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The warmness seed: long-term fruits of coaching

Paulo Lopes Henriques, Carla Curado and Pedro Verga Matos
ISEG (Lisbon School of Economics & Management), University of Lisboa, Lisboa, Portugal

ABSTRACT
This study addresses three coach behaviours’ effects (warmness behaviour (WB); stimulating action (SA) and planning and structuring activities (PSA)) in two dimensions of coaching outcomes (coachee’s performance (CP) and the quality of the coach–coachee relationship (QCCR)). The paper argues that coaching is a helpful tool to achieve greater performances in the long run when considering coaches who present higher levels of maturity. Results reveal the positive impact of SA and PSA over CP and QCCR. The adoption of WB has a negative impact on CP and a positive impact on the QCCR. Evidence also supports the relevancy of coaching experience over coaching training. Such results pose a paradox worth exploring in subsequent studies, for it challenges the usefulness of coaches’ training. Contributions are related to introducing the concept of WB within the organisational context and addressing two different time horizons regarding the coach behaviour.

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KEYWORDS
Coaching; coach’s behaviours; coaching outcomes; warmness

Practice points

- To which field of practice area(s) in coaching is your contribution directly relevant?
  The research shows that (a) coaches’ experience are significant to coachee’s performance (CP) and the quality of the coach–coachee relationship (QCCR); and (b) having coaching training is not significant; on the other hand, having experience in coaching is far more effective than having training on coaching.

- What do you see as the primary contribution your submission makes to coaching practice?
  Contributions are related to introducing the concept of warmness behaviour (WB) within the organisational context and addressing two different time horizons regarding the coach behaviour. Result raises a paradox regarding age. Age affects CP negatively and presents no effect on the QCCR, which appears to be a contradiction in terms, since experience and age usually go along.

- What are its tangible implications for practitioners?
  - coaches are invited to better plan their activities;
  - having an emphatic approach to coaches pays off;

CONTACT Paulo Lopes Henriques lopeshen@doc.iseg.utl.pt, lopeshen@iseg.utl.pt
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- it is important to outline the coaching objectives in terms of time horizons in order to better mix the portfolio of coaching behaviours.

**Positioning the coaching action**

The quality of the relationship established between a coach and a coachee is of great relevance to the coaching outcomes (De Haan, Duckworth, Birch, & Jones, 2013; Grant, 2014; Greensfelder, 2012; Palmer & Mc Dowall, 2010, p. 39; Pousa & Mathieu, 2015). Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) and Smither and Reilly (2001) propose several stages for an effective coaching process: (1) establishing a relationship of trust between the coach and the coachee; (2) evaluating the coachee and the professional setting in which he or she works; (3) providing feedback on this evaluation to the coachee; (4) establishing a development plan and setting goals; (5) implementing the behaviours to be developed or improved and (6) evaluating the progress achieved. According to Wasylyshyn (2003), effective coaches present (1) the ability to form a strong connection with the coachee; (2) professionalism and (3) the use of a clear and sound methodology. The coaching relationship provides the opportunity for a ‘communal interdependence’ which supports the sense making of both the coach and the coachee (Gergen 1994, p. 96). The literature supports that coaching is positively and significantly linked to individual performance (Bourg, Stoltzfus, McManus, & Peggy, 2010; Hagen, 2010; Smither, 2011; Smither, London, Flautt, Vargas, & Kucine, 2003). According to Bluckert (2005), (1) coaches are focused on improving learning and coachees' developing, leading to the increase in their performance, and (2) coaches are concerned with coachees' personal growth. Smither (2011) indicates that further research is needed on effective coaches’ characteristics exploring the effect of coaches’ backgrounds (e.g. training or experience). The literature associates the coaching relationship to coaching outcomes (Baron & Morin, 2009; Grant, 2014; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011), suggesting that a good coach–coachee relationship is positively related to the success of coaching (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Kilburg, 2001; Lowman, 2005). According to Baron and Morin (2009), there are few reported studies on the coach–coachee relationship and the effectiveness of coaching. Research has further advanced the notion that a positive working alliance between the coach and the coachee is a critical condition of coaching success (Lowman, 2005). Following gaps in the literature, this study searches for coaching outcomes (1) by assessing the performance of coaches and (2) by addressing the quality of the coach–coachee relationship. Such dimensions suggest a double time pressure to deliver results: performance seems to focus on the short run, whereas the quality of the relationship appears to take a long-run approach.

