Academic Paper

Coaching Effectiveness Framework

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Abstract

Despite increased empirical research, coaching effectiveness in organizations has not been fully established. Leveraging the 'Cube of Coaching Effectiveness', this study reviews scientific literature and further integrates findings from qualitative and quantitative research, coaching effectiveness questionnaire validation, insights from global data on coaching outcomes and from the interviews with coaches. The paper introduces the 'Coaching Effectiveness Framework' to define and measure coaching effectiveness, focusing on competencies, behaviors, and outcomes for organizational application, including enhancement of employee development. Highlighting key skills and behaviors for effective coaching, the framework offers practical insights for coaching training and warrants further empirical validation in organizational contexts.

Keywords

coaching effectiveness, coaching relationship, performance, well-being, workplace coaching

Introduction

By 2022, the number of coach practitioners worldwide rose to approximately 109,000, a 54% increase from 2019 (ICF, 2023). Global coaching revenue grew by 60%, bringing the industry's value to over $4.5 billion. Nearly 70% of coaches focus on business-related coaching such as: leadership, executive, or organizational coaching (ICF, 2023). Coaching has been integrated into organizational frameworks to support workplace learning, cultivate leadership, and improve employee performance, with its increasing popularity leading human resource professionals to often take on internal coaching responsibilities (Boysen, 2018; Brown & Grant, 2010). Although there has been an increase in empirical studies, the effectiveness of coaching in the workplace has not been fully established (de Haan & Nilsson, 2023). Also, the underlying mechanisms driving the effectiveness of coaching in organizations remains unclear (Jarosz, 2023). Current studies have yet to fully identify the specific coach behaviors or factors crucial for effective coaching (Boyatzis et al., 2022). There remains a gap in scientific understanding about the direct advantages of coaching for organizations, including a lack of detailed knowledge about the specific types of outcomes that

coaching can produce (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Jones et al., 2015; Grant & Zackon, 2004; Henriques & Matos, 2010; De Meuse, 2009).

This paper acknowledges these existing limitations in the definitions and understanding of the concept of coaching effectiveness, as well as the lack of a rigorous, scientifically-derived framework that could be applied in the organizational context to measure the effectiveness of coaching. The purpose of this study is to derive a Coaching Effectiveness Framework by taking the previously proposed theoretical model of the Cube of Coaching Effectiveness as a starting point and through integrating empirically based findings obtained from qualitative and quantitative research methods.

This paper is organized into four main sections. The first section delves into the scientific literature on coaching effectiveness, outcomes, and benefits including a brief overview of the Cube of Coaching Effectiveness. The second section introduces the methodology of deriving the Coaching Effectiveness Framework. The third section presents the findings of quantitative and qualitative research stages. The fourth section integrates the findings into a proposed theoretical framework. This section is preceded by a brief discussion of implications for future research, coaching profession, organizations and coaching clients; research and application limitations; and conclusions.

Literature review

After Wang et al. (2021), we define coaching in organizations (workplace coaching) as "a facilitative process for the purpose of coachees' learning and development and a greater working life (e.g., psychological well-being) through interpersonal interactions between the coach and coachee". Assessing coaching effectiveness is challenging. Wang et al. (2021) identified only 20 studies for their meta-analysis on coaching effectiveness using psychologically informed approaches. Burt and Talati (2017) focused on studies with control groups, finding merely 11 that met this standard. Additionally, de Haan and Nilsson's (2023) meta-analysis was based on 37 studies (including randomized controls). The difficulty in demonstrating coaching effectiveness through various methods is notable, and as Burt and Talati (2017) observe, evaluating coaching outcomes is rare.

The effectiveness of coaching heavily relies on defining the desired outcomes. |A recent paper by Boyatzis et al. (2022) suggests a shift from researching coaching inputs to examining outputs, outcomes, and value coaching creates for the clients. Research demonstrates various benefits, including client satisfaction with the coach and the process (de Haan et al., 2019, 2020), action intention and goal setting (Grant, 2012; Spence et al., 2008), enhanced well-being (Jarosz, 2020; Jarosz, 2021; Spence & Grant, 2007), and development of a coherent personal vision (Mosteo et al., 2016). Additionally, diverse health outcomes like improved quality of life and behavior change have been noted (Frates et al., 2011; Sforzo et al., 2019). Yet, the current scope of outcomes studies is limited (Theeboom et al., 2014). Unexplored areas include self-change (Diller et al., 2021) and behavior improvement impacting relationships and performance (Boyatzis et al., 2022; Boyatzis & Cavanagh, 2018; Grover & Furnham, 2016).

Grassmann et al. (2020) highlight the significance of the coaching relationship in achieving desired outcomes. Empirical research shows coaching's impact on behavioral and personality changes (Worgan, 2013). Studies indicate improvements in various psychological aspects, such as self-efficacy and emotional intelligence, irrespective of the client's age and gender (Jarosz, 2020). Work by Wang et al. (2021), Theeboom et al. (2014) and Jarosz (2021) supports these findings, demonstrating coaching's positive influence on performance, skills, and well-being.

The evaluation of coaching effectiveness incorporates multiple models and criteria, reflecting the complexity and multidimensionality of coaching outcomes. Kirkpatrick's (1977) seminal model has

been pivotal, categorizing evidence of coaching success into four levels: changes in results, behavior, participant reactions, and learning. Lawrence and Whyte (2013) in their Clocktower Model, and Albizu et al. (2019) in their proposed framework, have expanded upon this, focusing on factors like client motivation, supervisor commitment, and the quality of the coaching relationship. They emphasize the role of the coaching process and organizational context in influencing client's satisfaction, which in turn affects learning and behavioral change.

