as less broadly useful for personal development. This may also depend on how central certain skills are for several spheres of life. If, for example, improving communication skills is considered necessary only for work, due to the specific nature of one's job, a coachee may not regard the intervention to develop that skill as useful for overall development. Second, regardless of the specific type of goals set in the program, reflection is an instrumental competence to progress in one's goals. However, coachees may fail to see how to apply reflection to other spheres of life and transpose the changes in reflection in the work context to other domains (Gray, 2006).

On the perceived utility for work, we find it did not correlate with alpha change in reflection. There are two possible justifications for this result. One, a change in the amount of reflection might not directly impact work in a practical sense, since the context in which the coachee works might inhibit reflection. For example, Reams and Reams (2015) underlines that some coachees, being expected to act and react quickly, might perceive that as incompatible with deep reflection processes. Another reason for this result could be the lack of novelty. Those experiencing alpha change may not perceive it as very novel since what they changed is the "amount" of reflection, not the quality of what they do. We can also link this interpretation to the finding that those coachees presenting beta change tended to report greater utility for work. Thus, since beta change involves recalibrating their own reflection scores, it represented greater novelty. Their self-awareness and insight into how much they reflected about work-related events may have been a revelation of sorts (Grant et al., 2002). Conversely, those coachees experiencing gamma change tended to report lower utility for work because for them, gamma change represents a complete redefinition of "reflection" since it comprises several different dimensions (self, goals, methods, relations; Ong et al. 2015). Such a redefinition process may be too unsettling to be considered "useful". As Gray (2006) puts it: "change must be at a level appropriate to the client's developmental level, creating some disequilibrium in the client's thinking, but not so much that confidence and motivation are threatened" (Gray, 2006, p.489). We propose that individuals who presented gamma change may have experienced extreme disequilibrium, which completely changed their understanding of reflection making it understandable they perceived no utility for direct application at work. Following Harakas

(2013), who studied resistance to change in coaching based on the classic three-stages of change process by Lewin (1951), we suggest that those coachees might need longer to “refreeze” their new conceptualization of reflection and perceive its utility.

Limitations and Future Research

The first limitation to acknowledge in our study is the small sample size. However, being mindful of that, we chose an adequate type of analysis (Terborg et al., 1980). Moreover, because of the sample size we accepted lower levels of statistical significance, and acknowledge we are still at a very exploratory stage with this research topic, being this the first empirical study of alpha, beta and gamma changes in coaching. A second limitation is that lacking a control group, the research design is pre-experimental (Campbell & Stanley, 1963). This was partially offset in that our analyses were conducted within person: our focus was not on the “effectiveness” of coaching for one group of coachees vs. another (e.g., Jones et al., 2016), but rather involved single individuals who all underwent a coaching program and may have reported different types of change.

Future studies should employ larger sample sizes and attempt to replicate the three types of change using different statistical methods recommended for larger samples (Terborg et al., 1980). Furthermore, we envision studies that will apply the tripartite taxonomy of change (Golembiewski et al., 1976) to other competencies such as mindfulness (Theeboom et al., 2017), or other psychological mechanisms activated by coaching, such as self-awareness (Grant, 2002) or psychological capital (Fontes & Dello Russo, 2020). We also suggest that other types of coaching (besides workplace coaching) explore different types of change in reflection and their relationship with perceived utility for personal development. The goal being to investigate whether other types of coaching may clarify the application of the reflection competency in other domains.

Based on our findings we also call for further research on the predictors of different types of change. It is evident that most extant research on the predictors of coaching effectiveness is, in fact, research on the traditional alpha change. Our results contributed to that, by showing that incremental IPT is another predictor of alpha change. However, we do not know what the predictors of beta and gamma change could be. Therefore, we invite research to explore not only personality or individual predictors but also characteristics of the coaching relationship and coaching procedures. Lastly, a very promising research direction would be to employ longitudinal research designs and explore whether people progress through different types of change, i.e., from gamma, to beta to alpha change over time.

Practical Implications and Conclusions

We believe our study contributes to coaching practice in innovative ways, as well as to the broader HRD field. Understanding the intra-individual processes of change, besides theoretical value, also informs the practice of coaching. With coaches and HRD professionals better informed about the different change processes that might occur, coaching practice and other developmental interventions at work will improve. In particular, we suggest that coaches and HRD specialists assess multiple types of change in their end of intervention evaluations.

Our study also enlarged knowledge about the characteristics and traits of the coachee, specifically IPT, and how they can influence change in reflection. IPT plays an important role in motivating change, which is a key ingredient of successful coaching programs. If coaches diagnose their coachees' IPT, we believe they can better define their methods and expectations of success for their clients when planning a coaching intervention.

Finally, we also provide relevant information about the relation between each type of change in reflection and the perceived utility for work and personal development of a coaching intervention. These results can make coaches and HRD professionals aware of what coachees might value, and shed some light on what the "user" will perceive as useful, which ultimately influences the learning and transfer of learning (Alliger et al., 1997). Such knowledge will make coaches better able to design effective interventions.

In conclusion, our study is still a very exploratory study of the different types of change that can occur with coaching. Despite this study's small sample size and other limitations, its value resides in providing the first empirical test of alpha, beta and gamma change in reflection - a key competency in coaching. The investigation of IPT as a predictor of the three types of change, and the perceived utility as correlate, add to the value of this study and show that more research is warranted to understand the predictors and consequences of beta and gamma changes in particular. All three types of change are likely to follow from coaching intervention, and we need to better understand why and how they may occur, together with their nomological network.

CHAPTER VI

Discussion and Conclusion

DISCUSSION

Coaching is a widespread industry that is still increasing all over the world (ICF, 2016, 2020), and with no barriers or regulatory mechanisms to entry, practitioners can establish themselves quickly and easily (Spence, 2007). According to several scholars (e.g., Bennett, 2006; Spence, 2007), coaching has yet to achieve professional status since, despite the contributions of research conducted in the last decade, there are several aspects still to be fulfilled before that can happen. At the core of coaching professionalization is the issue of its theoretical position, a “shared body of knowledge that can allow coaching practice to be grounded in an evidence base” (Spence, 2007, p. 256). On a journey initiated by Grant (2001), coaching began to be framed within important psychological theories highlighting the relevance of a theory-driven practice, still echoed by several scholars (McKenna & Davis, 2009; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011; Bozer & Jones, 2018).

In the last twenty years, important advances have been made in research, with several literature reviews (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Ely et al., 2010; Grover & Furnham, 2016; Lai & McDowall, 2020; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011) and meta-analysis (Jones et al., 2016; Sonesh et al., 2015; Theeboom et al., 2014) contributing to greater knowledge of the practice. In line with the development stage of coaching (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011) these manuscripts have mostly concentrated on specific topics. From those most mentioned, we highlight three: 1) the outcomes of coaching (Jones et al., 2016; Theeboom et al., 2014); 2) the influence of factors emerging from the coachees’ characteristics (Jones et al., 2014, 2019; Stewart et al., 2008); and 3) the relevance of the collaborative relationship between coach and coachee (Lai & McDowall, 2020; Sonesh et al., 2015; De Haan et al., 2013; De Haan, Molyn & Nilsson, 2020).

However, important gaps have been evidenced, with one such gap being design of the studies. Most designs present self-reported data, with cross-sectional designs and a lack of control groups (Blackman et al., 2016). According to scholars, there is a need for more research with experimental designs that measure outcomes over time (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Jones et al., 2016; Sonesh et al., 2015; Theeboom et al., 2014) and assess multiple stakeholders (Theeboom et al., 2014).

The second main gap concerns the explanatory mechanisms of coaching effectiveness. As stated by Theeboom and colleagues (2014) “it is the time to shift attention from the question ‘does it work?’ to ‘how does it work?’”(Theeboom et al., 2014 , p.14) and, as also

later echoed by Jones in 2016, “we strongly feel that there is a need for the development of theory concerning why, how and in what ways coaching leads to the reported positive effects” (Jones et al., 2016, p.270). In order to better contribute to these explanatory mechanisms, specific requests were made to investigate mediators of coaching effectiveness (Sonesh et al., 2015) and for further detailed analysis of the change processes (Ely et al., 2019; Theeboom et al., 2014) that result from coaching.

The third gap, still associated with the outcomes, resides in the factors that impact the sustainability of the effects of coaching over time (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018), and the consequent elements contributing to coaching transfer (Theeboom et al., 2017; Stewart et al., 2018).

With the above described gaps in mind, the aim of this thesis is first to provide evidence of the geographical differences regarding the coaching industry as exemplified in the case of Portugal (Chapter II). While coaching is a widespread industry, most of the literature comes from Anglo-Saxon countries. It is important, therefore, to highlight the differences between those countries, where coaching has its roots, and other countries at different developmental stages. By looking into these differences, it becomes evident that there is a clear need for a more professional practice.

Second, this thesis aims to explore the explanatory psychological mechanism of coaching effectiveness, as called for in the international literature, either through the inclusion of relevant mediators (Chapter III), or with detailed analysis of the change process that occurs as a result of a coaching intervention (Chapter V).

Lastly, it contributes to the establishment of coaching outcomes within the learning framework by revealing coaching reactions (Chapter V), providing evidence of the learning outcomes (Chapter III), and initiating the discussion of coaching transfer, shedding light not only on facilitators but also on the obstacles to the process of coaching transfer in the workplace (Chapter IV).

