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DOCTORAL THESIS

Title	*Executive Coaching: An Exploration of The What, How and Who of Coaching Practices from a Cognitive-Emotional and Cross-Cultural Perspective*
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Research Unit	**GLEAD –** *Leadership Development Research Centre*
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Executive Coaching:

An Exploration of The *What*, *How* and *Who* of Coaching Practices from a Cognitive-Emotional and Cross-Cultural Perspective

By

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the PhD in Management Sciences at the

Leadership Development Research Centre (GLEAD),

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Directed by

D. Joan Manuel Batista Foguet, PhD

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To my nearest ones:

Your presence, mere and unfailing,

constitutes the deepest source

of inspiration to me

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First and foremost, I wish to express my deep gratitude to one special person to whom I owe the success of this project. Without the boundless encouragement and confidence which Professor Joan Manuel Batista offered me from the very beginning of the PhD journey, nothing of this would have happened. He not only inspired me and stimulated to critically think along the whole way with extraordinary insight on methodological issues and content, but he certainly coached me and revealed through his daily, tireless example that the concerns and decisions faced when researching have indeed a parallel impact and application to the 'real world', in our educational and lifelong learning spaces, our relationships inside-outside the GLEAD; in our own lives. You are much more than an exceptional thesis director, thank you from my heart.

Profound gratitude is also to Professors Boyatzis, Serlavós, Emmerling, and colleagues from Case Western Reserve University, whose expert, strategic advice and permanent willingness to help have been both splendid and vital for this project.

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Indeed, I feel truly privileged, since many other informal mentors accompanied me throughout this learning journey. A very singular thanks is to my GLEAD bright women, with whom I shared endless exciting conversations but also tough revealing moments. Also, my friends, co-authors and work-peers from the PhD Room and the Research Units at ESADE Business School, as well as Professors (all outstanding coaches) Juan Rovira, Simon Dolan, Eva Marco, Carlos Royo, Artur Massana (from ESADE); Alejandra Cortés and Alberto Ballarín (from University of Zaragoza); I felt as a *learning sponge* when being around all you.

Besides, I wish warmly acknowledge all respondents – both coaches and executives - who voluntarily took part in the studies undertaken in this doctoral thesis. Without their genuine willingness to collaborate, none of this would have been possible.

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Thank you each of you; you have the love of humanity in your hearts.

"Let him who would move the world first move himself"

Socrates

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Preface

This thesis led on from a 4 years FPI Grant associated to the National Project *"Emotional and Social Competencies Development Program within the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)"* (Project Reference: EDU2010-15250) from the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness.

The thesis is submitted in total fulfillment of the requirements for the PhD in Management Sciences at ESADE Business School. According to the PhD degree requirements for Ramón Llull University, the thesis takes the form of a '*Monograph based on articles'*. That is, the central chapters of the monograph are derived from articles which have not all necessarily been published yet but are in the process.

Specifically, the thesis contains the following three articles: the first one − presented in Chapter 4 − is entitled '*An Integrative Framework on Executive Coaching Perceived Value from the Coachee's Side'*, which has been submitted to the *Journal of Managerial Psychology -JMP* (ISSN: 0268-3946), considering its unique focus on the social impact of managerial psychology as well as its concern with the wider aspects of human resource management derived from the application of psychology theory and practice. The second paper − presented in Chapter 5 − is entitled *'Understanding Cognitive-Emotional Processing through a Coaching Process: The Influence of Coaching on Vision, Goal Directed Energy and Resilience'*. A pilot study of this research was presented at the *4ᵗʰ International Congress on Emotional Intelligence* held in New York in September 2013. Later, the ultimate article was accepted in the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences – JABS* (ISSN: 00218863) in May 2015 (DOI: 10.1177/0021886315600070), which is an interdisciplinary and internationally leading journal on the effects of evolutionary and planned change, breaking ground in its exploration of group dynamics, organization development, and social change by providing scholars the best in research, theory, and methodology while also informing professionals and

their clients. Chapter 6 presents the third study, *'Coaching for Cultural Sensitivity: Content Analysis applying Hofstede's Framework to a Select Set of the International Coach Federation Core Competencies'*, which was presented at the *1st International Columbia Coaching Conference* held at Teachers College (Columbia University, New York) in September 2014. This article was published in the conference proceedings. Later, the complete study has been submitted to the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations – IJIR* (ISSN: 0147-1767) as the official publication of the *International Academy for Intercultural Research –* considering the topic that involves, which provides an interdisciplinary forum for scholars in fields of psychology, communication, education, management, sociology and related disciplines. Articles one and three (Chapters 4 & 6) are expected to be published in the upcoming months. The three journals were meticulously chosen because of its best fit with each of the articles' specific content and methodology, always guaranteeing that the quality of their research was among the best in their specific topics (all of them had an impact factor above 1. when submitted).

The three papers are presented here keeping the structure of the original articles. Only minor format changes have been introduced to maintain the uniformity of the thesis. This also means that some concept definitions and theoretical arguments may seem recurrent in chapter 2 as an early context-setting chapter that offers convenient background ("*Theoretical Framework*") and the correspondent chapter in which each paper is presented.

The defendant was the leading author of the three papers. All co-authors have been notified and have agreed to the inclusion of these papers in the defendant's doctoral thesis.

Additionally, the defendant of this thesis had the chance to spend a period of 6 months at two prestigious American Universities (3 months at each): *Case Western Reserve University* (Cleveland, OH) and *Columbia University* (New York, NY). The subsequent training and research stages significantly enhance both the author's

theoretical background on the thesis topic and her research competencies to manage the various studies developed throughout. As a result, the present doctoral thesis has been submitted for the inclusion of the *international qualification* as all the requirements for this mention were fulfilled by its defendant.

Publications

Mosteo, L.P, Batista Foguet, J.M., Mckeever, J.D., & Serlavós, R. (2015). Understanding Cognitive-Emotional Processing through a Coaching Process: The Influence of Coaching on Vision, Goal Directed Energy and Resilience. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Sciences.* Published online on 14th August, 2015 (DOI: 10.1177/0021886315600070).

Mosteo, L.P., Chekanov, A., & Rovira del Osso, J. (2015). An Integrative Framework on Executive Coaching Perceived Value from the Coachee's Side. Article submitted to the *Journal of Managerial Psychology* in October 2015. Under revision.

Mosteo, L.P., Maltbia, T.E., Marsick, V.J. (2015). Coaching for Cultural Sensitivity: Content Analysis applying Hofstede's Framework to a Select Set of the International Coach Federation Core Competencies. Article submitted to the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* in September 2015. Under revision.

Abstract

The intellectual integrity of coaching depends on rigorous research. Executive coaching has gained significant momentum as a resource for workforce development in corporate and non-profit organizations despite still scarce empirical evidence on its impact and its key factors, and wide disagreement about necessary or desired professional qualifications. This doctoral thesis examines the practice of executive coaching from three core differentiate yet complementary dimensions of the coaching cube (*what, how, who*). The significance of the overall research lies in its integration of the extant literature on executive coaching and the comprehensive exploration of coaching from those three key angles using a mixed-methods approach, in order to gain a better grasp of the coaching process and its potential impact from its core elements. As a necessary first step, the first study provides a conceptual framework of coaching value perception from the executives' standpoint (beyond coaching agendas; the *what*) with the objective of tapping into one of the main problems of measuring coaching impact, the perception of value from its direct recipient. In this regard, moderators on the perceived value of coaching are presented. The second study shares a rigorous analysis on the impact of coaching under a lifelong learning umbrella (*Intentional Change Theory*) (the *how*), aiming to better understand the emotional-cognitive processing behind on its executive recipients as well as key moderators on the coaching outcomes grasped. The third study goes a step further on coaches characteristics (coaching competencies; the *who*) and suggests evidence-based insights for the clarity and inclusion of cultural competence, once identified certain cultural biases embedded in an existing worldwide used coaching competency model (ICF's). The overall investigation aims to make a novel contribution by explicitly focusing on the particular elements that build the emotional-social (and thus, cultural-) interaction between coach-coachee, which constitutes an essential aspect of all coaching types and methodologies and that we refer to as the quality of the connection evolved. The quality of the present research is critically discussed, future research lines

recommended as well as the theoretical and practical implications of the present studies reviewed.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Author's Path