**Coach’s behaviours and hypothesis development**

According to Grant (2014), the ingredients of the coach–coachee relationship impact on the coaching outcomes. Neveins-Stanulis and Ames (2009) suggest that effective coaches differentiate their coaching behaviours, developing a repertoire of coaching behaviours. Coaches have a duty to act as leaders and are responsible for the performance of their coachees; they need to exhibit emotions (Jones, Armour, & Potrac, 2002).
Similarly, Sherish, Hassan, Muhammad, and Muhammad (2012) point out that coaching is about changing the behaviours of the coachees. On the other hand, the literature also supports the importance of having specific training and preparation to act as a coach (Bourg et al., 2010). A coach is someone who helps people to achieve a desired outcome, by establishing a special relationship between him or her and the coachee and placing the emphasis on nurturing behaviours (Downey, 1999; Moe & Kvalsund, 2008; Zeus & Skiffington, 2002). This description focusing on the relationship and increasing the effectiveness of coachees proved to be much helpful when developing the constructs used in the study. The following prior quantitative empirical studies examine coaching: Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic (2006); Luthans & Peterson (2003) and Smither et al. (2003).

A coach is someone who helps people to achieve a desired outcome, by establishing a special relationship between him or her and the coachee and placing the emphasis on nurturing behaviours (Downey, 1999; Moe & Kvalsund, 2008; Zeus & Skiffington, 2002). Although some coachees expect strict and direct feedback from the coach, others need a more sensitive and caring action from the coach. Coaches face the challenge of respecting their coachees’ uniqueness and tailor their style and approach accordingly (Newsom & Dent, 2010). Maintaining a strong and productive relationship between coaches and coachees is more important than the professional attitude and the working methods of the coach (Bluckert, 2005; Wasylyshyn, 2003) in achieving successful coaching outcomes; however, no concrete relations to explicit behaviours have been identified. Glickman, Gordon, and Ross-Gordon (2010) present a range of interpersonal coaching styles ranging from a non-directive one (listening, encouraging and reflective behaviours) to a collaborative one (presenting and negotiation behaviours) or a directive one (directing and reinforcing behaviours), inviting studies on the effects of coaches’ behaviours. Believing that organisations have increasingly more competitive cultures in response to environmental changes and market challenges, coaching in organisations may be considered an equivalent to coaching in sports. Such parallelism allows adopting the perspective of Self-Determination Theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 2000, 2008, 2012). According to SDT, the underlying reasons for individuals to engage in activities vary from being related to external outcomes, to being integrated with the self. As the external reasons for participating become internalised, they become coherent with the individual’s values or objectives and the individual experiences higher quality motivation and increased positive outcomes (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Coaches’ autonomy-supportive coaching (ASC) involves coaches relating to their athletes in such a manner that they provide choices in line with specific rules and limits, display patience in relation to their learning process, acknowledge their perspectives, give them a rationale for the various tasks and limits, and provide them with opportunities to solve their technical problems independently (Rocchi, Pelletier, & Couture, 2013). Such relationship seems to be very similar to coaching in organisations; thus, adaptations of the SDT and the ASC rationales are used in this paper. Considering that ‘a focus on skills and behaviours of coaching would be a valuable asset to both scholars and practitioners’ (Hagen, 2010, p. 796), the present study further develops the coaching behaviours analysis and suggests three coaching behaviours: WB, stimulating action (SA) and planning and structuring activities (PSA), adding to Glickman et al.’s (2010) work.
**Warmness behaviour**

The effectiveness of the coaching process involves asking questions, listening and encouraging (Bennett, 2006). Peers and colleagues at work may be reluctant to give straight and direct feedback to one another; still the coach is expected to do so. Some supervisors require coaching to be delivered in a tactful, sensitive and caring manner; others insist that the coach should tell it as it is (Boyce, Jackson, & Neal, 2010).