This thesis also incorporates a diverse range of research designs as suggested by Theeboom and colleagues (2017) “It is only by combining different methodologies that we can attain a comprehensive understanding of coaching as a change methodology” (p.9). The study in Chapter II, based on the results of a cross-sectional survey, presents a diagnosis of the Portuguese practice. In chapter III, an experimental design was performed using a within- and between-subject analysis, which also included three moments of effects’ measurement. This study, besides contributing with a theory-driven mediator, also contributes towards closing some of the design gaps reported, namely with the inclusion of a control group and a

longitudinal design. In Chapter IV a qualitative study was conducted in order to explore the coaching transfer concept leading to a content analysis allowing for both inductive and deductive research. Finally, in the study included in Chapter V, a quite innovative way of measuring change (taxonomy of change) was brought to the analysis of reflection, opening up new routes for further analysis in coaching or any other developmental field.

To summarize the four empirical studies and how the variables being studied are intertwined, we contend that coaching, being defined as a goal-focused intervention (Grant, 2019), relies on a coachee's reflection, that will, with coach's help, initiate a self-regulatory cycle, that will lead to purposeful positive change (Jones et al., 2019). Via reflection, psychological resources are activated and strengthened and help make the desired goal achievable. As an integral element of coaching, reflection can lead coachees to greater insight which, in turn, helps them become aware of their blind spots, challenge self-limiting beliefs and keep the focus on their strengths, resources and the future (Connor & Pokara, 2012; Jones et al., 2019). Thanks to reflection, coachees can increase their PsyCap. As a set of psychological resources (self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience), PsyCap has proved to be a significant mediator between coaching and the affective outcomes, such as job satisfaction and organizational commitment, as evidenced in Chapter III. Additionally, coaching by its nature is a change process, and we could also argue (based on Chapter V) that the existence of an outcome is the result of a change process that starts with a change in the reflection process. We found three types of change and drew conclusions about IPT as a predictor and perceived utility as a reaction to coaching. The maintenance of the outcomes and their transferability to the workplace is another concern of our thesis that rests in the findings of learning literature, evidencing the types of learning that can occur, plus the associated factors emerging from the individuals or from the context (Chapter IV).

Below, in table 6.1, the summary of the main findings from each chapter is presented.

Finally, hoping to fill some of the existing gaps in the current knowledge on coaching, we present theoretical and practical implications in this chapter. Limitations and avenues for future research are also discussed, just before the closing remarks.

Table 6.1. Main findings from each chapter

Chapter	Research questions:	Method	Main Findings	Status
Chapter II: Quo Vadis? A study of the state and development of coaching in Portugal.	-What is the prevalent background of coaches in Portugal and what association does it have with the espoused theoretical positions and the use of specific techniques/tools? -What are the main features of the coaching process in Portugal? -What are the most frequent demands in coaching interventions in Portugal, and is there any association between these demands and coaches' background? -What are the most relevant consequences (positive and negative) observed and mentioned by coaches in Portugal?	Survey to professional coaches conducted online (snowball sampling)	Issues regarding credibility of the practice are shared. The relative paucity of certification, lack of common procedures and approaches informed by theory, allows for subjectivity. The majority of coaches have a background in education and training. Positive outcomes are found, mainly in self-awareness and hope/optimism.	Published in International Journal of Training and Development, 2019, 23(4), 291–312. (Q1 ⁶)
Chapter III: An Experimental Field Study on the Effects of Coaching: The Mediating Role of Psychological Capital	-Is coaching effective in improving coachees' attitudes and job performance? -Can PsyCap be the mediating mechanism?	Experimental field study: within and between subject analysis	Coaching was associated with increases in PsyCap, job attitudes, and one dimension of job performance. The mediating role of PsyCap was supported for job attitudes. The effects on PsyCap and job satisfaction lasted over time, as revealed by within-subjects repeated measures analyses	Published in Applied Psychology: An International Review, 2020 doi: 10.1111/apps.12260 (Q1 ⁶)

⁶ According to Scopus cite score, 2020.

Table 6.1. Main findings from each chapter (cont.)

Chapter	Research questions:	Method	Main Findings	Status
Chapter IV: A qualitative study of coaching transfer: exploring factors regarding the coachee, the design and the work environment	-What type of learning do coachees report some time after the conclusion of the coaching program? -Can writing exercises stimulate the reflection on PsyCap dimensions, over the course of a coaching intervention? -What are the factors hindering coaching transfer?	Qualitative study with Content analysis	Three types of transfer occurred. Reflective writing exercises in between coaching sessions help in the activation of PsyCap, contributing to the coaching transfer. Mostly individual and organizational, factors hinder the transfer process.	Planned to be submitted in a Q1 ⁶ journal in 2021
Chapter V: What changes with coaching? Investigating within-person changes in reflection, the predicting role of implicit person theory and the effects on perceived utility of coaching	-What types of change can be found in reflection as a result of a coaching intervention? -Coachees with an incrementalist IPT will present a higher probability of experiencing an alpha change, followed by beta and gamma change? -Different types of change in reflection will predict different types of utility perceptions after a coaching intervention?	Quantitative study with within-subject analysis	Three types of change (namely alpha, beta and gamma) were found with a homogenous distribution. Incremental IPT is associated to more probability to present alpha change and beta and gamma changes correlate with the perceived utility for work, positively and negatively, respectively	Revise & Resubmit (in Q1 ⁶ Journal)

⁶ According to Scopus cite score, 2020.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

As anticipated by Passmore and Fillery -Travis (2011) the coaching industry has reached a point where what is so far known about it, needs to be grounded in research and in theory, which requires more sophisticated and robust studies. The theoretical contributions this thesis makes are set out in three major groups: 1) contributions towards the professionalization of coaching; 2) contributions towards a better understanding of the explanatory mechanisms of coaching effectiveness; and 3) contributions towards what is known about coaching outcomes and their sustainability over time.

Professionalization of coaching

Coaching, being a quite recent industry, has yet to achieve its aim to be afforded professional status. However, as stated by Spence (2007), some important criteria are still missing before that aim can be achieved. These include a code of ethics or any kind of regulation, plus as a well-established theoretical base of knowledge that is interconnected with formal training and qualification requirements to regulate access to the profession. That being said, all contributions that inform theory are consequently contributing to the professionalization of the field.

In Chapter II, we highlight the Portuguese context and we echo the same concerns expressed by McKenna and Davis (2009) about the need for theory-driven practice. The results found in Chapter II raised important questions applicable not just to Portugal, but also to other countries at the same developmental stage. The concerns of several scholars (Grant et al., 2010) were echoed in this research, thus reinforcing the need for more regulated training and practice to dispel the continuing distrust of coaching practice, and help it progress towards professional status.

This study also aims to shed light on several aspects of the practice, namely: the practitioner, their clients and the practice itself, helping in the construction of the state of art. Regarding the practitioners, we highlight the information about their training and background. Knowing that the majority have come from an educational background provides important clues about their underlying theoretical orientation.

Relevant theoretical inferences can be made by comparing those coming from a background in psychology with all other backgrounds. Despite being a smaller group, the psychologists present a higher level of education and a higher percentage of coaching

certifications. And, even more relevant, is that they more frequently report an explicit theoretical base. These findings are in line with those reported by Bono (2009) asserting that practitioners from psychology are better equipped with tools and theory-based methods.

Psychological Mechanisms of Coaching

As per some of the coaching studies, reflection can be seen as an implicit ingredient in coaching. Reflection, as a process of pondering, reviewing and questioning the past (work) experiences in order to extract meaning from them (Ong et al., 2015), can be found in the definition of coaching (Lai & McDowall, 2014); in the outcomes of a coaching intervention (Grover & Furnham, 2016); and also in the maintenance of learning effects from coaching (Theeboom et al., 2017). Reflection is, in fact, a key variable in the coaching process and, more broadly, in any learning process (Gray, 2007). This thesis explores the role of reflection in several ways.

First, in Chapter V, reflection was the variable chosen for analysis under the taxonomy of change method. Selecting reflection for the study of change takes into account the paramount relevance of this competence in coaching and in the change process, in particular (Theeboom et al., 2017). Indeed, knowing that coaching is by definition a desired change process where the self-regulation process is supported by reflection (Theeboom et al., 2017), we might argue that acknowledging any outcome of coaching is, in fact, to acknowledge the existence of a changing process that requires reflection. Based on the results of Chapter V, this thesis contributes further to the explanatory mechanism of coaching by analyzing the several types of within-subject changes in reflection. This type of analysis has been deemed necessary by several scholars (Ely et al., 2010; Theebom et al., 2014) and can represent a shift in the paradigm regarding the analysis of the effects of coaching. Having found the three types of change, namely alpha, beta and gamma change, this study shows that the traditional way of measuring change, comparing pre and post levels of a certain variable, is an incomplete measure since it reflects only alpha change. For some coachees, coaching might induce an increase in reflection (alpha change), for others a recalibration in their assessment of reflection (beta change), and in others a reconceptualization of the reflection activity itself (gamma change). In short, if coaching is an individualized process, designed to produce change, through reflection and the stimulation of cognitive aspects by the coach, it is likely to produce different types of change.

Second, in Chapter IV, reflection is included in the design of coaching, namely in the reflective writing exercises. As the literature shows, reflection is a key ingredient in any

learning intervention (Gray, 2007) and a prerequisite for transfer (Brown et al., 2011). Also, reflective writing proved to increase training transfer (Allan & Driscoll, 2014; Knipfer, Kump Wessel & Cress, 2013; Sparr et al., 2017) and to stimulate the strengthening of psychological resources (Gilbert et al., 2018). Incorporating a reflection tool in the design between sessions would strengthen reflection of psychological resources, reinforce the work done in the face-to-face sessions and increase the opportunities for coachees to reflect beyond the coaching sessions.