Jones et al. (2015) propose a triad of evaluation criteria: cognitive, skill-based, and affective outcomes. This framework suggests that coaching effectiveness can be assessed through improvements in knowledge (cognitive), skill enhancement (skill-based), and psychological factors like self-efficacy and work satisfaction (affective). Wang et al. (2021) integrate these concepts into a comprehensive meta-analytic framework, identifying four critical criteria: affective, cognitive, behavioral (skills/performance), and psychological well-being outcomes. This framework underscores the multifaceted nature of coaching effectiveness and further highlights the significance of well-being improvements as a key outcome of coaching.

In her 2023 paper, Jarosz introduces a theoretically grounded model (The Cube of Coaching Effectiveness) that proposes to use the evaluation of the quality of the coaching relationship, client's performance and client's well-being to establish the effectiveness of coaching. It defines and measures the factors influencing successful coaching. The Cube is built around three core dimensions: individual performance, individual well-being and the coaching relationship as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The Cube of Coaching Effectiveness
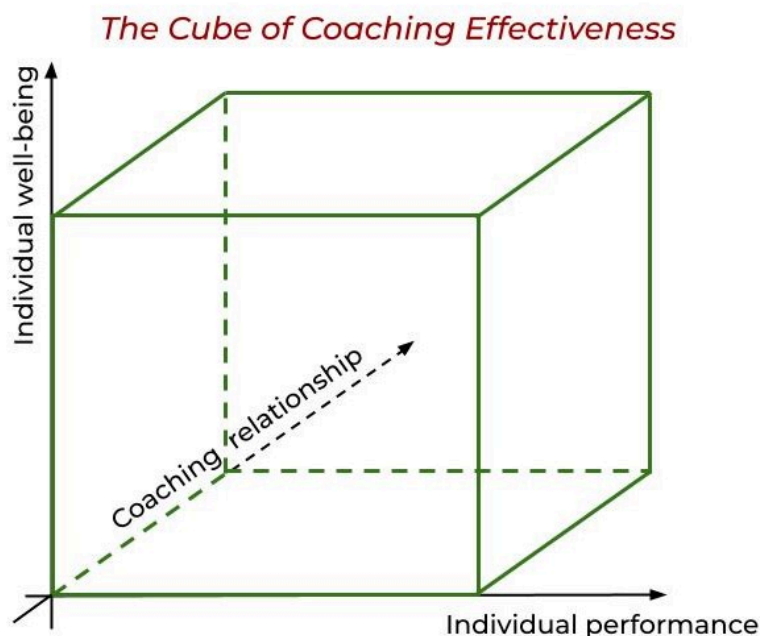
The Cube of Coaching Effectiveness provides tools to assess coaching on multiple levels, emphasizing both performance and well-being. It guides organizations and coaches in identifying which factors contribute most to coaching success, such as the strength of the coaching relationship and the satisfaction of psychological needs. The model has potential applications in training programs, coach education, and organizational assessments, ensuring coaching interventions are tailored for maximum impact.

Research on coaching effectiveness has identified positive outcomes such as client satisfaction, goal attainment, well-being, and behavioral changes. Studies highlight the importance of the coaching relationship and psychological factors like self-efficacy and emotional intelligence, while meta-analyses show coaching's effectiveness, though limited by few rigorous studies. Frameworks like Kirkpatrick's model and those by Albizu et al. (2019) and Jones et al. (2015) provide criteria for evaluating effectiveness, focusing on cognitive, affective, and skill-based outcomes. Despite these advancements, there are several gaps. Mechanisms of coaching effectiveness remain unclear, particularly the specific behaviors that consistently lead to performance improvement, as well as continuous growth and development of the client. There is a lack of research focusing on self-change and behavior improvements that affect relationships and long-term performance outcomes. Additionally, limited tools exist to consistently measure coaching outcomes across different organizational contexts.

To fill this gap, this paper focuses on further investigating the mechanisms of coaching effectiveness by analyzing specific coach and client behaviors that drive success in coaching outcomes. The purpose of this study is to propose a comprehensive framework measuring the effectiveness of coaching in the organizational setting. By using a mixed-method approach that integrates both qualitative and quantitative data, this study aims to provide more actionable and precise recommendations for measuring coaching effectiveness, beyond existing models, to ensure practical application in diverse organizational settings. The next section of this paper introduces methodology used to derive a Coaching Effectiveness Framework.

Methodology

In this study, we employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Such an approach enables a more comprehensive use of data compared to relying solely on either quantitative or qualitative data gathering and analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Conclusions of both quantitative and qualitative stages of research were used to validate concepts from the Cube of Coaching Effectiveness, augment and develop a comprehensive Coaching Effectiveness Framework.

The quantitative research, carried out first, informed by the validated questionnaire, provided statistical insights into the key factors of coaching effectiveness. The qualitative research, carried out in the next independent stage through interviews with coaching practitioners, revealed deeper, context-specific insights into effective coaching practices. The integration of these findings allowed for the identification of core themes and variables that were then synthesized into a robust framework. This framework reflects both the measurable aspects of coaching effectiveness and the nuanced, relational dynamics identified through qualitative analysis.