Although the precise list of coaching competencies continues to be debated (e.g. Visser, 2010), the set of knowledge, skills and abilities appears to converge on certain core competencies (Graham, Wedman, & Garvin-Kester, 1994; International Coach Federation, 2008; Poteet & Kudisch, 2006) and qualifications (Wasylyshyn, 2003). Among all proficiencies listed in the literature on a coach’s aptitudes, the WB – the dimension of coaching relating to coaches having a positive feeling of liking coachees (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2006) – seems to be understudied. Giving the Social Cognition Theory (Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007), warmness might be linked to characters associated with a positive approach to the other person’s perspectives and intentions towards us, including affability, helpfulness and trustworthiness. This approach follows the critical work of Rogers (1961) proposing that the quality of a relationship (namely, the therapeutic relationship) is not only based on hard skills, but is also a function of the accurate and empathic understanding of client needs. This ‘client-centred thinking’ perspective (Bluckert, 2005) includes tactful and genuine caring, communicated in a meaningful and warm way, creating an effective relationship between both partners.

Following Newsom and Dent (2010), some coaching dimensions focus on the coach–coachee relationship. The relatedness between the coach and the coachee refers to mutual actions, from which individuals can be viewed as both receiving and providing love, care and support. It concerns individuals’ desire to be in a secure communion with others, feeling an emotional and personal bond to other individuals (Rocchi et al., 2013; Ryan, 1991; Solstad, van Hoye, & Ommundsen, 2015). Such aspects of the relationship include clear understanding of the coachee’s concerns and challenges; establishing trust, honesty and respect in the relationship; and the knowledge and use of counselling theories and techniques, similarly to the working alliance presented within the psychotherapeutic literature that embodies trust, warmth and respect for the client’s autonomy (Grant, 2014; Lampropoulos, 2000). The ability of the coach to display empathy and also to act openly and honestly in the coaching relationship is essential to build a ‘coaching partnership’ between the coach and the coachee (Passmore, 2007). This study proposes WB to be a dimension of coaching that relates to a friendly disposition and warmness towards the coachees (as in Keinde, 2013). Thus:

H1A: WB has a positive effect on CP.

H1B: WB has a positive effect on the QCCR.

**Stimulating action**

Due to the difficulty in observing the basic assumptions of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) rationality and volitional control, Ajzen (1985) introduced the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which extended the TRA adopting the variable perceived behavioural
control (PBC). PBC addresses a person’s perception of ease or difficulty to perform a behaviour (Ajzen, 1991), and it is related to Bandura’s (1982) self-efficacy concept, referring to perceptions of control over internal resources. This means that PBC is supposed to influence behaviours both directly and indirectly (via intention). In accordance, people are more likely to engage in behaviours they think they have control over, and the formation of goals is more likely to occur when individuals believe it is easier to perform the associated behaviour. Since coachees believe they are able to adopt the desired behaviours, the coaches’ role shifts from starting and motivating the process of change to the need of keeping the coachees on the right track. According to Newsom and Dent (2010), coaches should stimulate coachees (make them believe that adopting a certain behaviour is easy, thus promoting the change) while coaching them. One of the key challenges of coaching is assisting internal motivation of coachees (Owler, 2012). ASC involves autonomy-supportive interpersonal behaviours playing an important role in dyadic interactions (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003; Rocchi et al., 2013) and resulting in important implications on the coachee’s motivation (Bartholomew, Ntoumanis, Ryan, Bosch, & Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2011). Moreover, considering the coach–coachee relationship, a similar approach to supervisor–subordinate can be suggested. Supervisors support their subordinates’ need for autonomy, ultimately helping them to meet their needs, and therefore increasing self-determined motivation (Pelletier, Seguin-Levesque, & Legault, 2002); this study proposes that such reasoning also applies to coach–coachee relationships. The similar dimension of coaching relating to getting coachees to take action and move forward – SA (Hayes & Kalmakis, 2007) – seems to be understudied. Nevertheless, the motivation to maintain the desired behaviour tends to erode over time. The eroding process imposes the necessity to protect each one from attending and responding to distractions (Bayer, Gollwitzer, & Achtziger, 2010). Resilience is important for the coaching activity which aims to help others to move and change (Corcoran, Petersen, Baitch, & Barrett, 1995; Rich, 1998). Coaching should encourage coaches to commit to the highest levels in order to achieve results (The Executive Coaching Forum, 2008, p. 28). Consequently, SA could be a dimension of coaching that relates to motivating coachees for high accomplishments and giving them solid support to never abandon the desired behaviour. Thus:

H2A: SA has a positive effect on CP.

H2B: SA has a positive effect on the QCCR.

Planning and structuring activities

Kilburg (1997) outlines predictability and reliability as characteristics of successful coaching relationships. Newsom and Dent (2010) addressed the administrative dimension of successful coaching relationships. The coach–coachee relationship may assume a structured format following a pre-existing coaching agreement establishing the purpose and goals of the coaching sessions; the duration of sessions; the content of the sessions; the responsibilities’ definition and the limits of confidentiality associated with the relationship and its termination (Bourg et al., 2010). When structuring the way the coaching process will happen, the coach defines the format, schedules and length of the periodic coaching sessions. The structured sessions will monitor and reinforce activities, modify plans and discuss ways of overcome barriers (Feldman, 2001).
Coaching provides systematic approaches, including action planning (Eby, McManus, Simon, & Russell, 2000; Joo, 2005). The way in which coaches structure practices and training has important motivational implications (Amorose & Anderson-Butcher, 2007). Bono, Purvanova, Towler, and Peterson (2009) address the ubiquity of coaching interventions in business organisations, and find little uniformity in the practices (e.g. assessment tools, activities, goals and outcome evaluation methods) of executive coaches; it seems there is the need to establish routines and procedures in the coaching activity. The best practice for a successful coaching relationship relates to having a written contract defining the terms of performance to avoid any misunderstanding. Such contract terms should cover very different aspects of the relationship. In particular, the ones regarding practical definitions of how to operate in the context of the coach–coachee relationship are very important. Accordingly, this study proposes PSA to be the dimension of coaching relating to coaches establishing the procedures and routines to organise the interactions with the coachee, resulting in creating a methodical environment that frames the relationship. Thus:

H3A: PSA have a positive effect on CP.
H3B: PSA have a positive effect on the QCCR.

Data and results

Data collection

Based upon a literature review, a survey on coaches’ perceptions about their work behaviours and coachees’ performance was used to collect data. Following previous work on coach behaviours (Gordon & Brobeck, 2010; Hann, 2007), the questionnaire was intended for coaches only. Data collection instrument validation followed several steps: statement generation, statement item refinement and format refinement and, finally, pilot-testing of the questionnaire with experts. Statements regarding the coach’s behaviours (WB, SA and PSA) were generated considering the relevant literature and contributions from specialists. This process resulted in an initial list of 37 statements. A focus group composed of four experts in coaching was convened to refine the items and provide suggestions for new statements or statement adjustment, deletion and/or addition. The focus group initial meeting was followed by several rounds of email correspondence (as in Cabaniss, 2002), resulting in a final list that included 17 statements. The final statements were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (0 – The sentence does not apply to me; to 4 – The sentence applies to me completely). A pilot test was conducted using a pool of 20 coaches from different firms to provide feedback regarding the format, content and time needed to complete the questionnaire. Based on the feedback received, final appropriate refinements were made. To avoid issues of common method variance, following Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, and Podsakoff (2003) when preparing the questionnaire, several measures were taken to reduce the common method variance; the scale used intents to eliminate the possible notion of right or wrong answer. Additionally, the questions’ order was counterbalanced when designing the questionnaire and during the collection of the data, total anonymity was guaranteed to all respondents, and all information that could serve as back-tracking from the questionnaire to the respondent was removed.
Exploratory factor analysis was conducted to determine the underlying factor structure, and five factors emerged (see Appendix): WB, PSA, SA, CP and QCCR.