Third, as a factor inherent to the mediation process of PsyCap (Chapter III), reflection promotes the coachees' awareness (Jones et al., 2019) of their own current resources, driving the recurrent loop of other resources (Hobfoll et al., 2018) towards goal attainment. This reflection is stimulated via the goal setting itself, plus the questioning and feedback associated to the collaborative relationship established with the coach (De Haan, 2016; Theemboom et al., 2017). The findings reported in Chapter III were framed within the goal setting theory. Goal setting is an inherent process of any coaching practice, independently of the theoretical bases on which it rests (Grant, 2012; Gregory et al., 2011). And having goals to pursue is itself motivating and stimulates the activation of the psychological mechanisms (Borgogni & Dello Russo, 2013) required to achieve them.

The second contribution to the explanatory mechanisms of coaching is related to the role of PsyCap. In addition to affective or attitudinal outcomes and performance, we also report psychological capital as an important coaching outcome (Chapter III). Comprising self-efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience, PsyCap as a set of malleable psychological resources can be reinforced in developmental interventions (Luthans et al., 2006), and, as we conclude in Chapters III and IV, in coaching as well. The literature has already reported some isolated components of PsyCap as positive effects of coaching, namely self-efficacy (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Jones et al., 2016), hope (Green et al., 2007), resilience (Grant et al., 2009; Franklin & Doran, 2009) and optimism (Xanthopoulou, et al., 2009). Consistent with the conceptualization of resources in the COR theory (Hobfoll et al., 2018) and the Positive Organizational Behaviour (POB) movement (Luthans, 2002), we argue that having a goal to pursue stimulates individuals to reflect and activate their inner resources and strengths towards goal achievement (Luthans, 2002; Theeboom et al., 2017). In coaching, individuals are future-oriented and goal-directed (hope); encouraged to exert their agency (self-efficacy) and preserve a positive outlook on their future expectancies (optimism), even when facing obstacles (resilience).

PsyCap, however, was not only evidenced as an outcome of coaching. As we posit in

Chapter III, PsyCap is in fact a mediator between coaching and affective outcomes, specifically job satisfaction and organizational commitment. This represents an extremely relevant discovery since not much has so far been said about the mechanisms that can explain coaching effectiveness, despite this being claimed by scholars as an urgent gap to fill (Theeboom et al., 2014, Jones et al., 2016). Based on the results found, we might argue that coaching significantly and positively affects attitudinal outcomes at work via the stimulation of PsyCap. Additionally, based on the strong and significant correlations between job satisfaction and some dimensions of performance, we could speculate that PsyCap and job satisfaction work as double-mediators between coaching and performance. Although the timing of the data collection did not allow a robust test of this hypothesis, it nevertheless sheds some light on possible routes for future investigation. In fact, and in accordance with the literature, the positive impact of coaching on job attitudes has been extensively documented (Bozer & Sarros, 2012; Ely et al., 2010; Jones et al., 2006; Luthans & Peterson, 2003; Theeboom et al., 2014). Additionally, meta-analytical findings evidenced the effects of job satisfaction (Judge et al., 2001) and organizational commitment in performance (Riketta, 2002). And, more recently, it has been shown that coaching increases the possibility of positively impacting performance via the mediation of job satisfaction and work engagement (Ali, Lodhi, Raza & Ali, 2018). To these last results, we might add that even before the activation of such attitudes, psychological resources are the key variable stimulated by coaching. That stimulation is facilitated, through questioning, feedback and verbal persuasion from the coach, in addition to properly designed sessions. As stated in chapter III, the GROW model (Withmore, 2003), widely used in coaching, can be easily adapted in order to reinforce the reflection on PsyCap dimensions. Additionally, that activation of PsyCap can be achieved, not only in the coaching sessions via the questioning process driven by the coach (Chapter III), but also between sessions via reflective writing exercises (Chapter IV).

Coaching outcomes

The outcomes of coaching have gained the attention of many scholars, and have been extensively explored in the coaching literature. However, the majority of these studies present results collected immediately after the coaching intervention, yet to ascertain the effects over time, more longitudinal designs are required. Inspired by the learning literature and, more specifically, the training evaluation model of Kirkpatrick (1976), this thesis presents the outcomes of coaching measured at three different levels: reactions to coaching as the first

level; the attitudinal and behavioral outcomes as the second; and the concept of coaching transfer as the third level.

Starting with the reactions to coaching, this speaks to the individual's way of perceiving the coaching intervention immediately after it. In the training literature, two main groups of reactions can be found: affective reactions, including measurements that ascertain satisfaction with the program; and utility reactions where measurements about the program's usefulness are included (Alliger et al., 1997). Also from the learning literature, it is known that utility reactions are positively correlated with learning immediately following the training and transfer of learning (Alliger et al., 1997), and more strongly than affective reactions. With that in mind, in Chapter V we studied the correlations between types of change in reflection and perceived utility. Results report significant correlations both for beta and gamma change with utility for work, although in different directions, with beta presenting a positive correlation and gamma a negative one. Alpha change presented no significant correlation. The reasons argued for the positive correlation of beta results with utility for work, reside in the nature of the definition of beta change. This type of change represents a "breakthrough" for the coachee since they, still under the dominance of the concept of reflection, realize that the scale considered before is no longer adequate, and reframe it in accordance with this new reality after coaching. Markedly different is gamma change which, as it represents a complete reconceptualization of reflection, might have presented a disorientation dilemma (Reams & Reams, 2015) and could have been so unsettling for the coachee that it might lead to a negative perception of coaching's usefulness for work. Regarding alpha change, it could be argued that, to some extent, alpha change in reflection was expected, so the coachee might not perceive it as useful for work. Also, from a more practical perspective, the pace of life in the workplace might not have been conducive to reflection fitting in with the daily workflow demands. No correlation was found between utility for self-development and the different types of change. This result might be related to the nature of the goal selected by the coach, or the framework limitation of topics imposed by workplace coaching.

Coaching outcomes, unlike reactions, have gained the attention of many international researchers in the last two decades. There have been several empirical studies, systematic reviews (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Bozer & Jones, 2018; Ely et al., 2010) and meta-analyses (Theeboom et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2016) that have already evidenced the advantages of coaching overall, and particularly in the workplace. Even though the majority of studies still reflect the management context, some have already expanded the effects into not only the leadership field, but also into a more democratized context.

Interestingly, as reported in Chapter II, leadership was the most mentioned competence that coachees needed to develop. When discussing the outcomes, however, leadership appears at the bottom of the list, being surpassed by other outcomes such as optimism and hope, self-awareness, resilience, and self-efficacy. These results already evidence the possible explanatory mechanisms further explored in the following Chapters. In addition to those, some other outcomes have been reported by more than 50% of the practitioners: an intensified focus on career goals; more motivation to work; improved performance; greater satisfaction with work; greater commitment to the company and greater effectiveness in dealing with change.

Also, in the empirical study presented in Chapter III, there is evidence of coaching's positive effects on job satisfaction, organizational commitment and performance. Coaching is likely to create a better alignment between the individual and the context, ultimately exerting a positive impact on coachees' organisation-related attitudes. These findings are in line with the previous literature evidencing the affective outcomes (Ely et al., 2010; Jones et al., 2016; Theeboom et al., 2014) as a consequence of coaching. Performance was also previously reported as an outcome of coaching (Jones et al., 2006; Passmore & Gibbes, 2007) although with mixed (e.g., Cerni, Curtis & Colmar, 2010; Grant, Green, & Rynsaardt, 2010) and weaker results (Bozer & Sarros, 2012). In the study included in Chapter III, only one dimension of the company performance scale (collaboration) evidenced significant differences after the coaching intervention. However, based on the high correlations between job satisfaction and the other measured dimensions of performance, as previously mentioned, possible serial mediations might have been explored if the timing and robustness of the data had allowed for it.

In these last paragraphs, in which the positive outcomes of coaching are discussed, we nevertheless need to highlight some of the negative ones that we report in Chapter II, and that are still linked to the practitioners' background and practice. As reported in Chapter II, the main negative outcomes are goal changes being made by the coach without the coachees' permission, and the inability of coaching to solve deeper and more complex problems triggered by the sessions. This last outcome, we might argue, brings us back to the relevance of a coach with a background in psychology who would, therefore, be better equipped to deal with some of those issues. These results, aligned with the very scarce literature on the side effects of coaching (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016), present another important contribution to the literature.

In parallel to the study of the outcomes, other studies have been investigating the role of

coachee characteristics and the way they might influence the coaching outcomes. With coaching being an individualized intervention, analysis of those characteristics is particularly relevant. According to the literature (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018), coachees possess several characteristics that can influence the coaching process. These include personal attributes such as personality, confidence and self-efficacy and also motivation to learn, and their own expectations. Some authors go a bit further and use the term “coachability” to allude to the predisposition of coachees to change (Passmore, 2009). Within the sphere of traits, the role of a coachee’s personality, has already been explored (Klockner & Hicks, 2008; Jones et al., 2014; Jones et al., 2019; Stewart et al., 2008). Equally, the application of Implicit Person Theory (IPT), can play a role in the coaching process, but few studies have tested this assumption (Gregory & Levy, 2012; Lin et al., 2017; Sue-Chan et al., 2012). With coaching involving a process of change, as stated above, we considered the study of implicit person theory to be particularly relevant since it succinctly describes two individual perspectives about change. In Chapter V, we explored whether the different types of change in reflection could be predicted by IPT. The findings showed that those with an incrementalist belief were more predisposed to present one of these types of change, namely alpha change. Alpha change, being a substantial type of change, was objectively manifested by coachees after the coaching intervention, and appears to be predictable among those who believe individual change is possible and desirable in an intervention setting. We might argue that coachees with this trait perceive coaching as an opportunity to learn and evolve and are, therefore, more predisposed to manifest an objective type of change. The other types of change (beta and gamma) represent more cognitive changes, either involving reframing the scale of reflection or the reconceptualization of the concept, and may depend less on IPT.