The quantitative stage consisted of: (1) developing of the Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire based on the methodology of the Cube of Coaching Effectiveness (Jarosz, 2023); (2) validating the questionnaire through data collection; (3) using gathered data to gain insights on the questionnaire and the underlying methodology. The qualitative stage consisted of: (1) conducting interviews with coaching practitioners; (2) using qualitative data analysis tools to find common threads and components relevant to coaching effectiveness framework; (3) using gathered data to gain insights on the coaching effectiveness methodology.

The validation of the Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire played a crucial role in the quantitative research by ensuring the reliability and accuracy of the data collected. The process involved consulting with subject matter experts, using established scales like the Flourishing Scale, and gathering responses from over 100 participants. The data obtained from this validation helped refine the questionnaire, ensuring that it accurately measured the constructs of coaching effectiveness (performance, well-being, and the coaching relationship). This quantitative data

provided empirical support for the dimensions outlined in the Cube of Coaching Effectiveness, confirming their relevance and utility in evaluating coaching outcomes.

The quantitative stage allowed for *confirming* the variables and the qualitative stage allowed for *deriving* the variables relevant for the coaching effectiveness concept. The insights gathered in each of the stages were then juxtaposed with the original framework (Jarosz, 2023) to verify whether they correspond to the initial framework and outlined variables. This included the level of detail of looking at every behavior of the coach, behavior of the client, coaching competencies or skills listed in previously published study on coaching effectiveness (Jarosz, 2023) and verifying if their importance is reflected in data from the qualitative stage and conclusions derived from the interviews with the coaches.

The synthesis process started with an integrated examination of various components: the preliminary version of the framework, the coaching effectiveness questionnaire, thematic qualitative data blocks (from themes and sub-themes analysis), and the proposed three variables related to the coaching effectiveness (performance, well-being and coaching effectiveness), along with the underlying elements that contributed to the construction of the questionnaire and each variable. This integrative approach sought to align and interconnect all themes, ensuring their congruence within the newly revised framework. The first iteration of this framework served as a reference point, allowing for a comprehensive and nuanced reflection back to the original components of the study, including the questionnaire and the qualitative themes. This reflective process was instrumental in identifying areas of convergence and divergence, facilitating a more holistic understanding of the concept of coaching effectiveness.

The study combines quantitative data from surveys and qualitative data from interviews to develop the Coaching Effectiveness Framework. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of coaching effectiveness by leveraging the strengths of both quantitative (e.g., statistical validity) and qualitative (e.g., thematic richness) research methods. The mixed-method design was integral in bridging the gap between empirical measurement and practical application, ultimately leading to a well-rounded and empirically supported framework.

The final proposal for the Coaching Effectiveness Framework, refined through this synthesis process, aims to be robust enough for further empirical testing. Additionally, it is designed with practical applicability in mind, particularly for implementation within organizational settings. The ultimate goal is to offer a framework that not only withstands rigorous scientific scrutiny but also possesses the utility and adaptability required for effective real-world application in enhancing coaching effectiveness.

An overview of the methodological process has been summarized in Figure 2. The methodology subsections that follow provide details on each of the quantitative and qualitative research stages.

Figure 2: Stages of development of the Coaching Effectiveness Framework
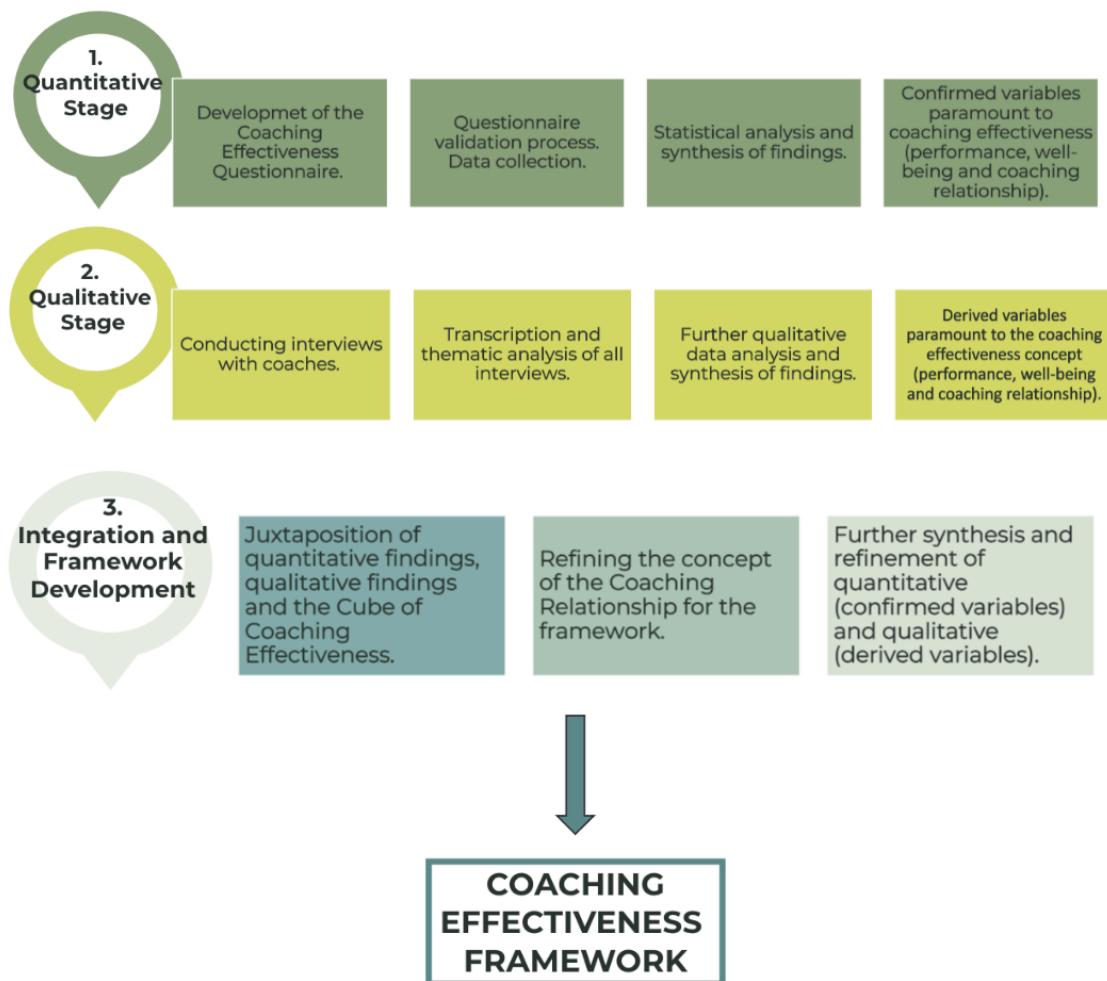
Quantitative