The defendant of this doctoral thesis has long had a deep interest in human development. While studying *Educational Psychology*, she already discovered how much potential for development throughout a human life there is. Through her research master in *Lifelong Learning in Multicultural Contexts*, she had the chance to developing her master thesis in vocational education and career development throughout life, focusing on coaching as a process designed to foster an environment of growth which helps individuals to clarify where they are, where they are going and where they really want to go. The research served a dual purpose: (1) to provide a first approach to the scientific study of the coaching process from both perspectives – *coach* and *coachee*; (2) to subsequently analyze how coaching can contribute methodologically to the constructivist career development approach fated by *Paradigm Shift* (Loven, 2003) and *Paradigm Complexity* (Morin, 1984), which consider career as a holistic concept in which professional and personal dimensions of people are closely bounded, and where individuals are called upon to become experts and pro-active builders of their lives and careers. Meantime, her active role as the Representative of Spain (through the University of Zaragoza) in the preparation of the *European Project Leonardo da Vinci ECVET in Coaching, (LdV 2011-2012)* directed by EUconcilia in Tübingen (Germany) helped her realize on the ineludible need to define the professional role and competencies of coaches from an internationally agreed upon perspective. Then, she discovered the *Leadership Development Research Centre* (GLEAD) at ESADE Business School and became truly inspired by the research lines which such distinguished researchers were deploying in the field of leadership, emotional and social intelligence development, and entrepreneurship. Albeit the defendant already knew what research she wished to pursue from the very beginning, she was positively forced to critically think twice (or three, four…) about this 'popular' arena, and to build each particular research design decision upon scientific and rigorous argumentation, eventually reaching the opportunity to frame her PhD on

the young field of coaching research -and its numerous risks associated, hand in hand with such an internationally-recognized expert on research methods (Dr. Batista-Foguet) and distinguished scholars on the specific research topic (such as Dr. Boyatzis and Dr. Emmerling, among others). From that nurturing symbiosis, one of the tangible results of having developed the defendant's doctorate program within the GLEAD is this thesis, for which an up-to-date theoretical confrontation, meticulous methodological rigor throughout the studies that it comprises, and a unique theoretical and managerial contribution were envisioned from the very early steps of its proposal.

1.2 General Introduction

The development of any profession relies on research, training programs and innovations in practice. These endeavors, however, depend on knowledge of the current state of the field. For all of the time, effort, and money invested in attempts to help individuals develop through education and training, there are few comprehensive studies shedding light on adult developmental processes – understood as change processes, and the key pieces which might help boost those processes. Notwithstanding, the research on change, development and growth seems to harp on the importance of others in the process, whether those others are various forms of support or reference groups (Ballou, Bowers, Boyatzis, & Kolb, 1999) or mentors, coaches, counselors, or trusted advisors (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima, 2004; Hall, 1996; Kolb & Boyatzis, 1970a, 1970b; Kram, 1985; McCall, Lombardo, & Morrison, 1988; Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002; Wanberg, Welsh, & Hezlett, 2003). For others such as Prochaska, DiClemente, Norcross (1992), and McClelland (1965), the actual process of development and the role of the 'helper' (e.g., mentor, coach, or others) are often treated like mysterious

'black boxes'. The emerging literature on relational theories (Hall, 1996; Kram & Cherniss, 2001) may shed certain light on the subject.

Concurrently, it is palpable that our world is in the middle of critical evolutionary and paradigmatic transformations (Dolan, 2003; Cortés, 2005-2006; Eisler, Dolan, & Raich 2013) driven by powerful forces such as globalization, digitalization, virtualization (Raich, Eisler, & Dolan, 2014). This transition may lead to a lack of transfer in learning and lack of sustained behavioral change, revealing a need for more individualized, more engaged, and more context-specific learning approaches (Bacon & Spear, 2003). Coaching, as a person-centered approach that supports the idea of personalized and challenging learning, holds the potential for positive, transformative outcomes; it provides a perspective on learning as a personal engagement with change. Thus, in those efforts, coaching has recently emerged as a discipline, a profession, a leadership style, and a new area of empirical research connected to all kind of developmental processes. Certainly, the practice of coaching has been around for millennia in the form of individualized professional advice but has only recently been formally recognized as a psychological construct within corporate and academic arenas. Be that as it may, a helping relationship in which an individual helps another individual or group in their developmental processes - which always implies a transition from a current state to a desired future state, coaching is becoming an increasingly popular approach to building leadership capability within organizations (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006), while helping individuals to attain major learning goals as part of lifelong career development.

Hence, learning, development, behavioral change, performance, leadership, career success, and organizational commitment are the issues linked to executive coaching. For instance, coaching a leader to positively imagine a desired future for the organization can transform the culture; coaching an individual or team around the organization's core values can spark new and creative ways to design products or serve clients; coaching individuals on deep aspirations for their work and life can

expand their capabilities and their lifelong development in significant ways. Consequently, the spread growth of coaching poses a unique challenge to the field of management research because it represents a new configuration of behavior in both organizations and managerial education.

Research has already suggested that training programs that include a coaching component are up to four times more effective than training alone (Oliver, Bane, & Kopelman, 1997). Certainly, through the last decade, coaching has become part of leadership development programs, boosting studies intended to empirically or theoretically justify the use of coaching techniques to consciousness-raising in executive development programs (Mirvis, 2008; Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2007); increase reflective practices by managers and enhance decision-making processes within the context of MBA programs (De Déa Roglio & Light, 2009); accelerate career learning in terms of personal development (Parker, Hall & Kram, 2008); and improve performance following executive education programs by supplementing the coaching with multisource feedback (Hooijberg & Lane, 2009; Smither, London, Flautt, Vargas, & Kucine, 2003).

In their surveillance of the coaching literature and industry, authors confirm a familiar tenet – we all need the help of others to grow and change. Therefore, coaching extends beyond a process or technique for developing competencies and reaching ambitious goals, and represents a new paradigm in management based on a new type of formalized high-quality relationship in which skilled professionals assist individuals make desired and sustainable life changes. The fact that executive coaching is growing by leaps and bounds has been well documented in recent years (Bacon & Spear, 2003; Baek-kyoo, 2005; Diedrich, 2001; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Kilburg, 1996). The obvious risk of this intense growth of coaching interest in the practitioner and academic world is that the field ends up in chaos, lacks transparency, experiences a drop in the quality of services and studies, and hence, might become a short-lived organizational fad that passes quickly.

Additionally, while recent contributions have raised issues regarding standards of competence and outcome evaluation, both aspects of executive coaching remain incomplete and inconclusive. This is despite recent calls to investigate further the theory gap in coaching and to conduct more empirical examination of the elements that rigorously differentiate successful coaching outcomes from mediocre or unsuccessful ones (Brotman, Liberi & Wasylyshyn, 1998; Kilburg, 2001; Wasylyshyn, 2003). To the best of our knowledge, no research project has yet focused on the entire three core dimensions that constitute what has been referred as to the *coaching cube*[1]*:* (1) coaching agendas (*what*); (2) coaching approaches (*how*); coaches' characteristics (*who*). Specifically, by focusing on executive coaching – which refers to coaching where the executive is the coachee, we aim to comprehensively explore those three key dimensions from a mixed-methods approach in order to gain a better grasp of the coaching process and its potential impact from its core elements.

Explicitly, we posit that understanding coaching as a specific form of lifelong human development in both organizational and educational contexts, is a function of examining its (a) *content* (or the 'what' beyond coaching agendas, in terms of value perception from the coachee's perspective as the main recipient of the process) —considered as a research phenomenon; (b) *context* (or 'how' coaching is deployed by the coach while engaging the coachee) —grounded in the philosophical orientation of constructivism; and finally (c) *conduct* (or 'who' can act as a coach, the builder of the coaching space through specific core

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[1] The *Coaching Cube* is an internationally theoretical framework which has recently helped to structure and understand the coaching industry. This thesis uses it as an overall umbrella that on the one hand, helps guide research, while on the other hand, goes further by adding elements that enhance the complexity of the referred *cube*. See: "Structuring and Understanding the Coaching Industry: The Coaching Cube" (Segers, Vloeberghs, Henderickx & Inceoglu, 2011). *Academy of Management Learning and Education, 10*(2), 204-221.

competencies) —grounded in the philosophical substrate of behaviorism. Therefore, the overarching research questions on which this thesis is built are:

1. Which are the crucial components that might moderate the coachee's value perception of an executive coaching process beyond their coaching agendas? (What)

2. Which is the impact of coaching under a specific theoretical framework and what might be the moderators of the coaching process outcomes? (How)

3. What are the key core coaching competencies and how might culture be embedded in the most widely-used set of coaching competencies? (Who)

1.3 Structure of the Thesis

To answer these questions, this doctoral thesis reports empirical studies conducted at ESADE (Department of Strategy, General Management and People Management and Organization), *Ramon Llull University* with outside support from key researchers from the Weatherhead School of Management (Department of Organizational Behavior, Psychology, and Cognitive Science), *Case Western Reserve University* (Cleveland, OH), and Teachers College (Department of Organization and Leadership), *Columbia University* (New York, NY). The studies which the thesis comprises are presented in the form of three papers. The attempt is to respond from a multidimensional perspective to the reiterative existing and documented calls for empirical research on executive *coaching impact* and *coaching process* assisted by coaches' *characteristics*, with a crosswise look at the *coaching relationship*.