The last contribution this thesis makes to the theory, is related to the maintenance of the effects or outcomes of coaching over time and their transferability to the workplace. The need for studies that investigate coaching effectiveness at multiple time-points, and the need to assess the sustainability of the effects over time has been made salient by scholars (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011; Theemboom et al., 2014).

In Chapter III, the chosen design included a measurement of the variables under study, namely PsyCap, job satisfaction and organizational commitment, four months after the end of the intervention. Our findings confirm the effects are maintained over time, particularly for PsyCap and job satisfaction, although with less revealing results for commitment. Still, besides the sustainability of the effects overtime, coaching, like any type of developmental

intervention, aims to see the acquired knowledge applied in practice. This is particularly relevant if we are discussing workplace coaching, where organizations play an important role, and expect visible results. Bridging the learning literature, as stated by Dumilda and Allen (2020) “transformation is not complete until learners start action on these new perspectives” (p. 155). In fact, training transfer has gained the attention of many scholars in discussions about “traditional” training. However, with regard to coaching that did not happen and as far as we know, there has been only one study about coaching transfer (Stewart et al., 2008). Nevertheless, the topic of coaching transfer, although not referred to as such, is implicit in the literature about the learning process in coaching “learning is crucial for the long-term effectiveness of coaching. The return on investment of coaching is much higher when coachees have learned from the coaching experience that their self-regulatory capacities are enhanced and they are able to solve similar problems in the future” (Theeboom et al., 2017, p.7).

Knowing that coaching draws upon several learning theories such as experiential, reflective or transformative (Dumilda & Allen, 2020), the qualitative study in Chapter IV, explores the existence of three types of learning outcomes that constitute coaching transfer (cognitive, affective and skill based). Our findings highlight the relevance of the cognitive outcomes versus those that are affective and skill based (Kraiger et al., 1993), which would appear to be aligned with the nature of coaching, whose ultimate goal is to bring about a change at the intra-individual level of meta-cognitions (Theeboom et al., 2017). The sub-categories that emerged were also aligned with the most relevant theoretical mechanisms assumed in the coaching literature, including goal setting (Grant, 2019), reflection (Gray, 2006), self-awareness (Bozer & Sarros, 2012), and solution focus (Grant & O’Connor, 2010). However, whereas those studies collected the data immediately after the intervention (Chapter IV), the data reported in our study was collected four months after the intervention and, therefore, can be considered coaching transfer. In this study, we also shed light on the factors that might increase or hinder that transfer, from the individual sphere to the organizational one. Within the factors positively impacting transfer, we propose a coaching design factor associated with coachees’ characteristics (personal resources), which, as can be seen in Chapter IV, includes reflective writing exercises. Having proved to be effective in increasing reflection and activating personal resources (Gilbert et al., 2018; Woerkom & Meyers, 2018), this tool was introduced as a way to bridge the coaching sessions and give continuity to the work of developing individual coachees’ PsyCap. As seen in Chapters III and IV of this study, PsyCap, is central to the self-regulatory strategy and a proximal outcome

of coaching; Chapter IV also highlights the role PsyCap plays in learning transfer. In fact, our findings confirm that writing exercises stimulate reflection in all PsyCap dimensions and that throughout the coaching program, participants reported more instances of a positive manifestation of PsyCap dimensions and fewer instances of a lack of PsyCap.

On analysis of the factors that hinder coaching transfer, several were found. In descending order of relevance: individual factors, job design factors, relational factors and macro-organizational factors. Included among the individual ones were: a lack of mastery, motivation and goal focus, as well as the repetition of old habits. Following very closely in number of mentions were job design factors with elements such as high job demands, and lack of planning, among others. With regard to workplace relations, lack of cooperation and negative social environment were two examples found. Finally, in the macro factors inherent to the organization, lack of vision and leadership were some of the mentioned factors. Despite this being still an exploratory study, we believe it nevertheless contributes to a crucial phase of any learning intervention, which should be a concern of coachees, coaches, organizations and scholars alike.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

With coaching being profoundly rooted in practice, the findings reported in this thesis also offer several practical implications for coaches and coaching associations, for coachees, for organizations and, especially, the Human Resources Development (HRD) field.

The need for a more regulated practice has already been postulated by several scholars and this thesis also reinforces that need. Echoing the shared sentiment of Grant (2010) and others that followed him, the state of the coaching industry is still of no benefit to the reputation of its practice. What is reported in Chapter II, evidences the gaps in the Portuguese context that coaching still needs to fill in order to become a profession. There are several missing aspects that need to be resolved before that target can be achieved. These include establishing a code of ethics, formalizing the necessary competences and introducing adequate training requirements and, of course, making it a theory-driven practice whereby robust theoretical routes inform the methods and techniques applied in practice. In this thesis (Chapter II), we also found that psychologists seem to be the professionals best equipped to carry this crusade forward (Bono et al., 2009; McKenna & Davis, 2009). Their greater involvement should reinforce theoretical based research, reduce variability in the success rate and boost reproducibility of the results.

For the practitioners, this thesis has contributed with theoretical based methods and

techniques which, we contend, should inform practice in order to better extract the desired outcomes. In particular, we highlight the usage of the well-known GROW model (Whitmore, 2003) in sessions, but adapted for use with PsyCap oriented instructions (Chapter III). Moreover, the reflective writing exercises, oriented to PsyCap dimensions (Chapter IV) proved to be a useful technique with regard to maintaining coachees' reflection of PsyCap between and beyond the face-to-face sessions. It is important to note that these exercises can also be employed as self-coaching techniques, or as a way to continue the work autonomously after the coaching intervention (Sue-Chan & Latham, 2010).

Still with regard to the design of workplace coaching intervention, this thesis reinforces the relevance of a pre and post coaching evaluation, this being extremely important to confirm the efficacy of the intervention and the outcomes achieved. In chapter III of this thesis, we highlight the advantages of having a multi-source evaluation from the several contacts that interact with the coachee, thus providing a more accurate evaluation of his/her performance. In the pre intervention assessment, we would recommend that practitioners include some important diagnostic variables about individuals' characteristics, namely IPT or other relevant characteristics that can work either as facilitators or become obstacles to the change process that coaching implies. Also, in the post intervention phase, we highly recommend the inclusion of evaluating reactions since, both affective and perceived utility contains relevant variables that influence learning and transfer (Alliger et al., 1997) and, more importantly, the measurement of change that occurred as a result of the intervention.

Regarding the clients (individuals or companies), we believe that clarifying the definitions of coaching (Chapter I) could contribute to clearing up any confusion still present, mainly about distinguishing between coaching and other developmental interventions. Additionally, we believe we have contributed towards better clarifying the expected outcomes of coaching and shed light on some of the aspects that can facilitate sustainability over time and applicability in practice, particularly with regard to the organizational context. Also, we believe it contributes to greater awareness of the possible obstacles that need to be taken into account in order to align expectations and/or produce the necessary adaptations. In this regard, we would like to add the need for prior alignment between stakeholders (De Haan, 2021), which is particularly relevant in workplace coaching. Some elements were brought into the discussion that are worth detailing, namely the workplace factors that can hinder transfer. When initiating a coaching practice, these are important elements that need to be brought to the table in order to develop actions that can prevent them or, at least, align the expectations of all stakeholders.

This last aspect is directed towards HRD since we believe that is the field that will derive most value from this work. We also provide some additional recommendations we consider relevant to creating a better design and to evaluating a development intervention like coaching and, at the same time, to assess the satisfaction of those benefiting from the intervention and their perception of its usefulness. As mentioned above, the coachee's perception can influence the learning process and the transfer of learning. Such knowledge can help practitioners design better, more effective interventions. This can also help HRD, either through them requesting that such measurements be included, or by doing it themselves with the variables considered relevant for their company. In this way, better informed and more demanding clients (organizations and HRD professionals) are also contributing towards professionalizing coaching practice. The same applies to the measurement of change, where we suggest including more detailed analysis than just the traditional pre /post comparison. Considering the different types of change, we believe the learning and development field can be enriched, and not necessarily only for coaching.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

From the earliest stage of planning this thesis up to the very last minute, there were many ideas for further analyses that should have been, or could be, conducted.

Of the limitations that were found, we begin with our own sample. In the first study, we chose to recruit Portuguese practitioners using social networks. This, in itself, could constitute a limitation since it meant we could not reach coaches who were not part of those communication platforms. The number of participants in the survey could have been higher and the questionnaire shorter since we detected some dropouts, particularly in the final questions. Additionally, we could argue that to avoid a biased view, particularly in the coaching outcomes, a survey applied to coachees could have been released.

In the following three studies, the first limitation we must acknowledge is the fact that they were taken from the same sample, although different variables and different methods were used as can be analyzed in table 6.1 This information has also been shared with the editors of the journals the manuscripts were submitted to. This highlighted a further limitation regarding the lack of diversity of organizational contexts. Having collected information in just one organization, could mean the replicability of results is reduced in other contexts (Tsang & Kwan, 1999). However, it does guarantee the existence of some important commonalities, such as cultural aspects and macro-organizational variables that can influence the measurements of the attitudinal outcomes like job satisfaction and organizational commitment (as in Chapter III). Another variable measured in Chapter III was individual performance. This variable was evaluated using a specific scale defined by the company, and although that represents the reality of the organization and thus considered empirically more relevant, it has consequences regarding the replicability of the study. Future studies might consider applying a validated scale to measure performance, which could allow it to be measured in the third moment (four months after coaching). However, this was not possible due to decisions dependent on the organizational calendar. Still with regard to collecting data in several moments, future studies could assess the outcomes again but after longer periods of time in order to investigate the sustainability of effects after one year, for instance.