**Data sampling**

In order to pursue the objectives of this study, data based on coaches’ self-reports were used. That seems to be appropriate given the nature of the study focusing on the coach’s behaviour. As an attempt to better reflect the reality, different types of organisations (national and multinational) were included in the mailing list. Initially, 521 questionnaires were sent to randomly selected coaches working at 33 different medium and large private Portuguese firms. Alongside the questionnaire, an invitation letter to participate in the study was sent to all participants. A total of 334 surveys returned (65% response rate); due to excessive lack of data, 15 surveys were dropped off, and the remaining 319 provided empirical evidence to the study (for demographic data, see Table 1). The coaches in the sample are mostly female (59.9%), aged 43 years on average, 65.5% of them not holding a postgraduate degree (MSc or Ph.D.) and 58.9% of them performing supervising functions. Regarding their experience as coaches, 56.4% of them report having coached more than 30 coaches, and they declare to have been doing so for more than 4 years on average. The majority of the coaches (85%) report having received special training as coaches (see Table 1 for descriptive statistics).

**Model, results and discussion**

A cross-sectional ordinary least squares (OLS) multivariate regression model was used to test the hypotheses as follows (Figure 1).

The findings in Table 2 suggest that the three coaching behaviours considered play an important and statistically significant role in explaining the perceptions of the coaches’ work (CP and QCCR). The results support the majority of the hypothesis. F-statistics are significant at the 1% level and adjusted $R^2$ indicates a good fit for both models. All of the $\beta_j$ estimated values are statistically significant at the 5% level for the three coaching behaviours. The effect of PSA and SA is positive in both models, and WB presents a negative effect on CP ($\beta_j = -0.146$) and a positive effect on the QCCR ($\beta_j = 0.127$).

According to the results, the outcome of coaches’ work (measured by CP and the QCCR) is superior when considering male and more experienced coaches. The results also show that coaches having specific training in coaching has no effect on the outcome of coaches’ work – estimates for $\beta_j$’s are not significantly different from zero in both models. Regarding H1A, ‘WB has a positive effect on the CP’, the results do not support it ($\beta = -0.146; p = .002$), and consequently, this hypothesis is rejected. Considering H1B, ‘WB has a positive effect on the QCCR’, the hypothesis is not rejected ($\beta = -0.127; p = .011$), following previous literature on the need to build a ‘coaching partnership’ between the coach and the coachee (Grant, 2014; Newsom & Dent, 2010; Passmore, 2007). Rejecting H1A and not rejecting H1B seem to be consistent with and supportive of Bluckert’s (2005) rationale for categorising coaches into two main categories: (1) coaches who are focused on improving learning and developing the coachees, and this way leading to increases in their performances; and (2) coaches who are concerned with the personal growth of the coachees. Such results seem to support that coaches concerned with warmness do not focus on results.
Table 1. Descriptive statistics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. deviation</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Gender</td>
<td>0.599</td>
<td>0.491</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Age</td>
<td>43.451</td>
<td>8.794</td>
<td>0.390**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Academic degree</td>
<td>0.655</td>
<td>0.476</td>
<td>0.173**</td>
<td>0.232**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Training</td>
<td>0.850</td>
<td>0.358</td>
<td>−0.184**</td>
<td>−0.237**</td>
<td>−0.139*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5. N. of coachees</td>
<td>0.376</td>
<td>0.485</td>
<td>−0.011</td>
<td>−0.216**</td>
<td>0.032</td>
<td>0.128*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Experience (years)</td>
<td>4.549</td>
<td>3.616</td>
<td>0.052</td>
<td>0.374**</td>
<td>−0.085</td>
<td>0.076</td>
<td>−0.247**</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Stimulating action</td>
<td>3.120</td>
<td>0.567</td>
<td>−0.066</td>
<td>−0.051</td>
<td>−0.023</td>
<td>0.318**</td>
<td>−0.292**</td>
<td>0.059</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Planning and structuring activities</td>
<td>3.342</td>
<td>0.547</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>0.176**</td>
<td>0.049</td>
<td>−0.223**</td>
<td>−0.042</td>
<td>−0.086</td>
<td>0.417**</td>
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<td>9. Warmness</td>
<td>3.177</td>
<td>0.601</td>
<td>−0.302**</td>
<td>−0.078</td>
<td>−0.259**</td>
<td>0.435**</td>
<td>−0.146**</td>
<td>−0.004</td>
<td>0.445**</td>
<td>0.262**</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Coachee’s performance</td>
<td>3.370</td>
<td>0.601</td>
<td>−0.199**</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>−0.058</td>
<td>0.011</td>
<td>−0.473**</td>
<td>0.366**</td>
<td>0.532**</td>
<td>0.456**</td>
<td>0.233**</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>11. Quality of relationship</td>
<td>3.556</td>
<td>0.565</td>
<td>−0.145**</td>
<td>0.144**</td>
<td>−0.155**</td>
<td>0.089</td>
<td>−0.319**</td>
<td>0.241**</td>
<td>0.536**</td>
<td>0.522**</td>
<td>0.444***</td>
<td>0.802**</td>
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</tr>
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</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