In line with the objectives of the thesis which are related to the impact of executive coaching effective practices and the perceived value of such practices, under a

vision strength-based umbrella on the one hand, and the improvement of coaching competency models by incorporating culturally sensitive nuances on the other, the theoretical framework of the thesis also offers an overview of the executive coaching arena and its epistemological, theoretical and methodological bases (Chapter 2), as well as a synopsis of the existent executive coaching research conjointly with a synthesis of an appreciation of current strengths and weaknesses of the state of the art (Chapter 3). The three studies are then presented: As a necessary first step and with the objective of taping into one of the main problems of measuring coaching impact, results of an empirical study on bank branch executives' perceptions on the value of coaching are presented to cover the inquiry of potential key moderators on the perceived value of coaching as posed in the first research question (Chapter 4). This is followed by consideration of the *how* dimension of the umbrella used –coaching cube. Robust quantitative analysis of the impact of a specific theoretical approach is presented in the second study. This analysis seeks to shed light on the emotional-cognitive processes of MBA coachees and potential moderators of coaching impact (Chapter 5) as part of the emotional and social competencies development program developed at ESADE. The third paper (Chapter 6) covers the third research question. The paper's findings provide evidence-based insights for the inclusion of cultural competence to overcome the identified bias on intercultural sensibility embedded in a concrete coaching competency model used worldwide (namely, that of the *International Coach Federation* -ICF). Finally, after a general discussion, the overall limitations are revisited, implications of the findings covering the abovementioned research objectives discussed, and future avenues of investigation suggested (Chapter 7).

1.4 Visual Overview of the Thesis Studies

As a general overview of the overall research, Table 1 presents a synopsis of the three studies including the focal research questions, theoretical backgrounds, empirical approaches, research designs, samples and contributions.

Empirical study	Main research questions	Main theoretical frameworks	Empirical approaches/ research designs	Samples	Key findings
Study 1: *An Integrative Framework on Executive Coaching Perceived Value from the Coachee's Side*	-What are the crucial factors that might be moderating executive's value perception of an executive coaching process? -To what extent might those moderators depend on the coach's or coachee's side?	High Quality Relationships (Boyatzis, Smith, & Beveridge, 2012; Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Gregory & Leavy, 2010); Coaching Relationship (Baron & Morin, 2009; De Haan, Duckworth, Birch & Jones, 2013)	Literature review; Interrater reliability through Thematic Analysis of a consistent sample of Interviews	197 Bank Branches Executives	Perception of coaching value is contingent on a set of at least 4 moderators which not only depend on the coach but also on the coachee (*Coach's Reliableness & Guidance, Executive's Self-Awareness & Willingness*)

Study 2: *Understanding Cognitive-Emotional Processing through a Coaching Process: the Influence of Coaching on Vision, Goal-directed Energy, and Resilience*	-To what extent might an ICT-based coaching process affect ideal-self, goal-directed energy, and resilience? -Are there moderators of the ICT-based coaching impact?	Intentional Change Theory (ICT; Boyatzis, 2001, 2006, 2008); Positive and Negative Emotional Attractors (PEA/NEA) (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006; Howard, 2006; Boyatzis, Smith & Beveridge, 2012).	Quantitative; Within-subjects pre-post design non-equivalent dependent variables (NEDV)	76 Executive MBA from ESADE Business School	Significant main effects reported in ideal self, pathways thinking, and resilience as a result of the coaching process. Effect on ideal self dimensions and resilience were positively moderated by the perceived quality of the relationship and the coachee's levels of self-efficacy.
Study 3: *Coaching for Cultural Sensitivity: Content Analysis applying Hofstede's Framework to a Select Set of the International Coach Federation (ICF) Core Competencies*	-Which is the level of cultural sensitivity embedded in ICF's competency model? -How could be both the competencies definition/ indicators and their depiction, more culturally sensitive?	Cultural Intelligence (CQ) & Cross-Cultural Competence (Dolan & Kawamura, 2015; Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000); Intercultural Sensitivity (Bennett, 2006); Hofstede's Research Based Cultural Framework (1980;2005).	Selective integrated literature review; Interrater reliability through a critical qualitative content analysis on the competency model selected.	Competency Model of ICF (6 out of 11 executive competencies analyzed; the grounded core ones).	4 of the 5 Hofstede dimensions fully affect 3 of the 6 ICF competencies (*questionning, direct communication, awareness*) A composite cultural profile of the 6 competencies is provided as an artifact of the collective cultural assumptions embedded in the model.

Table 1-1 *Synopsis of the Empirical Studies*

1.5 Main Contributions

We believe that the contribution of this project is clear. From a theoretical standpoint, we fill a major gap in the coaching field by delving into what actually happens in the processes of human transformation triggered by coaching interventions. We do so by examining three differentiate yet inter-connected dimensions (the *what, how,* and *who*). Indeed, we consider that the value of this thesis resides in the following both theoretical and managerial perspectives:

a. First, by tapping into a sample of executive coachees' perception of coaching value under vision, strength–based coaching approaches, we are able to provide an empirical, evidence–based model framework of constructs which –regardless of the specific approach– might work as moderators in each specific coaching process when the overall value is assessed by its recipient. We also expose that those constructs might not only lie on the coach's side but also on the coachee's one, given that the recipient concurrently co-builds the process. As a result, it seems vital to monitor and develop the coaching relationship as seen by the client. Subsequently, our findings also tie in with innovative considerations regarding the coachee's 'readiness to be coached' (or *coachability*), exploiting the coachee's potential in a way that draws upon nuanced coaching wisdom and abilities such as knowing when and what change a client is ready for –as a critical step beyond coaching agendas sharped by literature.

b. Second, we are able to enrich the evidence–based theorizing on coaching process and outcomes with a focus on the theorizing associated with a specific theoretical umbrella that is based on *Intentional Change Theory-coaching*. The enrichment is achieved by offering empirical evidence on the coaching impact on executive MBA's cognitive-emotional processing – such as clarity, awareness, comprehensiveness and strength of personal

vision; among other factors– and key moderators of the process such as the quality of the relationship and coachee's general self-efficacy. We contend that the evidence reported will help shape how coaches frame coaching conversations that boost sustainable and desired change processes while developing high-quality coaching relationships; help coaches understand and manage the embodied coaching experience, and subsequently provide information on how to best train and develop coaches on building emotional salient spaces through engaging dialogue.

c. Third, we identify the cultural biases embedded in the most widely-used core coaching competency model and provide an evidence-base composite cultural profile of the set of competencies analyzed, as a premise on understanding cultural dynamics as foundational for developing coach cultural competence. Specifically, we do provide a first step in conceptually clarifying cultural competence in coaching education and training. We do so since we contend that only self-aware coaches can help clients consider, leverage, and exploit new possibilities that fit for their own needs. By doing so, we reframe a cross-cultural research angle on developing coaches' competencies from a critical perspective, founding potential implications not only for practicing coaches but also for decision-makers and researchers regarding education, credentialing, and service delivery.

It seems that coaching is here to stay (Day, Surtees, & Winkler, 2008). We therefore hope that the studies provided following the coaching cube structure will help the industry further mature. In our view, they will do so by guiding future research efforts and by helping all parties engaged in the coaching practitioner field to get a better empirically and theoretically supported grasp of today's coaching chaotic marketplace. We hold that our work indeed provides a compelling, scientifically-informed, empirically-supported rationale for why coaching, which executives often describe as a useful yet joyful experience, might must get better, longer-lasting results. Such results, we argue, will only be possible if the coaching

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draws on cognitive-emotional and cultural perspectives and are disseminated and implemented within the space of a high-quality relationship.

1.6 References for Chapter 1

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Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

2.1 Epistemological Bases of Coaching

Coaching is a facilitated, dialogic, reflective learning process which arises from a mixture of epistemological, theoretical and methodological foundations. This section presents a brief overview on the key foundations that fuels coaching to enable the reader to comprehensively grasp what is meant by 'coaching' throughout this research project.

2.1.1 Constructivism

Constructivism places a significant emphasis on how individuals accrue and develop their knowledge and understanding through their reflective participation in authentic, real-life situations and in interactions with others (Light & Wallian, 2008). In this regard, constructivism rejects the existence of a single reality and instead learning is considered to be an active, interpretative process. It is widely accepted that constructivism is based upon the seminal work of Dewey (1910; 1938), Piaget (1972), and Vygotsky (1962; 1978). Indeed, the term 'constructivism' does not refer to a single theoretical approach but rather to a diverse range of theories of human learning (Fosnot, 1996). From this epistemology, individuals only deeply understand what they have internally constructed on their own – through their interaction with others – and this is one of the crucial guiding principles of coaching.

2.1.2 Humanism and Lifelong Learning

A humanistic approach to development considers learning as a personal act to fulfill one's own potential based on internal motivations. It was put forward by authors such as Maslow (1943) or Rogers (1951; 1959). Recent advances in theory, research, and practice on lifelong learning (LLL) have made it clear that there is an

important reciprocal relationship between development and learning whereby advances in development frequently lead to learning, and conversely, learning often fuels development. The synchronicity between development and learning is responsible for positive changes in – among other capacities – insight, intelligence, reflective and meta-cognition, personality expression, interpersonal competence, and self-efficacy (Hoare, 2006). This synchronicity is also driving growth in coaching as a relatively new discipline that ties in with the boundaries of adult development and learning.