Another limitation, quite common in empirical coaching studies, is the sample size. All studies in this thesis could have benefitted from a larger sample. The qualitative study about coaching transfer, despite being quite exploratory, could benefit from a larger number of materials to code. Nevertheless, we believe that taking into account the coverage of several moments in time somehow compensated for concerns regarding the sample size. The findings

of Chapter V, being similarly exploratory in nature, would also have benefited from a larger sample size. This, besides being beneficial to the representativity of the findings, should also imply the use of more sophisticated statistical measurements to assess different types of change. Lastly, the robustness of the design found in Chapter III could be reinforced with more participants and data collection in more points in time, as well. This would allow serial mediation analysis in order to explain coaching effects on performance (including both PsyCap and attitudinal outcomes as mediators).

Two main factors justify the sample size presented. First, having measurements in several moments over time makes us dependent on variables such as retention rate, that were beyond our control. This meant having to discard some of the results from the initial participants. Moreover, we can argue that having only one coach hold four individual coaching sessions with all participants, implied a considerable amount of time.

Some additional features in the design of the studies could also be beneficial. In the analysis of coaching transfer as mentioned in Chapter IV, it could be interesting to have multi-source materials, in order to get multiple perspectives on change in the coachees' behavior. Nevertheless, as already mentioned, this study is exploratory in nature. Moreover, as we concluded from our findings, the most common outcomes were cognitive based, thus barely evident to others. Still in this study, and inspired by Sue-Chan and Latham (2010), it could be worth taking the results of the autonomous application of the reflective writing exercise oriented to PsyCap and comparing them with its usage in between sessions.

The findings reached in Chapter V, through a methodology never before applied to coaching, open up a wide range of research opportunities. Despite the purpose of the study being to analyze within-subject change, the inclusion of a control group could increase the robustness of the design. Moreover, it could be interesting to evaluate how these types of change are present, and compare that with other coaching interventions (like life coaching, for instance). Of particular relevance would also be the analysis of change overtime to investigate possible alterations within the types of change evidenced in longitudinal designs. Other variables could also benefit from this type of analysis (taxonomy of change), such as PsyCap or self-awareness, both of which are considered key variables central to the success of coaching interventions.

In the coachees' personal characteristics, which can either facilitate or inhibit change, there are also further variables that could be tested. We put forward personality traits, resistance to change and/or motivation/ readiness for change as some of the most straightforward indications. As advanced by scholars, some coachees might not be ready to change due to the "fear of losing

the identity they had worked so hard to build up, as they were not ready to face the uncertainty this change would encompass” (Reams & Reams, 2015, p.21), raising the question: “are some individuals “uncoachable”?” (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018, p. 76).

Regarding the coach, it might be pointed out that having the coach for all individuals and as researcher as well, might be considered a limitation. First, we argue that this guarantees the homogenization of methods (as an overarching structure that still allows for the customization typical of coaching) and assures a theory driven intervention with rigorous application, not being subject to variability inherent to the coach’s approaches. Second, regarding the issue of being the coach also the researcher some may be skeptical about possible biases. If the issue could be regarding the biased interpretation of the data, we assure that all materials were completed entirely by the coachees: 1) the quantitative data was statistically analyzed, not allowing for any type of bias; 2) the qualitative data was collected through reflective exercises, and not interviews, where there is an explicit interaction associated and a higher risk of jeopardizing the reality that the data intends to transpose (Chenail, 2011). Also, having a second coder we considerably contribute to diminish the risk in the interpretation of the data (Thomas, 2006). Last, we can acknowledge that participants may feel compelled to maintain a good relationship with the coach, but we also argue that this already speaks for one of the success factors of coaching, which is the working alliance. Previous studies already enhanced the relevance of the collaborative relation, evidencing its positive effects on coaching outcomes (De Haan et al., 2016; 2016; Graßmann et al., 2020; Lai & McDowall, 2014; Sonesh et al., 2015) but to better access the impact of the working alliance, future studies should investigate this in greater detail, namely its role in the change process. Still regarding the possible avenues for future studies, table 6.2 organizes variables, processes, research questions and type of analysis suggested.

Table 6.2 Summary of recommended future research directions and suggested types of analysis

Process:	Variable	Research Question:	Type of analysis:
Change	Reflection	Does the type of change in reflection evolve over time?	Longitudinal
Change	Reflection	Can we replicate the same types of change in reflection when comparing workplace coaching with other types of coaching (e.g. live coaching)?	Pre or experimental
Change	PsyCap	What types of change exist in PsyCap as a result of coaching?	Pre or experimental
Change	Self-awareness	What types of change exist in self-awareness as a result of coaching?	Pre or experimental
Change	Resistance/ Motivation to change	How resistance/motivation to change predict each type of change in coaching?	Pre or experimental
Change	Personality	Can personality traits predict any type of change? (e.g. Big5)	Pre or experimental
Transfer	PsyCap	Is PsyCap a mediator of coaching transfer?	Experimental longitudinal
Outcomes explanatory mechanism+ Transfer	PsyCap	Can PsyCap and attitudinal outcomes (job satisfaction; org. commitment) mediate (serial mediation) the effect of coaching in performance?	Experimental longitudinal
Outcomes explanatory mechanism	PsyCap	Is there a positive relation between reflective exercises and coaching outcomes (affective, cognitive and skill based)	Experimental
Outcomes explanatory mechanism +Transfer	PsyCap	Is there any difference in the effects of coaching with the autonomous usage of the reflective exercises versus usage between coaching sessions?	Experimental (two intervention groups + control group)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Coaching is already an established practice in Portugal and despite the geographical differences when compared to other countries, can no longer be considered merely a trendy occupation that could go out of fashion. Despite its basis being rooted in practice, there are still gaps that urgently need filling to overcome some of the preconceptions some individuals and companies still have about the credibility of the practice, and in order that coaching can achieve professional status. This thesis does not just highlight, but addresses some of the issues raised by scholars.

In diagnosing the Portuguese coaching practice, several important gaps emerged. These involved a lack of accredited training among practitioners, differences regarding the support coachees need and the outcomes and, most importantly, a lack of theoretically supported tools and methods. On a more positive note, psychologists seemed to be better equipped with more theoretically rooted practices. A fact which, although they represent only a small slice of practitioners in the Portuguese business of coaching, brings some hope for its future. With the proper alignment of psychological associations and coaching entities working together to create a well-reputed practice, the future of coaching looks promising.

Besides what our diagnosis of the coaching situation in Portugal revealed, our study also makes important contributions to the international field, specifically to the explanatory mechanism of coaching effectiveness. The mediation effect of PsyCap and the attitudinal outcomes have opened up an important route in the field, bringing to light the psychological mechanisms that are activated in a coaching intervention. The goal setting process, associated with “powerful” questions from the coach stimulates coachees to reflect on the necessary resources and pathways, and to believe in their ability to achieve goals and successfully overcome possible obstacles. Moreover, we concluded that several types of change in reflection can occur, strongly alerting us to the need for better assessment not just of the outcomes of coaching but, as we expand, for developmental intervention.

With the outcomes and their implicit mechanisms explained, this thesis further initiates the discussion on coaching transfer, within the theoretical framework of learning literature. There is clear evidence of the role played by cognitive forms of learning, followed by affective and skill-oriented forms. Furthermore, the inclusion of reflective learning exercises served to keep the focus on relevant psychological resources, increase the sustainability of outcomes between sessions and, as we argue, contribute to coaching transfer.

Having established the main contributions for both the theory and practice, this thesis

intends to shed light on important theoretical elements of coaching and simultaneously supply relevant tools to support practice. In the hope of helping practitioners, but also coachees and client organizations, the ultimate goal of this work is to contribute towards a better understanding of the coaching practice, whose value has not always been understood. Moreover, by including a list of suggestions for further investigation, we aim to somehow shed some light on the possible paths that researchers may follow to continue producing new and enriching knowledge about coaching.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – Survey used in the study reported in chapter II

Coaching_Portugal_2017

Start of Block: INTRODUÇÃO

Este questionário pretende contribuir para um maior conhecimento do panorama nacional em que o Coaching opera, e contribuir para um maior conhecimento acerca dos seus efeitos.

Pedimos por isso que dedique alguns minutos do seu tempo e responda a este breve questionário sobre Coaching em Portugal.

Recordamos que este questionário é anónimo e não são recolhidos quaisquer dados pessoais. Muito obrigada pela sua colaboração!

End of Block: INTRODUÇÃO

Start of Block: DEMOGRÁFICOS

Q1 Identifique o seu género:

☐ Feminino (1)

☐ Masculino (2)

☐ Outro (3)



Q2 Idade:

Q3 Identifique a sua área geográfica:

- ☐ Grande Lisboa (1)
- ☐ Grande Porto (2)
- ☐ Algarve (3)
- ☐ Zona Norte (exceto grande Porto) (4)
- ☐ Zona Centro e Sul (exceto grande Lisboa) (5)
- ☐ Arquipelagos Madeira /Açores (6)

End of Block: DEMOGRÁFICOS

Start of Block: EXPERIÊNCIA/FORMAÇÃO

Q4 Há quanto tempo trabalha na área de Coaching?

- ☐ <2 anos (1)
 - ☐ 2- 5 anos (2)
 - ☐ 5-10 anos (3)
 - ☐ 10-15 anos (4)
 - ☐ > 15 anos (5)
 - ☐ Já não trabalho na área de Coaching (6)
-

Q5 Que tipo de formação recebeu em Coaching?