\[ Y_i = \alpha + \sum j \beta_j S_j + \sum k \delta_k D_k + \xi_i, \]

where \( Y_i \) – coachee’s performance (\( i = 1 \)) and quality of relationship (\( i = 2 \)); \( \beta_j \) – estimate of parameters for variables (\( j = 1, 2, 3 \)); \( S_1 \) – warmth; \( S_2 \) – planning and structuring activities; \( S_3 \) – stimulating action; \( \delta_k \) – estimate of control variable’s parameters: \( D_1 \) – gender dummy variable (\( D_1 = 1 \) woman; \( D_1 = 0 \) man), \( D_2 \) – coach age, \( D_3 \) – dummy variable reflecting the academic degree of the coach (\( D_3 = 1 \) holding a bachelor degree or less; \( D_3 = 0 \) holding postgraduate degrees), \( D_4 \) – specific training in coaching (\( D_4 = 1 \) training; \( D_4 = 0 \) no training), \( D_5 \) – dummy variable associated with the number of coachees (\( D_5 = 1 \) if <21; \( D_5 = 0 \) if ≥21), \( D_6 \) – no. of years of coach’s experience; \( \xi_i \) – the residual value.
\[ Y_i = \alpha + \sum \beta_j S_j + \sum \delta_k D_k + \xi_i \]

Where:
- \( Y_i \) – Coachee’s performance \((i = 1)\), Quality of relationship \((i = 2)\);
- \( \beta_j \) – estimates of parameters for variables \((j = 1, 2, 3)\); 
- \( S_j \) – warmth behavior;
- \( S_j \) – planning and structuring activities;
- \( S_k \) – stimulating action;
- \( \delta_k \) – estimates for control variable’s parameters:
  - \( D_1 \) – gender dummy variable \((D_1 = 1, \text{woman}; D_1 = 0, \text{man})\);
  - \( D_2 \) – coach age;
  - \( D_3 \) – dummy variable reflecting the academic degree of the coach \((D_3 = 1, \text{holding a bachelor degree or less}; D_3 = 0, \text{having postgraduate studies})\);
  - \( D_4 \) – specific training in coaching \((D_4 = 1, \text{training}; D_4 = 0, \text{no training})\);
  - \( D_5 \) – dummy variable associated with the number of coachees \((D_5 = 1 \text{if} \leq 21; D_5 = 0 \text{if} > 21)\);
  - \( D_6 \) – n. of years of coach’s experience
- \( \xi_i \) – residual value.

**Figure 1.** OLS multivariate regression model.

**Table 2.** Models testing results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanatory variables</th>
<th>Coachee’s performance ((Y_1))</th>
<th>Quality of relationship ((Y_2))</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>Sig.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warmness</td>
<td>-.146</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning and structuring activities</td>
<td>.501</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stimulating action</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Training</td>
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<td>.340</td>
</tr>
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<td>No. of coachees</td>
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<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience (years)</td>
<td>.059</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusted (R^2)</td>
<td>.629</td>
<td>.531</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(F)</td>
<td>60.976</td>
<td>41.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(N)</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
achievement in the short run; instead, they are more concerned with turning their coachees into greater employees and therefore sustain the business in the long term.