The baseline of this epistemology is self-directed learning throughout life, which takes the form of systematic, qualitative changes in human abilities and behaviors as a result of interactions between internal and external environments. Indeed, some scholars agree on that adult learning can only be successful if it is based on self-initiation (Lindebaum, 2009) and self-directed objectives (Boyatzis, 2006). These assumptions have inspired new terms such as the aforementioned 'lifelong learning' or theories such as 'self-directed learning' (Boyatzis, 1999, 2000; Goleman, 1998), which is referred to as Intentional Change Theory (ICT; Boyatzis, 2000, 2006, 2008).

Intentional Change Theory (ICT) as an example of Lifelong Learning Theory

ICT nourishes from theory and principles from management research, emotion research, complexity science, and psycho-neurobiology, and provides deeper insights into how individuals achieve sustainable change (Howard, 2009). This LLL theory offers an appropriate coaching framework that helps boost a person's motivation to engage in the developmental process as well as in aspects of the social context. In ICT, development is seen as an integrated process in which individuals first develop a clear longer-term vision of the kind of life they would like to lead. This future vision – also called the *ideal self* – is then compared with the person's current state or *real self* in terms of competencies, values, and traits. A

detailed vision of the person's ideal self and future life is of critical importance as it helps provide an emotionally engaging, positively framed version of him/herself to which the leader can aspire. The process of deliberate change is graphically shown in *Figure 2-1* (Boyatzis, 1999, 2001; Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002) as an intentional model of self-directed learning within the big umbrella of LLL. It certainly represents an enhancement of the earlier models developed by Kolb, Winter, and Berlew (1068) and Kolb and Boyatzis (1970a, 1970b).

ICT has successfully been implemented in the context of management education at Case Western Reserve University (Boyatzis, Cowen, & Kolb, 1995; Boyatzis, Passarelli, & Wei, 2013) and ESADE Business School (Batista-Foguet, Boyatzis, Guillen, & Serlavos, 2008; Emmerling *et al*., 2008; Ryan, Emmerling, and Spencer, 2009) through the *Leadership Assessment and Development Course* (LEAD). A key element in ICT is resonant relationships characterized by trust, support, and a positive emotional connection boosted by coaches who provide the learner with encouragement, feedback and constructive advice in the pursuit of the development goals.

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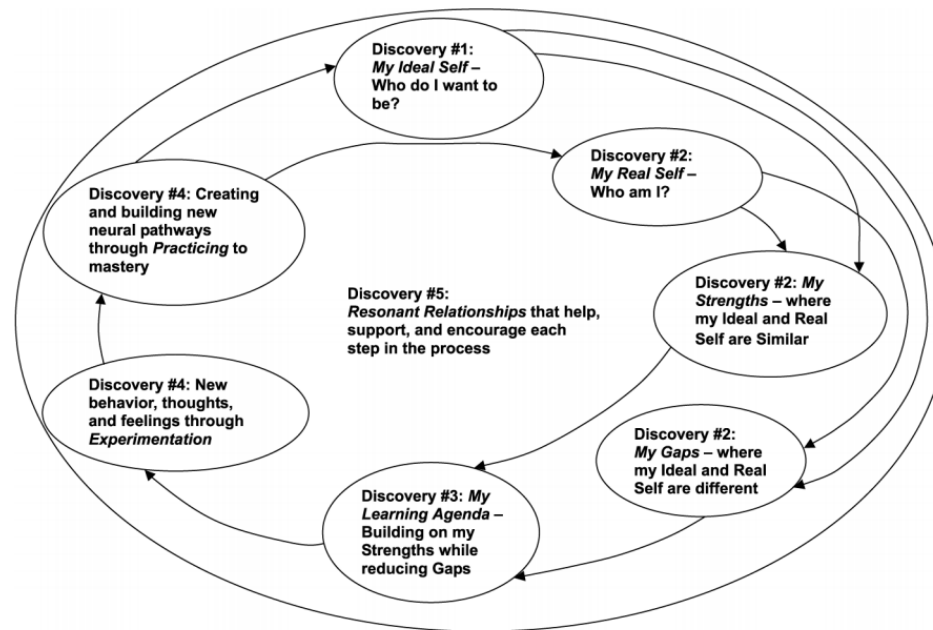
Figure 2-1 *Self-directed learning theory (Boyatzis, 2006)*

2.1.3 Positive Psychology

The emergent field of positive psychology provides a robust theoretical and empirical base for the practice of executive coaching, focusing on understanding how positive emotions work. An explicitly positive psychology framework suggests that a language of strength and vision rather than weakness and pain is the firm foundation upon which the coaching work rests (Seligman, 2004; Kauffman, 2005b; Kauffman, & Scouler, 2004). Fredrickson and colleagues (1998, 2001) have developed an empirically supported theory that shows how positive emotions help individuals thrive, examining the powerful day-to-day benefits of positive emotions, while evidencing that, on the other hand, too much positivity is not good for a person nor for a work team's level of performance. A series of studies supports Fredrickson's theory that positive emotions serve to "broaden and build" access to personal competencies by measuring how positive emotions broaden individual's momentary thought-action repertoires and build their enduring

personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual to social and psychological resources (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2001; Fredrickson, Mancuso, Branigan, & Tugade, 2005).

Indeed, positive emotions link to one's biology, behavior, and thoughts. Those multiple levels converge with another central tenet of most coaching approaches – developing the 'whole' person. That is, coaching that attends to only one aspect of the person does not provide the holistic support necessary to sustain meaningful change. Hence, sustainable change occurs when the whole person is acknowledged, integrating such elements as personal and professional identities, stress and renewal, emotions and cognitions. Borrowing from positive psychology, coaching adopts this holistic perspective of adult development, acknowledging that the utility of coaching will only occur when working at multiple levels: physiological, cognitive, and relational.

Humanism, constructivism, lifelong learning, and positive psychology converge all as ineludible epistemological foundations on the three studies which the current thesis comprises.

2.2 Culture: a Crosswise Element on Executive Coaching Competence Arena

Organizational psychologists have often made use of the concept of culture to better grasp organizational phenomena, yet it is somewhat ironic that we seldom examine ourselves through this lens to make explicit our values, assumptions and methods, and how these influence the framing of research questions and subsequent research carried out (Emmerling, 2008). The term 'competency' enshrines a concept that links individuals and their actions; it has been defined as the ability to forge constructive contact with one's setting, getting in touch with the environment in a fruitful way (Ingalls, 1979). Coaching competencies deployed by the coach are a

key element on the coaching process. The developmental process lies at the interface between people's life history and the sociocultural milieu in which they live (Jarvis, 1995). Hence, the continuum of an executive coaching intervention should take into account both 'context' (i.e., contextual factors embedded in the coachee's situation, or drivers – *culture*) and related "content" (i.e., the need to focus the range of intervention choices based on the presenting situation). This approach enables the executive coach to employ various competencies (linked to 'conduct') to help clients achieve their intended outcomes through the process. As such, the continuum of a coaching process encompasses all elements bearing on the science of human performance heuristic –*context, content, conduct*- (for a deeper exploration of the human performance heuristic, see Jackson, 1991; Maltbia, Marsick, & Ghosh, 2014).

While competency modeling distinguishes top performers from average performers in any field, executive coaching competency models do none of the following: explicitly cite related supporting research; provide conceptual clarity on cultural competence in coach education and training; state the procedures employed in developing competency models (Mosteo, Maltbia, & Marsick, 2014). Indeed, professionals in every field are beginning to see the need to relate effectively to those who work with them and those they serve. This need is particularly palpable in coaching processes. A coach's own cultural lens impacts his/her coaching but also the competency model to which the coach decide to adhere to is impacting his/her coaching in the way it is defined and implemented, considering the cultural biases that might be embedded on it. The most prominent in this area of studies are cross-cultural scholars such as Hofstede (1984; 2001), Schwartz (2007), House, Hanges, Javidan and Dorfman (2004), and Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner (1997). They are particularly active, having proposed different cross-cultural psychological models to map differences across national boundaries. Yet, culture, as having both visible and invisible layers – with invisible layers becoming more apparent with increased self-awareness and reflection, is a complex component on

any particular human act. Hence, the need to take culture into account turns evident when considering a co-constructed process such as coaching. This is why the practitioner and academic communities have called for coaches to enhance cultural awareness skills (Handin & Steinwedel, 2006; Plaister-Ten, 2009). From our work, we go a step further by recalling credentialing associations to examine the level of cultural sensitivity embedded in their competency models as a first step in building more culturally sensitive capabilities in coaches around the world.

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Chapter 3: Executive Coaching Research

3.1 Executive Coaching Defined

As an ineludible step for the current doctoral thesis development, the integrative literature review that follows is targeted to synthesize the state of the art in coaching research in order to have a clear picture of what kind of knowledge-based executive coaching is growing most. For doing so, this exhaustive review of the literature draws on scholarly papers from the behavioral science literature as presented in PsycINFO, Business Source Premier and Dissertation Abstracts International (DAI), and covers the peer-reviewed behavioral science literature on executive coaching as this is the focus of this thesis.