Following the methodology to measure factors of coaching effectiveness, proposed in Jaroz (2023), specifically in the section "Measuring the dimensions of the Cube: a proposition," a Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire has been created. The paper lists three factors that allow to evaluate the effectiveness of coaching: performance of the client, well-being of the client and coaching relationship between the coach and the client. For each of these three factors, the original 2023 paper also presents empirical research-driven suggestions around how to measure each one. The first version of the Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire has been constructed following these guidelines. All question items would then follow the validation process.

Constructing the questionnaire: example question items

Jarosz (2023) further suggests that performance may be measured through self-evaluation. She cites previous research (Warr & Nielsen, 2018) and an earlier paper (Jarosz, 2021) in which a questionnaire "Team Barometer" has been utilized to evaluate individual's performance during the pandemic. Based on conclusions from above cited research, the following question item has been created to evaluate performance of the coaching clients (as one of the factors of coaching effectiveness):

- *How would you rate your overall performance in your role in the past three months? (performance question item)*

This question item has been assigned a Likert scale 1-5, with 1 being "low" and 5 being "high".

Jarosz has also suggested that "fulfillment of psychological needs (autonomy, competency, relatedness) has a positive effect on (...) performance" (2023, p. 37) and that coaches can display behaviors that facilitate satisfaction of psychological needs of their clients. Based on an analysis of such behaviors, further question items have been created and added to the Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire. Some examples are:

- *To what extent did your coach help you minimize the pressure you're under? (performance question item)*
- *To what extent did your coach help you remove barriers that get in the way of performing effectively? (performance question item)*
- *To what extent did your coach talk about matters that were meaningful to you? (performance question item)*

This question item has been assigned a Likert scale 1-5, with 1 being "not at all" and 5 being "to a great extent".

Jarosz (2023) further suggested that well-being may be measured with a scientifically grounded instrument like an already validated questionnaire – e.g., the Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2009).

Jarosz (2023), also proposed the determinants of the quality of the coaching relationship. She listed the coach's knowledge/competency, client's perspective of the coaching effectiveness and the supportive dynamics of the coaching relationship. Based on in-depth analysis of these determinants, the following example question items were developed and added to the pilot Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire:

- *How would you rate your coach's effectiveness? (coaching relationship question item)*
- *To what extent did your coach enable you to hold yourself accountable?(coaching relationship question item)*
- *To what extent did your coach create a safe and open environment for the coaching sessions? (coaching relationship question item)*

Once the pilot Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire had been created, it has undergone a validation process.

Validating the questionnaire: the process

Following the process described by DeVellis (2017) and Voss and Kirkpatrick (2021) validating the Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire consisted of the following steps:

1. Development of the Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire based on the constructs that it is assumed to measure (coaching effectiveness and its determining factors: performance, well-being and the coaching relationship) and the assumptions it is based on (in this case the Cube of Coaching Effectiveness).
2. Evaluation by subject matter experts of how well the question items in the developed questionnaire relate to the construct it is supposed to measure.
3. Inclusion of a previously validated assessment as part of the questionnaire or as part of the assessment.
4. Collection of between 100-300 responses to the questionnaire and analyze data.

5. Based on the statistics, selection of the smallest set of question items that reliably measure the construct (coaching effectiveness and its determining factors: performance, well-being and the coaching relationship).

Once the Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire had been developed, it was consulted with over ten subject matter experts, such as (1) top academic figures; (2) top talent, growth and development professionals; and (3) business leaders and executives. The Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2009) - a valid and reliable assessment - was included within the pilot questionnaire to help check for reliability and validity of the Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire and validate against previously well-validated constructs.

The next step was to send the questionnaire to collect at least one hundred responses to help verify the constructs. Data collected in this stage was designed to get rid of questions that have low item-total correlation but also those that have very high item-item correlation (indicating some of the questions are redundant within the Coaching Effectiveness construct). A validated questionnaire aims at the following outcomes: low item-item correlation, high item-total correlation, mathematically sound instrument, and high construct validity (DeVellis, 2017; Norman, 2010). After conducting the analysis, the final set of question items has been selected and the questionnaire has been finalized based on the statistical outcomes.