Concerning H2A, ‘SA has a positive effect on CP’, and H2B, ‘SA has a positive effect on the QCCR’, the results allow us to accept both hypotheses (H2A: $\beta = .264$; $p = .000$; H2B: $\beta = .229$; $p = .000$). Not rejecting the two hypotheses emphasises the relevancy of the coaches’ actions over the coachees’ work result, and supporting the relationship. Such results seem to offer the argument that the different roles of a coach fight the eroding process over one’s motivation to keep the desired behaviour (Bayer et al., 2010; Bluckert, 2005).

Accepting H3A, ‘PSA have a positive effect on CP’, and H3B, ‘PSA have a positive effect on the QCCR’, (H3A: $\beta = .501$; $p = .000$; H3B: $\beta = .425$; $p = .000$) supports the notion that different dimensions of coaching (Bluckert, 2005) benefit from the use of activities of planning and structuring. Such results seem to indicate that activities such as (1) defining the purposes and goals of the coaching sessions, (2) the accurate definition of sessions’ length, (3) the content of each session, (4) the coachees’ responsibilities’ definition and (5) the limits of confidentiality associated with the relationship and its termination (Bourg et al., 2010) are not only significant to the achievement of the QCCR, but also to accomplish CP.

Considering gender, number of coachees and experience, the results show the same effect over CP and the QCCR: the outcome is enhanced when considering male coaches having coached more coachees and for longer. On the other hand, there are significant differences in the influence of age, academic degree and specific training. Age plays a negative effect on CP ($\beta_j = -0.007$) and has no significant effect on the QCCR ($p = .133$). When considering postgraduate studies, the circumstance of coaches holding higher academic degrees (MSc or Ph.D.) has no significant effect on CP ($p = .970$), but has a negative effect on the QCCR ($\beta_j = -0.121$). Having an academic degree does not influence coachees’ performance, since it cannot improve or diminish the performance of another than the person holding it. Holding a higher academic degree deteriorates the QCCR. Considering the study took place in Portugal and given the national culture dimensions (Hofstede, 2001), the results are probably due to Portuguese culture characteristics of high power distance or formality in interpersonal daily treatment. Specific training in coaching is not a significant explanatory variable in both models; having specific training in coaching has no real influence on either CP or the QCCR.

Conclusions, limitations and research consequences

The study fills in a gap in coaching research by addressing the results of coaching activity into two different ways: (1) assessing CP and (2) judging the QCCR. Such dimensions also suggest a double time pressure to deliver results: performance-related outcomes seem to focus on the short run, whereas the quality of the relationship appears to take a long-run approach. Rejecting H1A offers the literature the chance to explore the effect of warmness over performance. The study concludes that warm and supportive coaches do not challenge their coachees and that they do not lead them to competitive behaviours aiming to achieve higher levels of performance, which are consistent with the literature on the
benefits of competitive organisational cultures to enhance individual performance levels. Rejecting H1A and not rejecting H1B seem to stress the long-run orientation of WB (possibly not the most adequate behaviour to motivate short-run results). It seems that the way to motivate long-run results is to nourish the warmness seeds. Not rejecting the other four hypotheses is consistent with the previous literature and provides a study based upon evidence from a southern European country, thus enlarging the empirical report of the influence of coaching activities on coaching outcomes. Warmness can be associated with feminine gender, and given the relevance of warmness in the QCCR, it was reasonable to expect a positive female bias regarding the QCCR; however, the results do not support such an argument. One may conclude that warmness is not such a feminine trace after all. Other interesting conclusions emerge from (a) the coaches’ experience being significant to CP and QCCR; and (b) having coaching training not being significant in both models. Such results seem to suggest that having experience in coaching is far more effective than having had training in coaching. Such evidence raises a paradox regarding age. Age affects CP negatively and presents no effect on the QCCR, which appears to be a contradiction in terms, since experience and age usually go along. The study encloses several limitations, being the most significant ones: (1) not all the reliability indicators (Cronbach’s α) reported are above the recommended values (Cronbach, 1951), but given the exploratory essence of the study and considering that discriminant validity is supported by comparing the square root of the AVE for each construct against the correlation to the constructs (Bock, Zmud, Kim, & Lee, 2005) (AVE is higher than correlation levels), then results achieved may be considered acceptable. (2) The study did not question coachees directly; it is based on the perceptions of the coaches and therefore uses perceptive measures of CP. (3) Only two statements are used to measure either CP or QCCR. Nevertheless, the results offer paradoxes worth exploring in subsequent studies, for they challenge the spirit of having trained coaches. Why should firms train their coaches if there seems to be no direct benefits over CP or the QCCR? Further work can explore the longitudinal testing of time pressure effects over coaching decisions and behaviours.