Coaching has a long, yet fragmented history, and has been around as long as the human race, albeit it is not clear when exactly executive coaching first began. According to Witherspoon and White (1996), the word coach was first used in English in the 1500s.

> (*Coach*) refers to a particular kind of carriage. Hence, the root meaning of the verb to coach is to convey a valued person from where one was to where one wants to be—a solid meaning for coaching executives today! (Witherspoon & White, 1996, p. 124)

Currently, not shared agreement on a definition of coaching has been attained; there are nearly as many definitions of coaching as there are practitioners and researchers of coaching (for a sample of definitions, see *Table 3-1*). One's assumptions about coaching influence what one pays attention to and therefore, the practice options that are included or excluded, as well as the results the coach and his or her clients realize (Maltbia, Marsick, & Ghosh, 2014). The International Coach Federation (ICF), the largest professional association for coaches, provides a generalist definition:

> *Partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential—coaches honor the client as the expert in his or her life and work and believe every client is creative, resourceful and whole.* (www.coachfederation.org/)

Coaching has traditionally been viewed as a way to 'correct' poor performance and to link individual effectiveness with organizational performance (Ellinger, Ellinger, & Keller, 2003). There should be a distinction between the *manager as a coach* and executive coaching. In the manager as a coach, the manager plays a role as a coach, whereas in executive coaching, the executive is being coached by a professional (usually external) coach. Whereas the literature about the manager as a coach has been identified as a way of motivating, developing, and retaining employees in organizations (Evered & Selman, 1989; Orth, Wilkinson, & Benfari, 1987), executive coaching emphasizes self-awareness, learning and development through the one-on-one relationship between the coach and the executive.

Source	*Definition and Purposes*
Kilburg (1996)	A helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement. (p. 142)
Witherspoon & White (1996)	A confidential, highly personal learning process — an organized, personal learning provided over a specified period of time to bring about the possibility of effective action, performance improvement and/or growth. (p. 127).
Hall, Otazo, & Hollenbeck (1999)	A practical, goal-focused form of personal, one-on-one learning for busy executives that may be used to improve performance or executive behavior, to enhance career or prevent derailment, and work through organizational issues or change initiatives. (p. 40).
Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson (2001)	A systematic feedback intervention aimed at enhancing professional skills, interpersonal awareness, and personal effectiveness. (p. 208).

Stern (2004)	An experiential, individualized, leadership development process that builds a leader's capability to achieve short and long-term organizational goals —conducted through one-on-one interactions, driven by data from multiple perspectives, and based on mutual trust and respect. (p. 154).
Feldman & Lankau (2005)	A process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective. (p. 830).
Sperry (2008)	A form of executive consultation in which a trained professional, mindful of organizational dynamics, functions as a facilitator who forms a collaborative relationship with an executive to improve his or her skills and effectiveness in communicating the corporate vision and goals, and to foster better team performance, organizational productivity, and professional–personal development. (p. 36).
Spence & Grant (2007)	A collaborative relationship formed between coach and coachee for the purpose of attaining professional or personal development outcomes which are valued by the coachee (p.189).
Smith, Van Oosten, & Boyatzis (2009)	A facilitative or helping relationship with the purpose of achieving some type of change, learning, or new level of individual or organizational performance (p. 150).
Passmore & Fillery-Travis (2011)	A Socratic based dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (client) where the majority of interventions used by the facilitator are open questions which are aimed at stimulating self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant. (p. 74).
Maltbia, Marsick & Ghosh (2013) **The Graduate School Alliance of Executive Coaching Programs** **–GSAECP**	A development process that builds a leader's capabilities to achieve professional and organizational goals (p. 5).

Table 3-1 *Illustrative Definitions of Executive Coaching (in Chronological Sequence).*

Most of the definitions are underpinned by a view of coaching as a collaborative relationship formed between coach and coachee for the purpose of attaining professional or personal development outcomes which are valued by the coachee. Typically, the coaching goals are set in order to stretch and develop an individual's current capacity or performance. In essence, the coaching process facilitates goal attainment by helping individuals to: (1) identify desired outcomes; (2) establish specific goals; (3) enhance motivation by identifying strengths and building self-efficacy; (4) identify resources and formulate specific action plans; (5) monitor and evaluate progress towards goals; (6) modify action plans based on feedback (Spence & Grant, 2007). The 'monitor-evaluate-modification' steps of this process constitute a cycle of self-regulated behavior, what is a key process in creating intentional behavior change (Carver & Scheier, 1998; Boyatzis, Smith & Blaize, 2006). The role of the coach is to facilitate the coachee's movement through this self-regulatory cycle by helping the coachee to develop specific action plans and then to monitor and evaluate progression towards those goals (Grant, Passmore, Cavanagh & Parker, 2010).

As a team or system-level intervention, organizations spread the benefits of coaching by offering coaching resources to broader segments of the organization; encouraging informal practice of coaching behaviors by leaders and managers; and establishing coaching cultures that foster developmental relationships, motivation and performance, and organizational alignment (Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2006; Hart, 2005; Kets de Vries, 2005; Kralj, 2001; Orenstein, 2002; Rider, 2002; Schnell, 2005). Still, a key criticism levied at those coaching behaviors practices is for the lack of evaluation that takes place.

3.2 Theoretical approaches to Coaching

Several theoretical attempts have been made in the literature to classify the existing coaching schools (Barner & Higgins, 2007; Gray, 2006; Peltier, 2001; Stober & Grant, 2006). In their review of empirical work on executive coaching, Feldman & Lankau (2005) identify five prevailing coaching approaches:

- *Psychodynamic approach* (focuses on the client's unconscious thoughts and internal psychological states);

- *Behaviorist approach* (focuses on the client's observable behaviors);

- *Person-centered approach* (focuses on the client's self-understanding without direct intervention by the coach);

- *Cognitive theory approach* (focuses on the client's conscious thinking);

- *Systems-oriented approach* (focuses on individual, group, and organizational influences on the client's behavior) (p.839).

However, none of these approaches has been empirically validated (Segers, Vloeberghs, Henderickx, & Inceoglu, 2011). It is in fact evident that the landscape of coaching approaches and practices is further diversified by such mixed method forms of coaching as the Cognitive-Behavioral approach (Ducharme, 2004; Witherspoon & White, 1996) and various integrated models of development coaching exemplified by Laske's (1999) Integrated Model of Transformative, Developmental Coaching (derived from constructive development psychology, family therapy supervision, and theories of organizational cognition); Cocivera & Cronshaw's (2004) Action Frame Theory approach (derived from social action theory, functional job analysis and an integrated coaching model contributed by Kilburg, 2000); Passmore's (2007) Integrative Model for Executive Coaching (derived from six traditions including the humanistic, emotional intelligence, psychodynamic, behavioral, cognitive-behavioral, unconscious cognition, and

cultural perspectives); Boyatzis's (Boyatzis, Smith & Blaize, 2006) Intentional Change Theory Coaching model (derived from research and theory in the developmental leadership complexity and emotional intelligence traditions).

Maltbia and Power (2005) identified five key themes in their analysis of the theoretical literature behind executive coaching — executive coaching as a process (focused on learning, choice, change, and growth); a partnership (a designed alliance between the coach and the executive); a balance between individual and organizational needs; a way of working; and a new face of leadership for the 21st century. Yet, most coaches practicing today do not use theoretically coherent approaches and scientifically-validated techniques and measures (Grant & O'Hara, 2006; Grant, Passmore, Cavanagh, & Parker, 2010) – what constitutes a notable gap in the research behind and its subsequent spread and application when approaching the construct of executive coaching.

As concerns to the theoretical bases, overall, this thesis adheres to a behavioral approach on emotional intelligence and leadership development, though we consider our studies are built upon a wider integrative and diversified umbrella since they are all raised upon the paradigm of complexity, which expands to integrating cognitive-emotional, cultural, neuroendocrine and behavioral aspects of learning and change throughout life.

3.3 The Professional Status of Coaching

When judged against the commonly accepted criteria for professional status, the coaching industry display few of the standard hallmarks. There are no barriers to entry, no minimal or requisite educational process or specified training routes, and no binding ethical or practice standards (Sherman & Freas, 2004). Anyone can call themselves a coach, or set up a coach training school, and coaching practice is

currently unregulated. In response, and calling for greater scientific and professional rigor in coaching, Seligman (2007, p. 266) commented that:

> *People who call themselves coaches and get paid for coaching have an enormous range of academic qualifications from none at all to bachelor's degrees in almost anything, to masters degrees in counseling, education, social work, or positive psychology, to doctorates in psychology, medicine, and philosophy… Some have taken face-to-face or telecourses in coaching, but many have not. Some are 'accredited' by the self-appointed International Coach Federation… but most are not. The right to call oneself a coach is unregulated. And this is why a scientific and a theoretical backbone … (is essential)…"*

The accreditation of coaches is controversial. Much of the coach training industry appears to have been driven by a need for credibility and status and the demand for 'accreditation' by people who wish to work as coaches. Over time, a veritable global 'coach certification' industry has developed. Indeed, some coach training organizations seem to be little more than credentialing 'mills'. That is, after a brief attendance at a training program: in- person, online, or even over the phone, (and after payment of the requisite fee), one can be awarded the title of 'Professional Certified Master Coach' or similar (i.e., see Grant & O'Hara, 2006). Not surprisingly, the true worth of these certifications is decidedly questionable. This is an important issue because the general public is not well-informed about the value of authentic psychological qualifications, let alone coaching qualifications and may rely on impressive-sounding titles to guide them in selecting a coach. Furthermore, naive trainee coaches may be misled into believing that certifications awarded by an impressive-sounding 'Certification Board' are a guarantee of solid professional training.