Participants and data collection

A nonprobability availability sample (specifically, convenience sampling) was used to select the participants for the study. Respondents were: participants of Quantuvos coaching program (representing Boise Cascade, Delta Air Lines, Change Healthcare, Cochlear, GMS, Norfolk Southern, SAGE Publications, Visual Lease); coaching clients of coaches associated with ICF (International Coach Federation), IOC (Institute of Coaching), AC (Association for Coaching) and EMCC (European Mentoring and Coaching Council); coaching clients reached through authors' professional networks across the globe. Overall the questionnaire has been sent to over 1000 respondents. A total of 123 responses were collected.

The questionnaire used for collecting data from study participants included informed consent. Participants were also assured that their responses would be anonymous and strictly confidential. There is no reason to suspect that participant responses were biased in any way.

Data Processing and Outcomes

Statistical procedures (including Pearson's correlations, Cronbach's alpha analysis and factor analysis) have been carried out to analyze collected data and assure that the Questionnaire: (1) has good psychometric properties; (2) is a flexible instrument with many potential uses; and (3) is a valuable resource for evaluating coaching programs, coaches, and professionals using coaching skills. After having finalized this stage, the findings were used to juxtapose with the original coaching effectiveness framework.

Qualitative

An exploratory qualitative research approach was chosen to validate the Coaching Effectiveness framework. To accomplish this, semi-structured interviews, each lasting between 30-60 minutes, were carried out with 16 coaching professionals. A nonprobability availability sample (specifically, convenience sampling) was used to select the coach participants for the study. Semi-structured interviews focused on collecting stories of effective coaching sessions within a series of coaching sessions that led to a transformation in the coaching client. The effective coaching sessions were subjectively selected by the coaches based on their understanding of "impactful coaching", "effective coaching" or a "transformative event" that was present during the coaching conversation and shared during the interview.

All coaches interviewed were highly experienced in the field of professional, executive and/or workplace coaching (10+ years of coaching experience), industry certified (all holding ICF or similar high coaching quality credentials) - which assured consistency amongst the participants. Selected coaches have worked with successful clients all over the world. The coaches group represented nine different countries.

The coaching effectiveness framework had not been explained to the coaches prior to the interviews. The objective of this stage was to gather unbiased data and juxtapose the findings with the framework to validate its assumptions and enhance it.

Data Gathering and Analysis

Interviews were conducted, recorded and transcribed. A methodical procedure of inductive thematic analysis was conducted to investigate patterns that surfaced from the interviews. These emerging patterns were then structured into themes, some of which were broken down into more detailed sub-themes. The findings were synthesized and juxtaposed against the previously published conceptual framework of Coaching Effectiveness.

A dual - inductive and deductive approach has been applied to emerge and analyze themes. In the first stage of the qualitative analysis, three distinct sessions have been selected to draw initial conclusions. The conclusions were then generalized to verify whether they can be validated against conclusions obtained from all 16 sessions. Themes obtained from all 16 sessions have then been juxtaposed against themes and conclusions obtained from selected three sessions to verify their validity and consistency.

Qualitative data analysis techniques were used to perform a comprehensive exploration of various coaching sessions, highlighting emerging themes. Advanced data analysis techniques were employed, such as tokenization, stop word removal, stemming, and Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency (TF-IDF), along with topic modeling using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA). LDA aided in uncovering latent themes by analyzing patterns of word distribution across the dataset. The most significant and recurring themes were then identified as the final themes, reflecting key aspects of the coaching sessions and client experiences. These methods enabled the identification of prevalent themes in coaching transcripts, offering insights into effective coaching sessions.

Findings

This section outlines findings from both quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted to evaluate coaching effectiveness. Both methods combined to develop a Coaching Effectiveness Framework that integrates quantitative data and qualitative insights. This section concludes with analysis of the advancements that the framework brings compared to the Cube of Coaching Effectiveness, which served as a starting point.

Quantitative

The Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire was developed around the constructs defined in the Cube of Coaching Effectiveness (Jarosz, 2023): performance, well-being, and coaching relationship. Initially the Performance section consisted of 14 items, Well-Being was measured with 8-item Flourishing Scale (Diener et al., 2009), and the Coaching Relationship scale consisted of 11 items. The Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire has been distributed online to over 1000 respondents and data has been collected over a span of three months. A total of 123 responses have been collected. Quantitative analyses were then carried out using SPSS to evaluate both the survey items and the constructs.

A correlation table was generated to examine the relationships among all survey items. The correlation table revealed four distinct clusters with moderately strong inter-relationships. Three of the clusters aligned with the items proposed in the Cube of Coaching Effectiveness model. That is, the highest relationships between the items were those hypothesized to measure the same construct. Examples of a few of these elevated inter-correlations are presented in Table 1.

Items P7, W3, and CR2 in the table were selected to exemplify these "clustered" variables. These represent items from the Performance, Well-Being, and Coaching Relationship constructs respectively. The columns include the other items in the same scale.