☐

Certificação em Coaching. Escreva o nome da entidade que certificou, por favor. (1)

☐

Curso de Formação onde a temática Coaching estava incluída, mas sem obtenção de certificação específica em Coaching. Especifique o nome/tipo de formação, por favor. (2)

☐

Experiência profissional considerada adequada para poder fazer Coaching. Especifique a área, por favor (3) _____

☐

Outro. Por favor especifique (4)

☐

Não recebi qualquer formação específica em Coaching (5)

Q6 Exercia ou exerce outra actividade para além do Coaching?

- ☐ Psicologia (1)
- ☐ Gestão de Empresas (2)
- ☐ Ensino/Formação (3)
- ☐ Desporto (4)
- ☐ Saúde e Bem Estar (5)
- ☐ Comunicação (6)
- ☐ Política (7)
- ☐ Recursos Humanos (8)
- ☐ Consultoria (10)
- ☐ Outro. Por favor especifique (9) _____

Q7 Qual é o seu nível Educacional?

- ☐ Ensino Secundário (1)
- ☐ Licenciatura (2)
- ☐ Mestrado (3)
- ☐ Doutoramento (4)
- ☐ Outro. Por favor especifique (5) _____

End of Block: EXPERIÊNCIA/FORMAÇÃO

Start of Block: PRÁTICAS E TEORIAS EM COACHING

Q8 Trabalha em alguma área específica de coaching? Escolha todas as áreas em que trabalha

- ☐ Coaching de Carreira (1)
 - ☐ Coaching de Desporto (2)
 - ☐ Coaching Organizacional (3)
 - ☐ Coaching Educacional (4)
 - ☐ Coaching de Saúde & Bem Estar (5)
 - ☐ Coaching de Performance (6)
 - ☐ Coaching de Liderança (7)
 - ☐ Coaching Parental (8)
 - ☐ Outro. por favor especifique (9)
-

Q9 Que situação melhor descreve a sua actividade de Coaching?

- ☐ Trabalho maioritariamente como Coach interno numa empresa (1)
 - ☐ Trabalho maioritariamente como Coach externo (2)
 - ☐ Trabalho simultaneamente como Coach interno e externo (3)
 - ☐ Como Gestor de Recursos Humanos utilizo competências de Coaching de forma informal (4)
 - ☐ Como Gestor de Equipa utilizo competências de Coaching de forma informal (5)
 - ☐ Já não trabalho como Coach e não tenciono voltar a trabalhar no futuro (6)
 - ☐ Outra Situação. Por favor especifique. (7)
-

Q10 Quantas sessões de Coaching efectua em média por semana?

- ☐ (1)
 - ☐ entre 5 e 10 sessões por semana (2)
 - ☐ entre 10 e 20 sessões por semana (3)
 - ☐ entre 20 a 30 sessões por semana (4)
 - ☐ mais de 30 sessões por semana (5)
-



Q11 Em média quantas sessões costuma fazer com cada cliente?

Q12 Quais os meios que utiliza para as sessões de coaching?

- ☐ Exclusivamente sessões presenciais (1)
- ☐ Maioritariamente sessões presenciais, ainda que esporadicamente exista algum seguimento assíncrono (sms ou email) (2)
- ☐ Maioritariamente sessões presenciais, ainda que esporadicamente exista algum seguimento síncrono (telefone, skype, messenger, chat, etc.) (3)
- ☐ Maioritariamente meios digitais assíncronos (sms ou email) (4)
- ☐ Maioritariamente meios digitais síncronos (telefone, skype, messenger, chat, etc.) (5)
- ☐ Uma mistura de todos os meios (6)
-

Q13 Por favor, identifique as principais técnicas que utiliza nas suas sessões de coaching e em que fase as costuma aplicar (exemplos: roda da vida, G.R.O.W....)

- ☐ Sim, são utilizadas algumas técnicas específicas na Fase Diagnóstico. Por favor, nomeie as mais relevantes: (11) _____
- ☐ Não utilizo qualquer técnica específica na Fase de Diagnóstico. Por favor, especifique o motivo: (17) _____
- ☐ Sim, são utilizadas algumas técnicas específicas na Fase de Desenvolvimento. Por favor, nomeie as mais relevantes: (19) _____
- ☐ Não utilizo qualquer técnica específica na Fase de Desenvolvimento. Por favor, especifique o motivo: (21) _____
- ☐ Sim, são utilizadas algumas técnicas específicas na Fase Final. Por favor, nomeie as mais relevantes: (15) _____
- ☐ Não utilizo qualquer técnica específica na Fase de Desenvolvimento. Por favor, especifique o motivo: (20) _____
-

Q14 Nas suas práticas de coaching existe(m) alguma(s) linha(s) orientadora(s) específica(s) (Ex: Positivismo, PNL, Comportamentalismo, ...). Por favor especifique.

Q15 Em termos de facturação quanto cobra habitualmente em média por cada hora de consulta? (questão facultativa)

- ☐ menos de 50€/hora (1)
- ☐ entre 50€ e 75€/hora (2)
- ☐ entre 75€ e 100€ /hora (3)
- ☐ acima de 100€ /hora (4)

End of Block: PRÁTICAS E TEORIAS EM COACHING

Start of Block: CARACTERÍSTICAS DOS CLIENTES

Q16 Por favor indique que tipo de clientes é mais frequente:

- ☐ Proprietários de Empresas /Empreendedores (1)
- ☐ Executivos / Directores /Chefias de Topo (2)
- ☐ Gestores de Equipa - Chefias Intemédias (3)
- ☐ Funcionários de 1ª linha (4)
- ☐ Desempregados (5)
- ☐ Estudantes (6)
- ☐ Outro. Especifique. (7) _____

Q17 Por favor indique as três áreas que os clientes mais solicitam/necessitam de trabalhar nas sessões de Coaching:

- ☐ Liderança e Decisão (1)
- ☐ Suporte e Cooperação (2)
- ☐ Interação e Apresentação (3)
- ☐ Análise e Interpretação (4)
- ☐ Criação e Conceptualização (5)
- ☐ Organização e Execução (6)
- ☐ Adaptação e Progressão (7)
- ☐ Empreendedorismo e Foco nos Resultados (8)

End of Block: CARACTERÍSTICAS DOS CLIENTES

Start of Block: RESULTADOS OBTIDOS

Q18 Pensando nas consequências que observou nos seus clientes ou foram reportadas por eles como consequência das sessões de Coaching, seleccione todas as que se aplicam e indique a

percentagem estimada de clientes a que se aplicam. Caso não se aplique a consequência seleccione NA:

	Menos de 20% (1)	Entre 21% e 40% (2)	Entre 41% e 60% (3)	Entre 61% e 80% (4)	Acima de 81% (5)	NA (Não Aplicável) (6)
Melhoria de performance (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Melhoria das competências de liderança (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maior eficácia ao lidar com a mudança (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maior motivação no trabalho (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maior focus nos objetivos profissionais (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maior auto- consciência (6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maior auto-eficácia (7)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maior compromisso para com a empresa (8)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maior satisfação com o trabalho (9)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maior resiliência (10)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Maior otimismo/esperança (11)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Q19 Eventualmente podem ser identificadas algumas consequências negativas associadas ao coaching. Indique todas as aplicáveis e em que percentagem foram manifestadas ou observadas. Caso não se aplique a consequência seleccione NA:

	Menos de 20% (1)	Entre 21% a 40% (2)	Entre 41% a 60% (3)	Entre 61% a 80% (4)	Acima de 81% (5)	NA (Não Aplicável) (6)
Os clientes manifestaram descréscimo de satisfação no trabalho (1)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Os clientes viram os seus objetivos alterados sem o terem expresso voluntariamente (2)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Nas sessões de coaching foram despoletadas algumas questões mais profundas que não puderam ser resolvidas através do coaching (3)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
As relações dos clientes com a chefia/colegas pioraram (4)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
A performance dos clientes no trabalho piorou (5)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Os clientes manifestaram menor equilíbrio entre vida pessoal e profissional (6)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

End of Block: RESULTADOS OBTIDOS

Start of Block: TENDÊNCIAS FUTURAS

Q20 No seu entendimento, quais são as principais barreiras ao desenvolvimento do Coaching em contexto organizacional?

- ☐ Falta de conhecimento sobre o coaching /confusão com outras práticas (1)
 - ☐ Custo /Orçamento Elevado (2)
 - ☐ Consumo de Tempo Laboral (3)
 - ☐ Eficácia pouco comprovada (4)
 - ☐ Baixa relação Custo/Benefício (5)
 - ☐ Falta de credibilidade (6)
 - ☐ Pouco foco no negócio (7)
 - ☐ Questão cultural (8)
 - ☐ Outras Razões (9) _____
 - ☐ Não me parece que existam barreiras (10)
-

Q21 Na sua opinião quais serão as tendências do mercado de Coaching em Portugal para os próximos anos? Por favor, fundamente a sua resposta.

- ☐ Crescimento moderado (1) _____
- ☐ Crescimento acentuado (2) _____
- ☐ Estabilidade (3) _____
- ☐ Decréscimo moderado (4) _____
- ☐ Decréscimo acentuado (5) _____

Q22 Caso tenha algumas observações/ comentários adicionais, serão bem vindos.

End of Block: TENDÊNCIAS FUTURAS

APPENDIX B – Questionnaire used in the study reported in chapter III – pré - intervention (time 1)

PROGRAMA INDIVIDUAL DE DESENVOLVIMENTO COM RECURSO AO COACHING

Este questionário de auto-avaliação tem por objetivo identificar alguns aspetos essenciais para a fase de diagnóstico prévio, ao programa individual de desenvolvimento a efetuar. O diagnóstico é essencial para a criação deste plano individual de desenvolvimento, que incluirá um programa de coaching, para quem pretenda ter acesso ao mesmo. Será ainda disponibilizado um relatório individual desta auto-avaliação.

Para isso, pedimos a sua colaboração no preenchimento do questionário, que não deverá demorar mais do que 10 minutos.