Further research is also needed to better understand this phenomenon; for example, coachee characteristics (e.g. age, gender and professional curriculum) can also play a role in analysing CP and the QCCR. Additionally, since data were collected in one country with a specific cultural context, collection of similar data in different countries and replication of the study would be of great relevance. Considering the exploratory nature of this study, subsequent work examining the lines of research opened are welcome.

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Notes on contributors

**Paulo Lopes Henriques** is an Associate Professor of Organisational Behaviour and Human Resources Management at the ISEG, Economics and Business School at Lisboa University. He received his Ph.D. in management from the Technical University of Lisbon. He currently teaches at the ISEG – Economics and Economics and Business School at Lisboa University, where he teaches courses on business ethics and negotiation, public personnel management, human resources management and organisational behaviour to graduate and postgraduate students. His research and forthcoming publication works explore several themes of organisational behaviour such as ethics, trust, mentoring, knowledge management and human resources practices.

**Carla Curado** is a tenured Assistant Professor of Organisational Behaviour and Human Resources Management at ISEG, Economics and Business School at Lisbon University. She received her Ph.D. in management from the Technical University of Lisbon. She currently teaches postgraduate, master and doctoral programmes related to strategy and organisational behaviour issues such as strategic management, personnel training and organisational development. Her research in progress and recent publication works cover issues in intellectual capital, knowledge management, training and organisational learning.

**Pedro Verga Matos** is a tenured Assistant Professor at ISEG, Economics and Business School at Lisboa University and researcher of Advance – Centre for Research in Management at ISEG. He received his Ph.D. in Business and Management Studies from the University of Porto. His main areas of research are corporate governance and public and private partnerships. Author of publications in corporate governance and mergers and acquisitions issues, Pedro is currently member of the European Corporate Governance Institute and the European Accounting Association.

**ORCID**

Paulo Lopes Henriques [http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7869-7619](http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7869-7619)

Carla Curado [http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2608-8982](http://orcid.org/0000-0002-2608-8982)

Pedro Verga Matos [http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6737-2656](http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6737-2656)

**References**


Appendix. List of questions and constructs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>α</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I know the performance and the goals of my coachees</td>
<td>PSA</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I formulate a coaching plan for each coachee I have</td>
<td>PSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often appoint coaching sessions</td>
<td>PSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normally, I do some ‘homework’ before a coaching session</td>
<td>PSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I often take note of my coachees’ opinions</td>
<td>PSA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to be patient with my coachees</td>
<td>WB</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely, I have the need to reprehend someone</td>
<td>WB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I try to be kind and comprehensive</td>
<td>WB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I hear critics with an open mind</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I create opportunities that allow my coachees to impress important people in the organization</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normally, I give my coachees feedback about their performance</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use my influence in the organisation in my coachees’ benefit</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes, I let people perform according to their own solutions</td>
<td>SA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My coachees hold me in high respect</td>
<td>QCCR</td>
<td>.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The people I coach know that can trust myself</td>
<td>QCCR</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel I have a positive impact in my coachees’ personal and professional development</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My coachees are able to achieve their goals</td>
<td>CP</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>