Table 1: Example Pearson's correlations of selected items

	P7		*W3*		*CR2*
P1	.368	W1	.703	CR1	.782
P2	.348	W2	.776	CR2	1.000
P3	.855	W3	1.000	CR3	.871
P4	.705	W4	.785	CR4	.821
P5	.528	W5	.548	CR5	.773
P6	.705	W6	.630	CR6	.383
P7	1.000	W7	.728	CR7	.345
P8	.821	W8	.767	CR8	.479
P9	.716			CR9	.792
P10	.797			CR10	.502
P11	.712			CR11	.893
P12	.652				
P13	.595				
P14	.282				

The elevated inter-correlations may indicate that strong and distinct factors were measured. To test this conjecture, Cronbach's alpha was employed to evaluate the internal reliability of each proposed construct, As demonstrated in Table 2, the initial results indicated a significant level of internal consistency for the Performance, Well-Being, and Coaching Relationships constructs.

Table 2: Internal reliability

Variable	*N*	Cronbach's Alpha
Performance	14	.937
Well-being	8	.943
Coaching Relationship	11	.937

After follow-up analyses, it was identified that dropping question items in the Performance and Coaching Relationship scales would increase the overall internal reliability for these constructs. Specifically, dropping three question items from the Performance scale, and two question items from the Coaching Relationship scale would raise both alpha results to .947 (see Table 3). These items were dropped to achieve the modest gains in alpha levels, to shorten the and make survey completion slightly easier and faster for future study participants.

Table 3: Internal reliability after removing items with low Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	*N*	Cronbach's Alpha
Performance	11	.947
Well-being	8	.943
Coaching Relationship	9	.947

Factor analysis also confirmed that there are three constructs statistically relevant for coaching effectiveness - performance, well-being and the coaching relationship.

Qualitative

Qualitative data analysis methods enabled the identification of prevalent themes in coaching transcripts, offering insights into effective coaching strategies, client stories, the emotional impact of coaching sessions, or the impact of coaching on behavioral change amongst others.

Main themes and sub-themes

Client stories, experiences, discussed needs, goals and desires oscillated around 2 main general topics: client's professional performance and client's well-being. These themes may have been brought up by the client at the beginning of the session as part of the session agenda or could have emerged in the coaching process as the actual underlying theme. This conclusion allowed to highlight two overarching themes: (1) performance (capturing the tangible results, achievements, and progress of the client in various domains) and (2) well-being (reflecting the mental and emotional state of the client).

Performance had the following related sub-themes (selected examples):

- Goal Setting: Clients define professional success and set clear, measurable goals.
- Boosting Productivity: Clients are guided to work efficiently and maintain quality.
- Professional Growth: Sessions stress continuous improvement and professional development. Specific work challenges are addressed during the coaching sessions.

Well-being had the following related sub-themes (selected examples):

- Behavioral Change: Clients analyze and adjust behaviors, replacing detrimental patterns with beneficial ones.
- Positive Results: Clients see improvements and celebrate successes as part of the coaching journey.
- Emphasis on Support: Clients are encouraged to seek support and collaborate, highlighting community importance.

Another theme that emerged from qualitative data analysis was "Relationship Dynamics and Understanding" with its working definition: "focusing on the interpersonal aspects between coach and client, emphasizing mutual understanding". The following related sub-themes were found (selected examples):

- Open Feedback and Active Engagement: A foundation of mutual respect ensures effective feedback, with sessions tailored to client needs, goals, and perspectives.
- Goal Guidance and Empowerment: Clients are aided in setting and achieving clear goals while being encouraged to lead their growth and reflect.
- Client-Centric Approach and Safe Communication: Coaches prioritize client-focused sessions in a confidential and respectful environment, promoting a genuine bond.

There were a few sub-themes that appeared across multiple main themes:

- Trust in Coaching (coaching relationship and well-being): This sub-theme shows up for both coaching relationship and well-being. Coaching sessions foster a safe space for client vulnerability and trust.
- Work-Life Balance (performance and well-being): The struggle to balance work with personal life was addressed. Coaching aimed to help clients navigate these changes and find equilibrium.
- Holistic Application of Insights (performance and well-being): Insights were not limited to just professional scenarios but also how changes can positively impact their overall well-being and relationships. Clients were encouraged to apply learnings to broader life contexts.

Upon further analysis, only three aggregated themes have been kept for further analysis. Sub-themes have been organized and simplified across all three main themes: coaching relationship, well-being, performance in the next stage of research that ultimately lead to derivation of the Coaching Effectiveness Framework.

Selected elements, tools, techniques & theories used in effective coaching sessions

The interviews with coaching practitioners highlighted numerous elements, tools, techniques and theories that made the coaching sessions effective and allowed for the clients' growth along a transformational trajectory. Some of the examples of elements that made the coaching session successful are using targeted exercises, techniques and tools, application of learnings, addressing obstacles, personalized approach, empowerment and action, and continuous feedback and reflection.

Interviews with coaching practitioners identified several key factors for effective coaching and client growth. Here are some examples: (1) Targeted Exercises: specific techniques help clients address challenges and find solutions; (2) Addressing Obstacles: identifying and strategizing to overcome obstacles is essential for progress; (3) Empowerment and Action: coaches encourage clients to act on insights and empower them; (4) Continuous Feedback: regular assessments help clients align with their goals.

Practitioners also highlighted effective tools and theories which help foster greater self-awareness and growth in clients: (1) Success Stories: sharing examples inspires clients and demonstrates coaching impact; (2) Externalizing Triggers: clients visualize emotional triggers to create distance from them; (3) Behavioral Agility: helps clients adapt to changes and respond to challenges; (4) Social Comparison Theory: Promotes self-awareness by understanding how clients compare themselves to others.