Os dados recolhidos serão confidenciais, de acordo com as regras da Comissão de Proteção de Dados, e serão processados e analisados coletivamente apenas pelos responsáveis envolvidos no estudo.

Todas as informações serão utilizadas exclusivamente para os fins apresentados e nenhum dado recolhido será partilhado com a empresa ou qualquer outra entidade. Adicionalmente nenhum dado sensível (nome, emails, etc.) será fornecido a terceiros, incluindo a gestão e administração da empresa.

Agradecemos a sua colaboração!

Não hesite em colocar as suas questões ou pedir esclarecimentos à responsável: Andrea Fontes, (fontes.andrea@gmail.com).

Consentimento Informado

O questionário foi-me explicado e compreendi que a minha participação é voluntária. Além disso, compreendi que a confidencialidade dos meus dados pessoais está assegurada. Após ter lido e compreendido a informação anteriormente mencionada, declaro que aceito responder ao questionário anexo.

☐ Sim, concordo ☐ Não concordo

Sessão de Coaching Individual

O conteúdo das sessões de coaching foi-me explicado e compreendi que a minha participação é voluntária. Além disso, compreendi que a confidencialidade dos meus dados e da informação veiculada nas sessões está assegurada.

Após ter lido e compreendido a informação anteriormente mencionada, declaro que relativamente à participação nas sessões de coaching individuais.

☐ Sim, quero participar ☐ Não quero participar

Nome e Apelido: _____

Assinatura: _____

1. Nome: _____ 2. Género: Masculino ☐ Feminino ☐ 3. Idade: _____ 4. Função na empresa: _____
 5. Há quanto tempo trabalha na atual função: _____ anos _____ meses 6. Há quanto tempo trabalha na empresa: _____ anos _____ meses

As seguintes declarações relatam experiências no contexto de trabalho. Para cada item, deverá responder de acordo com o tempo e esforço tipicamente investido em cada uma destas atividades com a escala de 1 (nenhum tempo e esforço) a 5 (bastante).

Nenhum					Bastante
1	2	3	4	5	

1. Revejo os objetivos para um determinado projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Reflito se estou a atingir os objetivos de um determinado projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Avalio o meu progresso em direção aos objetivos de um projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Considero se estou no caminho certo para alcançar os resultados do projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Revejo a minha abordagem para fazer o trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Reconsidero como tomo decisões sobre um projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Considero se será preciso uma abordagem diferente para alcançar melhor os objetivos do projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Avalio se estou a trabalhar da melhor maneira para alcançar os resultados do projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Penso em como meu estilo de trabalho individual afeta o progresso do projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Avalio o impacto pessoal que eu tenho num determinado projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Observo como o meu humor do dia-a-dia ajuda ou prejudica o meu trabalho num projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Reflito sobre o tipo de energia que estou a trazer para o projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Avalio se me estou a relacionar bem ou mal com aqueles que receberão o meu trabalho (por exemplo, clientes, colegas de trabalho ou um chefe).	1	2	3	4	5
14. Considero se as minhas ações estão a ajudar a criar relações de elevada qualidade com aqueles que receberão o meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Reflito sobre o quanto estou a comunicar com aqueles que receberão o meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Penso na qualidade das minhas relações com aqueles que receberão o meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5

Por favor indique agora o seu grau de concordância ou discordância com cada uma das frases, utilizando a seguinte escala:

Discordo Totalmente	Discordo	Em grande parte discordo	Não concordo Nem discordo	Em grande parte concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17. O tipo de pessoa que alguém é, é algo de base e não pode ser muito mudado.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. As pessoas podem fazer as coisas de forma diferente, mas as partes importantes de quem elas são realmente não podem ser mudadas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Todos, independentemente de quem são, podem alterar significativamente suas características. básicas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Em baixo pode encontrar afirmações que descrevem o que pode pensar sobre si próprio neste momento, no trabalho. Utilize a mesma escala para indicar o seu nível de concordância ou discordância (1 discordo totalmente a 7 concordo totalmente):

20. Sinto-me confiante na representação da minha área de trabalho em reuniões com a administração.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Sinto-me confiante em contribuir para discussões sobre a estratégia da empresa.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Sinto-me confiante em apresentar informações a um grupo de colegas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Se eu me encontrasse com uma complicação no trabalho, poderia pensar em muitas maneiras de sair dela.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Neste momento, eu vejo-me como bastante bem-sucedido no trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Posso pensar em muitas maneiras de alcançar os meus atuais objetivos de trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. Neste momento, estou a cumprir os objetivos de trabalho que estabeleci para mim próprio.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Posso estar "por minha conta", por assim dizer, no trabalho, se tiver que ser.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. Normalmente, lido com as coisas stressantes no trabalho com dificuldade.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. Posso passar por momentos difíceis no trabalho porque já tive dificuldade antes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Eu olho sempre para o lado positivo das coisas em relação ao meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. Estou otimista sobre o que acontecerá comigo no futuro, no que se refere ao trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Pedimos que reflita agora sobre quão responsável é cada um dos seguintes elementos, pelo fato de ainda estar a trabalhar para seu atual empregador. Indique o seu nível de concordância utilizando a mesma escala (1 discordo totalmente a 7 concordo totalmente):

32. Sinto-me como "parte da família" na minha organização.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. Sinto-me "emocionalmente ligado" a esta organização.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. Esta organização tem um grande significado pessoal para mim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
35. Sinto um forte sentimento de pertença à minha organização.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Por favor indique, utilizando a mesma escala de 1 a 7, qual o seu grau de concordância com cada umas das seguintes afirmações acerca da satisfação no trabalho:

36. Eu sinto-me bastante satisfeito com meu trabalho atual.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. A maioria dos dias estou entusiasmado com meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. Eu encontro verdadeira alegria no meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

***** MUITO OBRIGADA PELA SUA PARTICIPAÇÃO *****

APPENDIX C – Questionnaire used in the study reported in chapter III – post - intervention (time 2)

PROGRAMA INDIVIDUAL DE DESENVOLVIMENTO COM RECURSO AO COACHING

Este questionário tem por objetivo medir a sua satisfação com o programa de desenvolvimento em que participou, e permitir também fazer uma auto-avaliação no final do programa.

Os dados recolhidos serão confidenciais, de acordo com as regras da Comissão de Proteção de Dados, e serão processados e analisados coletivamente apenas pelos responsáveis envolvidos.

Todas as informações serão utilizadas exclusivamente para os fins apresentados e nenhum dado individual recolhido será partilhado com a empresa ou qualquer outra entidade. Adicionalmente nenhum dado sensível (nome, emails, etc.) será fornecido a terceiros, incluindo a gestão e administração da empresa.

Agradecemos a sua colaboração!

Não hesite em colocar as suas questões ou pedir esclarecimentos à responsável: Andrea Fontes, (fontes.andrea@gmail.com).

Consentimento Informado

O questionário foi-me explicado e compreendi que a minha participação é voluntária. Além disso, compreendi que a confidencialidade dos meus dados pessoais está assegurada. Após ter lido e compreendido a informação anteriormente mencionada, declaro que aceito responder ao questionário anexo.

☐ Sim, concordo

☐ Não concordo

Nome e Apelido: _____

Assinatura: _____

QUESTIONÁRIO APÓS PROGRAMA

1. Nome: _____ 3. Idade: _____ 4. Função na empresa: _____

Este questionário é composto por duas partes: uma avaliação das sessões de coaching em que participou e uma autoavaliação de alguns aspetos específicos que pedimos que avalie, antes e depois das sessões.

Pensado do programa de desenvolvimento com recurso ao coaching, solicitamos que indique o seu grau de satisfação relativamente a alguns aspetos específicos. Por favor considere uma escala de 5 níveis (1 = muito insatisfeito; 5 = muito satisfeito)

Muito Insatisfeito					Muito Satisfeito
1	2	3	4	5	

1. Qual o seu nível de satisfação, relativamente às expetativas que tinha antes de iniciar o programa?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Qual o seu nível de satisfação relativamente ao atingimento dos objetivos propostos pelo programa?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Qual o seu nível de satisfação relativamente à profundidade dos temas abordados, permitida pela duração do programa?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Qual o seu nível de satisfação relativamente à adequação da duração do programa, tendo em conta os objetivos e o conteúdo?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Qual o seu nível de satisfação com a eficácia do coach, em termos globais?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Qual o seu nível de satisfação com a empatia do coach?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Qual o seu nível de satisfação com a capacidade de comunicação do coach?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Qual o seu nível de satisfação com o conhecimento e experiência do coach?	1	2	3	4	5
9. Qual o seu nível de satisfação quanto à utilidade do programa para o seu trabalho?	1	2	3	4	5
10. Qual o seu nível de satisfação com a preparação que o programa lhe deu para executar as atuais tarefas de trabalho de forma mais eficaz?	1	2	3	4	5
11. Qual o seu nível de satisfação quanto à utilidade do programa para o seu desenvolvimento pessoal?	1	2	3	4	5
12. De uma forma global qual o seu nível de satisfação com a qualidade do programa?	1	2	3	4	5
13. Qual o seu nível de satisfação com a estrutura e frequência das sessões?	1	2	3	4	5
14. Qual o seu nível de satisfação com os exercícios efetuados entre sessões?	1	2	3	4	5

15. Participaria novamente? Sim ☐ Não ☐

16. Recomendaria este programa de sessões de coaching aos seus colegas ? Sim ☐ Não ☐

17. Que características considerou mais positivas nas sessões de coaching?

18. Que características considera que poderiam ser melhoradas nas sessões de coaching para aumentar a sua eficácia?

Nas seguintes perguntas vai encontrar dois blocos de respostas: no primeiro bloco de respostas pedimos que responda de acordo com a sua situação atual, enquanto no segundo bloco deverá responder de acordo com o que recorda ser a sua situação antes das sessões de coaching.