Still, some of the larger coaching organizations such as the *European Mentoring and Coaching Council* (EMCC; UK-based, over 3,000 members), and the *International Coach Federation* (ICF; US-based, 30,000 members in nearly 130 countries) have put significant effort into establishing credentialing processes and developing coaching competencies, both individually and collectively.

Worldwide (and especially in the US and Australia), some commercial and government organizations now require, as a condition of employment, that their external coaches be accredited by the ICF. This development appears to represent a quest on the part of purchasers of coaching services for some security regarding the quality of offerings in an often disparate and confusing market place. Of course it may also reflect the effective lobbying of bodies such as the ICF, to be seen as the official representatives of 'professional' coaching. These moves are likely to increase the tensions held by many psychologists currently coaching in the field, who consider that their training represents a superior preparation to be an organizational coach (for research on the differences between psychologist and non-psychologist executive coaches see Bono, Purvanova, Towler, & Peterson, 2009).

Other countries have also explored the development of standards. In the US, the *Graduate School Alliance for Executive Coaching* (GSAEC), with institutional members from 10 universities, including Columbia University, University of Pennsylvania, University of Texas at Dallas and the University of Toronto, is developing a set of standards for the teaching of executive coaching at university level (see: www.gsaec.org).

Interestingly, the attempt by *Standards Norway* (the Norwegian peak standards body) to create coaching standards for the Norwegian coaching industry collapsed in disarray after a 17-month consultative process. Standards Norway eventually stated that the industry was too immature and fragmented to develop a genuine joint standard (Ladegård, 2008). Certainly, the Norwegian taskforce committee was made up of a number of coach training schools (and their associated industry bodies) who were all vigorously competing for business in the local market. Their offerings varied greatly in quality and substance, ranging from two-day courses which awarded 'coaching certifications', to comprehensive university-level programs. In contrast, the standards being developed by *Standards Norway* were comprehensive in scope; encompassing terminology, educational quality standards,

practitioner competence requirements, standards for independent practitioner certification and ethical guidelines. The development of higher level standards meant that at least some of the coach training businesses would have to make significant changes to their training products if they were to meet the new standards. In short, the development of a joint standard would have directly impact some of the taskforce's own business products and profitability (Jensen, 2009; Ladegård, 2008). Future projects that seek to develop common standards should seek to learn from the Norwegian experience.

Besides, the professionalization of coaching should take note of the controversies associated with the development of HRM as a professional field. These included: problems with precisely defining HRM (Hamlin, Andrea, & Beattie, 2009), an unclear theoretical basis, a paucity of research (McGoldrick, Stewart, & Watson, 2001) and the lack of defined demarcation with related disciplines (Jacobs, 2000), leading to territory disputes with areas such as Learning and Development (L & D), change management (Worren, Ruddle, & Moore, 1999) and, albeit to a lesser extent, the broader psychological enterprise.

3.4 Executive Coaching Research

In reviewing the literature, the first coaching citations are Gorby's (1937) report of senior staff coaching junior employees on how to avoid waste, and Bigelow's (1938) article on how best to implement a sales coaching program. Despite these early publications, contemporary research in coaching arena is still, in many ways, in its infancy, and the bulk of the literature found is less than 10 years old.

The existing coaching outcome research is characterized by high heterogeneity of issues, problems and goals, selected as themes in coaching interventions. A growing body of literature has emerged from the fields of management consulting, training and development, and consulting psychology (Kampa-Kokesch &

Anderson, 2001). This literature, largely taking a practitioner perspective, has differentiated executive coaching from other types of helping relationships, illustrated various types of executive coaching relationships, outlined steps of coaching interventions, and proposed potential outcomes associated with successful executive coaching. This high diversity is one of the strengths of the field because it allows exploration of a wide range of the coaching intervention and the changes it brings to the coachee and the sponsoring organization. However, this pluralism is also a weakness since the comparability of studies becomes challenging, and it is evident that most executive coaching outcome studies are weak in terms of methodological robustness and triangulation of findings (Denzin, 1984; Greif, 2007; Stake, 1995). Hence, despite the field's growth, only a few studies have explored the efficacy of coaching through rigorous methods (Gray, Ekinci & Goregaokar, 2011b; De Haan & Duckworth, 2013). Undoubtedly, it has been literally described as a robust professional exchange on coaching definitions, standards, techniques, methodologies, credentialing, and clientele, but yet offering little empirical work on coaching. Feldman and Lankau (2005) noted that there had been fewer than 20 studies that investigated executive coaching with systematic qualitative and/or quantitative methods. Several such studies that combine methodologies have been recently published (e.g. Burke & Linley, 2007; Kombarakaran, Yang, Baker & Fernandes, 2008; Grant, Curtayne, & Burton, 2009; Perkins, 2009; Gray & Goregaokar, 2010; Chandler, Roebuck, Swan & Brock, 2011).

Segers *et al*. (2011), in their suggested coaching cube framework to structure and understand the coaching industry – and that has been taken as a theoretical umbrella upon which build this thesis, observed that the widest gap in the existing coaching literature lies within the 'how' dimension of their coaching cube (i.e. what coaching approaches are being used) and particularly with regards to differences in impact and effectiveness from the use of diverse approaches. In fact, with the exception of Grant (2002) who compared the effects of a cognitive only approach (CT), with a

behavioral-only approach (BT), and with a cognitive-behavioral approach (CBT), no other study has compared executive coaching approaches. That said, several recent studies suggest that it is the general orientation or approach to coaching rather than specific techniques or behaviors that best predicts important outcomes, such as increased learning and performance (De Haan, Culpin, & Curd, 2011; Sue-Chan, Wood & Latham, 2012).

While discussing the field's future agenda, it has been observed a lag in existing executive coaching empirical research and limited theoretical work on the processes underlying effective coaching interventions. Concern about the theory gap in executive and organizational coaching has triggered numerous calls for more empirical investigation on the elements that differentiate successful coaching outcomes from mediocre or unsuccessful results (Brotman, Liberi & Wasylyshyn, 1998; Kilburg, 2001; Thach, 2002; Wasylyshyn, 2003; Weller & Weller, 2004). Calls have additionally been made for research on coaching antecedents (coach characteristics, coachee characteristics, organizational/client support); coaching process (coaching approach, coaching relationship, feedback receptivity); proximal coaching outcomes (self-awareness, behavioral change, learning); and distal coaching outcomes (individual success, organizational success) (Baekkyoo, 2005). It is evident that we cannot, for instance, raise the quality of the training of coaches (Garman, Whiston, & Zlatoper, 2000) or improve the selection process of coaches used in leadership development programs if we are not confident on the specific characteristics of the industry and the critical elements that need to be incorporated in the coaching process to maximize its success (Segers *et al*., 2011; Maltbia, Marsick, & Ghosh, 2014).

In short, the results of the most prominent coaching outcomes studies reported, indicate that executive coaching in an organizational setting is positively and significantly linked to individual performance and organizational commitment (McGovern et al., 2001; Olivero, Bane, & Kopelman, 1997; Smither et al., 2003), self-efficacy (Baron & Morin, 2007; Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2006), leader

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effectiveness (Cerni, Curtis, & Colmar, 2010; Thach, 2002), stronger relationships, personal development, and work-family integration and balance (Wasylyshyn, 2003). These studies also report interesting relationships with further variables such as the learner's self-awareness and satisfaction with supervisors and colleagues (Luthans & Peterson, 2003; Styhre, 2008), work satisfaction (Luthans & Peterson, 2003; McGovern et al., 2001), as well as time management (Gegner, 1997) and conflict resolution (McGovern et al., 2001). Nevertheless, very few of these studies have examined the process of executive coaching. Two reviews of the scientific literature on executive coaching identified the coach–coachee working relationship as one of the key variables of the coaching process (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Smither & Reilly, 2001), noting that establishing a relationship of trust constitutes the first step in the executive coaching process. Subsequent studies have attempted to confirm this tenet: the degree of the esteem, openness, and empathy shown by the coach, and equality in the relationship had been shown to have a positive effect on coaching outcomes (Brauer, 2005, 2006; Maethner, Jasen, & Bahmann, 2005; Parker et al., 2008). To facilitate a clear picture, self-elaborated *Table 3-2* reports the prominent studies on coach-coachee relationship and related outcomes, specifically aimed at coaching effectiveness considered by the coachee. In addition, on the basis of the psychotherapy literature, other studies have indicated that the counselor's skills (Ackerman & Hilsenroth, 2003), the client's motivation and involvement (Schneider & Klauer, 2001), and the number of sessions received (De Roten et al., 2004) are significantly associated with working alliance.