Implicit assumptions and further steps of the Qualitative stage

The effectiveness of the coach was an implicit assumption in the qualitative stage of research. It encompasses the coach's overall ability to facilitate positive change in the client. The interviews focusing on coaching stories provide examples of effective coaching sessions, indicating the effectiveness of the coach in guiding the client toward desired outcomes.

In all the coaching stories the clients have been supported by their organizations, direct managers or people close to them in participating in a coaching process. The organizational context of coaching has not been added to the proposed coaching effectiveness mechanism.

All elements of the effective coaching sessions that contributed to the client's success have been distributed accordingly to augment the three main themes. As indicated in all transcripts, the Coaching Relationship remains the primary variable that impacts the outcomes. Given its prominence in the transcripts from the qualitative research stage, it's evident that the dynamic between the coach and the client is pivotal to the coaching process.

Coaching Effectiveness Framework: Theoretical Setup

Quantitative research stage confirmed that there are three concepts significant to coaching effectiveness: performance of the client, well-being of the client and the coaching relationship. Conclusions derived from the qualitative stage allowed us to match concepts significant for coaching effectiveness (performance, well-being and coaching relationship) with those confirmed through the quantitative research stage. Following the findings obtained through qualitative and quantitative research, we propose a scientifically grounded framework explaining what determines coaching effectiveness.

Coaching Relationship and its components

The effectiveness of the coach has been an implicit assumption of the qualitative stage of research. All elements of the effective coaching sessions that contributed to the client's success have been taken into account when proposing a final set of components included in the characterization of the Coaching Relationship.

1. Effectiveness of the coach.
   Coach's capability to foster meaningful impact and facilitate goal achievement for the client. Encompasses the tangible skill development and behavioral changes fostered by the coach.
2. Coach's Knowledge, Tools & Techniques used.
   Skills, methods, and instruments employed by the coach.
3. Core elements of the coaching relationship.
   Examples: trust, safe environment, empathy, active-listening, client-centered, strength-focus, goal-orientation, empowerment.

The wording of these components has been chosen so that this characterization allows to bridge the qualitative and quantitative stage of research.

Bridging the qualitative and quantitative research

The interviews combined revealed that through their stories, the coaches referred to all the blocks that were confirmed in the qualitative stage and all the components referred to through questions of the validated Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire. Some of the examples are:

- clients bringing up their engagement at work or communication with the team as part of their conversation about performance during the coaching session;
- coaches highlighting the importance of allowing their clients to admit mistakes, discuss them and learn from them; discussing alternative solutions; connecting with the client or discussing matters that are of high relevance to the client;
- coaches discussing particular techniques, coaching knowledge or specific approaches that helped their clients during the coaching process;
- coaches referred to a lot of skills and elements that created a successful coaching relationship and an effective coaching process: offering a safe and open environment, unconditional positive regard, leveraging clients' strengths, or creating a clear plan of action[1].

All these elements have been included in the Performance part of the Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire and through the quantitative stage of research confirmed as theoretically valid and relevant.

Coaching Effectiveness Framework: The Proposal

Synthesizing the results obtained through the quantitative and qualitative stages of research, we propose the following Coaching Effectiveness Framework:

Figure 3: Coaching Effectiveness Framework
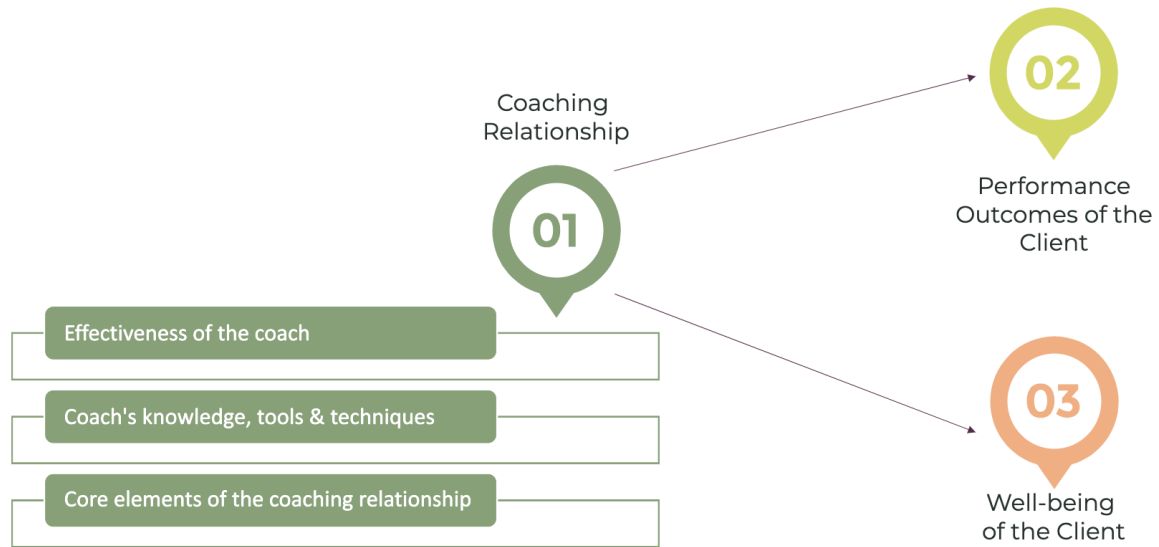
In the proposed framework, the coaching effectiveness is characterized by the impact of the coaching relationship on performance of the client and well-being of the client. Coaching relationships are further characterized by: (1) the effectiveness of the coach, (2) coach's knowledge, tools and techniques used, and (3) core elements of the coaching relationship.