Responda de acordo com o tempo e esforço tipicamente investido em cada uma das seguintes atividades, no contexto de trabalho, com a escala de 1 (nenhum tempo e esforço) a 5 (bastante tempo e esforço).

Nenhum					Bastante
1	2	3	4	5	

	Antes das Sessões					Atualmente				
19. Revejo os objetivos para um determinado projeto.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
20. Reflito se estou a atingir os objetivos de um determinado projeto.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
21. Avalio o meu progresso em direção aos objetivos de um projeto.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
22. Considero se estou no caminho certo para alcançar os resultados do projeto.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
23. Revejo a minha abordagem para fazer o trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
24. Reconsidero como tomo decisões sobre um projeto.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
25. Considero se será preciso uma abordagem diferente para alcançar melhor os objetivos do projeto.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
26. Avalio se estou a trabalhar da melhor maneira para alcançar os resultados do projeto.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
27. Penso em como meu estilo de trabalho individual afeta o progresso do projeto.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
28. Avalio o impacto pessoal que eu tenho num determinado projeto.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
29. Observo como o meu humor do dia-a-dia ajuda ou prejudica o meu trabalho num projeto.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
30. Reflito sobre o tipo de energia que estou a trazer para o projeto.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
31. Avalio se me estou a relacionar bem ou mal com aqueles que receberão o meu trabalho (por exemplo, clientes, colegas de trabalho ou um chefe).	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
32. Considero se as minhas ações estão a ajudar a criar relações de elevada qualidade com aqueles que receberão o meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
33. Reflito sobre o quanto estou a comunicar com aqueles que receberão o meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
34. Penso na qualidade das minhas relações com aqueles que receberão o meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Em baixo pode encontrar afirmações que descrevem o que pode pensar sobre si próprio, no trabalho, agora e antes da sessão. Utilize a escala para indicar o seu nível de concordância ou discordância (1 discordo totalmente a 7 concordo totalmente):

Discordo Totalmente	Discordo	Em grande parte discordo	Não concordo Nem discordo	Em grande parte concordo	Concordo	Concordo totalmente
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Antes das sessões							Atualmente						
35. Sinto-me confiante na representação da minha área de trabalho em reuniões com a administração.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
36. Sinto-me confiante em contribuir para discussões sobre a estratégia da empresa.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
37. Sinto-me confiante em apresentar informações a um grupo de colegas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
38. Se eu me encontrasse com uma complicação no trabalho, poderia pensar em muitas maneiras de sair dela.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
39. Neste momento, eu vejo-me como bastante bem-sucedido no trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
40. Posso pensar em muitas maneiras de alcançar os meus atuais objetivos de trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
41. Neste momento, estou a cumprir os objetivos de trabalho que estabeleci para mim próprio.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
42. Posso estar "por minha conta", por assim dizer, no trabalho, se tiver que ser.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
43. Normalmente, lido com as coisas stressantes no trabalho com facilidade.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
44. Posso passar por momentos difíceis no trabalho porque já tive dificuldade antes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
45. Eu olho sempre para o lado positivo das coisas em relação ao meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
46. Estou otimista sobre o que acontecerá comigo no futuro, no que se refere ao trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Pedimos que reflita agora sobre quão responsável é cada um dos seguintes elementos, pelo fato de ainda estar a trabalhar para seu atual empregador. Indique o seu nível de concordância utilizando a mesma escala (1 discordo totalmente a 7 concordo totalmente), refletindo acerca do momento atual e antes das sessões de coaching.

	Antes das sessões								Atualmente						
47. Sinto-me como "parte da família" na minha organização.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
48. Sinto-me "emocionalmente ligado" a esta organização.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
49. Esta organização tem um grande significado pessoal para mim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
50. Sinto um forte sentimento de pertença à minha organização.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
51. Eu sinto-me bastante satisfeito com meu trabalho atual.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
52. A maioria dos dias estou entusiasmado com meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
53. Eu encontro verdadeira alegria no meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*** * * MUITO OBRIGADA PELA SUA PARTICIPAÇÃO * * ***

APPENDIX D – Questionnaire used in the study reported in chapter III – follow up (time 3)

PROGRAMA INDIVIDUAL DE DESENVOLVIMENTO COM RECURSO AO COACHING FOLLOW UP

Este questionário tem por objetivo fazer uma auto-avaliação depois de decorrido um período de cerca de 4 meses após as sessões de coaching.

Os dados recolhidos serão confidenciais, de acordo com as regras da Comissão de Proteção de Dados, e serão processados e analisados coletivamente apenas pelos responsáveis envolvidos.

Todas as informações serão utilizadas exclusivamente para os fins apresentados e nenhum dado individual recolhido será partilhado com a empresa ou qualquer outra entidade. Adicionalmente nenhum dado sensível (nome, emails, etc.) será fornecido a terceiros, incluindo a gestão e administração da empresa.

Agradecemos a sua colaboração!

Não hesite em colocar as suas questões ou pedir esclarecimentos à responsável: Andrea Fontes, (fontes.andrea@gmail.com).

Consentimento Informado

O questionário foi-me explicado e compreendi que a minha participação é voluntária. Além disso, compreendi que a confidencialidade dos meus dados pessoais está assegurada. Após ter lido e compreendido a informação anteriormente mencionada, declaro que aceito responder ao questionário anexo.

☐ Sim, concordo

☐ Não concordo

Nome e Apelido: _____

Assinatura: _____

QUESTIONÁRIO FOLLOW UP

1. Nome: _____ 3. Idade: _____ 4. Função na empresa: _____

Este questionário é composto por duas partes: uma descrição (escrita livre) dos progressos desde as sessões de coaching e até ao momento e uma autoavaliação de alguns aspetos específicos já avaliados anteriormente.

1. Descreva, por favor, os progressos feitos desde as sessões de coaching para o atingimento dos objetivos definidos. Que resultados atingiu, que comportamentos adotou, o que pensou e o que sentiu

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Responda de acordo com o tempo e esforço tipicamente investido em cada uma das seguintes atividades, no contexto de trabalho, com a escala de 1 (nenhum tempo e esforço) a 5 (bastante tempo e esforço).

	Nenhum 1	2	3	4	Bastante 5
14. Revejo os objetivos para um determinado projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
1. Reflito se estou a atingir os objetivos de um determinado projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Avalio o meu progresso em direção aos objetivos de um projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Considero se estou no caminho certo para alcançar os resultados do projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Revejo a minha abordagem para fazer o trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Reconsidero como tomo decisões sobre um projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Considero se será preciso uma abordagem diferente para alcançar melhor os objetivos do projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Avalio se estou a trabalhar da melhor maneira para alcançar os resultados do projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Penso em como meu estilo de trabalho individual afeta o progresso do projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Avalio o impacto pessoal que eu tenho num determinado projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Observo como o meu humor do dia-a-dia ajuda ou prejudica o meu trabalho num projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Reflito sobre o tipo de energia que estou a trazer para o projeto.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Avalio se me estou a relacionar bem ou mal com aqueles que receberão o meu trabalho (por exemplo, clientes, colegas de trabalho ou um chefe).	1	2	3	4	5
13. Considero se as minhas ações estão a ajudar a criar relações de elevada qualidade com aqueles que receberão o meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Reflito sobre o quanto estou a comunicar com aqueles que receberão o meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Penso na qualidade das minhas relações com aqueles que receberão o meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5

Em baixo pode encontrar afirmações que descrevem o que pode pensar sobre si próprio, no trabalho. Utilize a escala para indicar o seu nível de concordância ou discordância (1 discordo totalmente a 7 concordo totalmente):

	Discordo Totalmente 1	Discordo 2	Em grande parte discordo 3	Não concordo Nem discordo 4	Em grande parte concordo 5	Concordo 6	Concordo totalmente 7
16. Sinto-me confiante na representação da minha área de trabalho em reuniões com a administração.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. Sinto-me confiante em contribuir para discussões sobre a estratégia da empresa.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Sinto-me confiante em apresentar informações a um grupo de colegas.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Se eu me encontrasse com uma complicação no trabalho, poderia pensar em muitas maneiras de sair dela.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Neste momento, eu vejo-me como bastante bem-sucedido no trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Posso pensar em muitas maneiras de alcançar os meus atuais objetivos de trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. Neste momento, estou a cumprir os objetivos de trabalho que estabeleci para mim próprio.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Posso estar "por minha conta", por assim dizer, no trabalho, se tiver que ser.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Normalmente, lido com as coisas stressantes no trabalho com facilidade.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Posso passar por momentos difíceis no trabalho porque já tive dificuldade antes.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. Eu olho sempre para o lado positivo das coisas em relação ao meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. Estou otimista sobre o que acontecerá comigo no futuro, no que se refere ao trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Pedimos que reflita agora sobre quão responsável é cada um dos seguintes elementos, pelo fato de ainda estar a trabalhar para seu atual empregador. Indique o seu nível de concordância utilizando a mesma escala (1 discordo totalmente a 7 concordo totalmente).

28. Sinto-me como "parte da família" na minha organização.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29. Sinto-me "emocionalmente ligado" a esta organização.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30. Esta organização tem um grande significado pessoal para mim.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31. Sinto um forte sentimento de pertença à minha organização.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32. Eu sinto-me bastante satisfeito com meu trabalho atual.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
33. A maioria dos dias estou entusiasmado com meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
34. Eu encontro verdadeira alegria no meu trabalho.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

***** MUITO OBRIGADA PELA SUA PARTICIPAÇÃO *****