A growing body of research supports the efficacy of *Intentional Change Theory* (ICT, Boyatzis, 2001, 2008) in explaining how coaching leads to sustained, desired change linked to the impact of the quality of the coaching relationship – *coaching with compassion* versus *coaching for compliance* (Boyatzis, Smith & Blaize, 2006; Boyatzis, Smith, Beverige, 2013; Howard, 2006; 2009; Passarelli, 2015; Van Oosten, 2013).

Source	Main insights
Colquitt, LePine, & Noe (2000); Dingman (2004); Salas & Cannon-Bowers (2001); Stajkovic & Luthans (1997)	Positive links between coach–coachee relationship, job performance, and self-efficacy, as a variable significantly associated with training outcomes.
Kampa & White (2002); Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson (2001); Kilburg (2001); Lowman (2005); McGovern *et al.* (2001)	A good working relationship coach-coachee reported as essential condition for the success of executive coaching.
Berry (2005)	Positive and significant correlation between coaching relationship as evaluated by the coachees and problem resolution (degree of change)
Joo (2005)	Outcome of executive coaching was partially linked to the coach's style (establishing trust, honesty, and respect)
Baron & Morin (2009)	Coach–coachee relationship plays a mediating role in the association between the number of coaching sessions received and development of a manager's self-efficacy.
Boyatzis, Smith, Beveridge (2012); Howard (2009)	Sustained desired change facilitated when coach showing compassion for the person being coached as being manifested by 3 components: empathy, caring for the other person, and willingness to act in response to the person's feelings.
Passarelli (2014)	Different emotional, relational, and physiological effects of PEA/NEA-based coaching interactions. PEA associated with (1) greater positive affect, (2) higher relationship quality, (3) motivation supportive of complex goal pursuit, and (4) parasympathetic activity.
De Haan & Duckworth (2013); De Haan, Duckworth, Birch & Jones (2013); De Haan & Page (2013)	Strong indications found for the prediction of coaching outcome by: (1) the coaching relationship in terms of a working alliance, (2) the self-efficacy of the client; and (3) generalized coaching technique as experienced by the client. Personality or personality matching did not correlate with coaching outcome.

Table 3-2 *Synthesis of Prominent Studies on Quality of Relationship & Related Outcomes*

In a coaching context, a positive or negative emotional valence arises from the client's reaction to the content of the coaching conversation as well as his or her perception of social connectedness with the coach. Coaching conversations that emphasize and frequently revisit the individual's dreams, passions and values have a more positive valence, whereas conversations that emphasize the current reality have a more negative emotional valence (Howard, 2006). Such relationships have been found to ease career transitions (Ibarra, 2003), assist in growth and development (Boyatzis et al., 2006; Ragins & Verbos, 2006), enhance and enrich identity (Roberts, 2006), and establish interpersonal trust that facilitates learning from failure (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009; Carmeli, Brueller, & Dutton, 2009). Resonant relationships have also been reported to provide physiological benefits, including improved immune system functioning, cardiovascular health, and patterns of neuroendocrine activity that contribute to resilience and engagement at work (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008a). The second study presented on this thesis (Chapter 5) raises from this pioneering research line – what is referred as to vision-based coaching.

3.5 Appreciation of the Strengths and Weaknesses of the existing executive coaching studies

Growing on Grant's (2011) annotated bibliography (which lists the abstracts of all 634 scholarly publications on executive, workplace and life coaching from 1937 to 1st January 2011) plus a further systematic research routed by us to identify the executive coaching studies published from 2011 to 2015. From this literature review, we found that in at least a quarter of the coaching studies, the coaches were also the authors of the paper (e.g. Mansi, 2007; Gaskell, Logan & Nicholls, 2012). This is apparently both an asset and a problem, but if the research is just a self-

reporting of one's own coaching practice, this invites questions regarding the reliability and credibility of the reported outcomes.

Several outcome studies were found, but the majority of them were based on case studies of a single coachee (e.g. Winum, 2005; De Haan & Nieß, 2013) with the impossibility to conclude with some level of external validity. Many of the studies rely only on coachees' self-reporting measures (e.g. Dawdy, 2004; Bowles, Cunningham, De la Rosa, & Picano, 2006; McDermott *et al*., 2007; Stewart *et al*., 2008) and while it can be argued that no one may understand the true outcome of a coaching intervention better than the coachee himself/herself, self-assessment might entail traps as a consequence of, for instance, social desirability (i.e., see Nederhof, 1985).

The within-subject studies represent the largest single methodological approach to coaching outcome research (77) – they can provide useful quantitative data and allow for the use of inferential statistics, while the least popular research method is the experimental/randomized controlled studies – which are frequently held to represent best practice in researching the impact of specific interventions. Of the 25 between-subject outcome studies found, only 16 used a randomized controlled design (Cerni, Curtis & Colmar, 2010; Deviney, 1994; Duijts, Kant, Van den Brandt, & Swaen, 2008; Gattellari, Donnelly, Taylor, Meerkin, Hirst, & Ward 2005; Evers, Brouwers, & Tomic, 2006; Grant, 2002; Grant, Curtayne, & Burton, 2009; Grant, Frith, & Burton, in press; Green, Grant, & Rynsaardt, 2007; Green, Oades, & Grant, 2006; Miller, Yahne, Moyers, Martinez, & Pirritano, 2004; Moen & Allgood, 2009; Moen & Federici, 2012; Spence, Cavanagh, & Grant, 2008; Spence & Grant, 2007; Taylor, 1997). Sue-Chan and Latham (2004) used random assignment to self, peer, or external coaching group but did not use a non-intervention or placebo intervention control group. Four of these 16 studies were conducted in the medical or health work areas; three were in the life (or personal) coaching domain, with community and student samples. These indicated that coaching can indeed facilitate goal attainment, reduce anxiety and stress (Grant,

2003), enhance psychological and subjective well-being (Green, Oades, & Grant, 2006; Spence & Grant, 2007) while increasing resilience and reducing depression (Green, Grant, & Rynsaardt, 2007).

There have been only two randomized controlled studies of workplace coaching. Deviney (1994) examined the efficacy of supervisors acting as internal workplace coaches, finding no changes in supervisors' feedback skills following a multiple-rater feedback intervention and coaching from their managers over nine weeks. Duijts *et al.*, (2008) examined the effectiveness of coaching as a means of reducing sickness absence due to psychosocial health complaints. There has been only one randomized controlled study of the effectiveness of executive coaching, with participants receiving 360 degree feedback followed by four sessions of executive coaching. The coaching was found to improve goal attainment and reduce stress and depression (Grant *et al.*, in press).

The paucity of randomized controlled outcome studies is perhaps the major shortcoming in the coaching literature. Although some might contest the practical utility of randomized controlled studies, they are held to be the 'gold standard' in quantitative outcome research (for discussion on this issue in relation to coaching, see Cavanagh & Grant, 2006). However, in 'real-life' field research, such as in coaching, genuine randomized allocation to intervention or control is often extremely difficult, if not impossible, to achieve. Because of this, many coaching outcome studies have used single group, and 'pre-post within-subject' designs (e.g., Grant 2003, Jones, Rafferty, & Griffn, 2006; Olivero, Bane, & Kipelman, 1997; Orenstein, 2006)**.**

Additionally, there have been some quasi-experimental studies with pre-test and post-test comparisons and non-randomized allocation to an experimental or control group. For instance, Miller (1990) examined the impact of coaching on transfer of training skills but the drawing of conclusions was restricted by a high participant drop-out rate; Gyllensten and Palmer (2005) found that, compared with a 'no-coaching' control group, coaching was associated with lower levels of anxiety and

stress; Evers, Brouwers and Tomic (2006) found that executive coaching enhanced participants' self-efficacy and their beliefs in their ability to set personal goals.

Summing up, we note that outcome research in coaching, as a relatively new field of study, may be moving through the 'natural' stages of research development (e.g., from case study-based research, to within-subject studies, and on to quasi-experimental and randomized controlled between-subject designs). Thus, '*The Holy Grail'* of executive coaching – proof that executive coaching is an effective intervention from a controlled study with random assignment and multiple behavioral and performance outcome measures – has yet to be found. In fact, no clear and agreed sense of what 'outcomes' should be included or how they should be measured has yet emerged. Also, the issue of variation in the outcomes measures used in the research needs to be addressed in order to draw meaningful comparison between studies and develop a coherent body of knowledge about the effectiveness of coaching.

Albeit we accept that we are still unlikely to get robust data on executive coaching outcomes in the near future, it prevails reasonably to assume that we can expect similar effectiveness for coaching as that demonstrated in rigorous psychotherapy outcome research (i.e., quality of the relationship, positive expectations, personalities matching, among others).