In this framework, well-being is characterized by a well-defined concept of flourishing and measured with the flourishing scale (Diener et al., 2010). Some examples of performance characteristics are ability to lead the team, communication level, and engagement level (Akram & Zepeda, 2016; Fernández-Llano et al., 2023; Jarosz, 2021). The coaching relationship, the effectiveness of the coach, the coaching skills, tools, techniques, and the core elements of the coaching relationship have been discussed thoroughly in the original framework of coaching effectiveness (Jarosz, 2023).

Coaching Effectiveness Framework: The Advancements

Coaching Effectiveness Framework incorporates several key elements from the original Cube of Coaching Effectiveness model, while also reflecting significant advancements informed by the latest empirical research. The most notable integration is the validation of the three primary variables - performance, well-being, and the coaching relationship - which were confirmed as central to coaching effectiveness through both the quantitative and qualitative stages of the study. The following have also been identified as key contributions to the advancements provided by the Coaching Effectiveness Framework.

1. Confirmation of key variables:
   In the quantitative stage, the Coaching Effectiveness Questionnaire was validated, confirming that performance outcomes, well-being of the client, and the coaching relationship are integral components of effective coaching. The data gathered provided empirical support for these variables, ensuring their reliability within the framework.
2. Advancements beyond initial assumptions:
   When compared to the original Cube of Coaching Effectiveness, significant developments have emerged:

   • The relationship between performance, well-being, and the coaching relationship has been further refined. In the original model, these were treated as independent variables. However,

the updated framework reveals that the coaching relationship is not an isolated factor; instead, it directly impacts both performance and well-being.

- The coaching relationship has been detailed further. It now comprises three core dimensions that drive its effectiveness:

  a)The effectiveness of the coach in terms of their ability to influence client outcomes.

  b) The knowledge, tools, and techniques employed by the coach, which have been empirically validated as essential.

  c) The core elements of the coaching relationship, including trust, rapport, and communication dynamics.

3. Empirical foundation of the updated framework:
   Unlike the original conceptual model, the Coaching Effectiveness Framework presented here is empirically derived. Through a mixed-methods approach, involving both quantitative validation and qualitative insights, the model is grounded in a strong foundation of academic research and practical data from both coaching clients and coaching practitioners. This has made the framework not only theoretically robust but also more practical and applicable in real-world coaching contexts.

4. Influence on client outcomes:
   The updated framework further elaborates that the coaching relationship is the central driver of client outcomes, influencing both performance and well-being. This nuanced understanding provides a more cohesive view of how relational dynamics between the coach and the client can lead to improved coaching results, marking a key development from the initial Cube of Coaching Effectiveness model.

Conclusion

This paper aims to connect past theoretical research on coaching effectiveness with current organizational practices and offer a comprehensive framework that could be used in a practical setting. This study reviews scientific literature, integrating theories from over seven decades, as well as robust findings from extensive qualitative and quantitative research and the Coaching Effectiveness questionnaire validation process conducted by the authors. As a result, a Coaching Effectiveness Framework is proposed. It is a practical framework for defining and measuring effectiveness in the workplace, focusing on competencies, behaviors, and outcomes.

The presented framework has its limitations and requires further empirical verification in a practical, organizational setting. It would allow for verification of hypotheses about the relationships between the variables, the direction of impact and the magnitude. This limitation sets an immediate direction for future research. Future studies should investigate the specific coach and client behaviors that *consistently* lead to successful outcomes, particularly in terms of performance improvement and well-being. Future research should extend beyond individual outcomes to examine organizational-level impact of coaching in the context of its effectiveness. Long-term research is needed to understand how coaching effectiveness evolves over time and how sustained coaching interventions influence continuous growth and development.

This study's framework of coaching effectiveness has multiple practical uses in organizational settings. The Coaching Effectiveness Framework offers organizations a structured approach to measure and improve coaching interventions by assessing both performance and well-being outcomes. It emphasizes the importance of the coach-client relationship, helping organizations refine coach selection and training by identifying key competencies. Additionally, the framework focuses on behavioral and skill development, ensuring coaching programs are aligned with

organizational goals. It serves as a valuable tool for HR professionals to understand and leverage coaching for employee development. By integrating regular evaluations of coaching effectiveness, organizations can track long-term impact, enabling continuous improvement and fostering enhanced employee performance and organizational success.

The Coaching Effectiveness Framework significantly contributes to both academic and organizational fields by addressing a crucial gap in measuring coaching outcomes. This comprehensive, empirically validated framework offers organizations a standardized approach to assess and enhance coaching effectiveness, focusing on areas such as performance, well-being, and the coach-client relationship. By grounding the framework in organizational applications like employee development or leadership enhancement, it demonstrates practical relevance while also advancing theoretical understandings of key factors in coaching success. The framework offers actionable insights into essential coaching skills and behaviors that enhance coaching effectiveness. Additionally, it guides future coaching training and education by identifying key skills and behaviors necessary for successful coaching. The broad impact of the Coaching Effectiveness Framework lies in guiding future research, driving measurement of coaching effectiveness, improving coach training, and influencing the development of more effective coaching programs across diverse organizational contexts.

Endnotes

[1] ↵
More details on which components have been assigned as defining for coaching relationship, well-being and performance, are in the 'Cube of Coaching Effectiveness' (Jarosz, 2023).

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