Thus, having illustrated a thorough synthesis of the current state of the art of executive coaching, we argue that it becomes imperative to identify the 'active ingredients' of coaching conversations, as those factors which might be common to all coaching approaches, philosophies and techniques, and that will presumably predict, moderate and/or mediate the effectiveness of executive coaching. From our perspective, those factors might all collude in the coaching relationship, as we hold that it is only in the context of a high-quality connection that growth and transformation indeed occur.

This thesis strives to contribute in this direction by exploring the quality of coaching relationships from the threefold tactic justified in the first chapter.

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Chapter 4: An Integrative Framework on Executive Coaching Perceived Value from the Coachee's Side

4.1 Abstract

The quality of the relationship between coach and coachee has been suggested as one of the main elements that could best influence coaching outcomes. To date, research has focused on providing further perspective on the role of coach skills and competences that might impact the quality of the relationship. Less attention has been given to the elements that might affect coaching perceived value. In this paper, through a qualitative study based on 197 semi–structured interviews, we explore how the perception of coaching value by the coachee – the executive, can be contingent on a set of –at least– 4 moderators (*coach's 'reliableness'* and *meaningful guidance; coachee's self-awareness* and *willingness*). The added value of this paper lies in the integrated framework of propositions provided from content analysis, which should enable insight into how coaches employ their capabilities to help clients monitor their progress en route to goal attainment through vision development, considering specific moderators that make executives perceive their coaching processes as highly valuable (including elements from their *inside-outside* context, as clients). We conclude the article by suggesting some research directions emerged from the reported analysis that will shed light on what crucial elements might affect executive's perceived value when the usefulness of the coaching process assessed.

4.2 Keywords

Perceived value of coaching, coaching usefulness, coaching relationship, coach capabilities, readiness for coaching.

4.3 Introduction

The practice of executive coaching has been widely adopted as a leader development strategy by organizations (Day, 2001; Feldman and Lankau, 2005; Bono et al., 2009). The rapid growth of coaching practice has outpaced research (Bennett, 2006). This growing interest in executive coaching has provided with a plethora of coaching models, describing, for example, basic ways of: approaching the conversations (see, e.g., Kilburg, 2000; Downey, 1999); structuring the conversations (see, e.g., Whitmore, 1992; De Haan & Burger, 2005); and intervening within the conversations (see, e.g., Heron, 1975; Clutterbuck, 1985). Still, many executive coaches structure their work by adopting frameworks and models that reflect popular practices in the industry rather than an empirical evidence base (Lowman, 2005). The pressure of a results-oriented business culture has exacerbated the lack of empirical evidence while all these helpful frameworks, categories, and taxonomies yield insights into how professional coaches might think about their work. Thus, even if we know a great deal about what coaches do and how coaches conceptualize; what do these models indeed tell us about how their clients experience and view the coaching work?

There is a pioneering debate in the exiting literature on what could be the active ingredients that might condition the evaluation of the quality of the coaching procedure and subsequently predict its effectiveness. In this paper, we dive into that ongoing dialogue to go a step further by proposing a specific set of moderators that could affect the client's perceived value of coaching, regardless the specific approach used (all of them vision, strength based), as exploring the potential common components underpinning the relationship between coach-coachee as perceived by its direct recipient, the executive. Thus, based on a set of 197 semi-structured interviews with executive coachees, we suggest a model-framework of executive coaching perceived value moderators that might help to determine the difference in the predictive value perception of those active ingredients (*moderators*) on coaching effectiveness.

4.4 Conceptual framework

To date, research has provided some evidence on how: (1) the usefulness of coaching depends on the value perceived by the coachee (Jung & Berthon, 2009); (2) the perceived value of coaching might be contingent on organizational and individual factors (Lewis & Fagenson, 1995; Wade, 2004). Even so, it remains uncertain in what specific moderators the coachee's perceived value of coaching depend upon (at least at the individual level) and how far those moderators depend more on the coach or on the coachee side.

One of the most widely-embraced tenets in the executive coaching field is that the coach-coachee relationship has a proven mediating role in the coachee's perception and development of self-efficacy given the correlation between both (Baron & Morin, 2009). This stream of research has stressed that a strong relationship between coach and coachee can foster the coachee's growth and transformation (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Josselson, 1996; Miller & Stiver, 1997). There is also evidence that high-quality coaching relationships are characterized by genuineness, comfort, positive communication and in their facilitation to development (Gregory & Levy, 2010). A series of longitudinal studies indicated that coaching based on Positive Emotional Attractors (PEA), which refers to coaching relationships characterized by an overall positive tone – foster psychological states that optimally support behavioral change by facilitating the formation of trust, rapport and interpersonal closeness in the coaching relationship (Boyatzis, Rochford, & Taylor, 2015; Passarelli, 2014). This makes sense given that there is also evidence on how trust affects the quality of the relationship between coach and coachee in that it appears as a driver to create it (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007; Maltbia, Ghosh, & Marsick, 2011). Indeed, McGovern, Lindemann, Vergara, Murphy, Barker, & Warrenfeltz (2001) provided empirical evidence on that 84% of coachees identified the quality of the relationship with their coach as one of the most critical elements for the success of the coaching process. The aim of this study is to explore and provide further understanding on how the perceived coaching value can be

contingent on factors that might affect this crucial foundation, the coach-coachee relationship, regardless of the specific theoretical coaching approach used, when being vision, strength-based.

4.4.1 Coach skills and competences

There is already evidence in the literature that a strong 'connection' with the executive, professionalism and an appropriate coaching methodology might have a direct effect on coaching outcomes (Wasylyshyn, 2003). This provides some insights on possible dimensions within the coach-coachee relationship that could affect the coaching process – such as the need for coaches to develop skills of interpersonal effectiveness, listening and empathy (Peterson, 1996; Stern, 2004) as well as self-management (Kemp, 2008).

We explore this approach further and delve into what this 'coach-coachee relationship' may be based on. Beyond the existing evidence on how the quality of the coach-coachee connection can affect coaching outcomes, there are some scholars who suggest that the coachee's perception of the coaching outcome might be highly dependent on other variables. For example, research has supported that the coach's interpersonal capabilities such as communication skills, the coachee's perception of the working alliance and self-efficacy, and the instrumental support that the coach can offer to the coachee, mainly in terms of the range of the coach's techniques, are also important predictors of coaching's perceived value (Dingman, 2004; De Haan, Duckworth, Birch, & Jones, 2013). However, to our knowledge, the only common factor which has been reported among all the studies is that the coach-coachee relationship arises as key in determining how clients perceive the outcome of coaching in terms of effectiveness. The subsequent clear gap is to further explore which particular factors make clients perceive that coaching relationship as highly valuable.

On the other hand, focusing on the coach's perspective, a set of skills and competencies has been studied in terms of effectiveness and impact on coaching outcomes. For instance, a targeted questioning conjointly with powerful listening responses (e.g., paraphrasing, confirming, encouraging, among others) were identified as key elements of the coach's direction of the process itself. These variables were claimed to significantly affect the value perception of the coaching process, given that they could serve as a mean for exploration of past and present experiences of coachee's intentions (for an in-depth review of grounded coaching competencies see: Maltbia, Marsick, & Ghosh, 2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014), helping clients build meaning in both current states and a desired image of their future (vision-based). With this regard, as highlighted in *Table 4-1*, claims are made on the centrality of *trust* and *presence* as relational competencies needed to help clients achieve the results they truly desire.

Association	Coaching Competencies
International Coach Federation (ICF)	Since the early 1990s ICF has developed, refined, and promoted the use of 11 core coaching competencies including: #3 establishing *trust and intimacy* with the client & #4. *Coaching presence*.
Worldwide Association of Business Coaches (WABC)	Since 1997 WABC has worked to define the emerging practice of business coaching and distinguish it from other forms of coaching—competencies include: *establishing trust and respect*; and *awareness of self as instrument*.
International Coaching Community (ICC)	ICC has identified 9 key competencies coaches need to demonstrate as part of the certification process including: #3. *Relationship building* and #5. *Self-management*.
Graduate School Alliance of Executive Coaching Programs (GSAEC)	In 2007 GSAEC identified the following coaching skills, arranged in three clusters, as part of a broader, more comprehensive set of 20 academic standards targeted for university based coaching programs (currently beginning revised), coach competencies include: (a) *establishing trust* & (b) *coaching presence*.

Table 4-1 *Core Coaching Competencies*

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Furthermore, the coach's knowledge about a given business context (what has been referred to as *business acumen*) might be also an important factor for the coachee's perceived value of the coaching relation (Diedrich & Kilburg, 2001), implying that a coach should have a good understanding of leadership, different business disciplines, organizational politics or management principles as part of their core competences (Levinson, 1996; Saporito, 1996; Tobias, 1996; Kamp-Kokesh & Anderson, 2001). Besides, the existing studies on coaches' competences and background also point out that listening skills and professionalism (i.e., resourcefulness, integrity, honesty or objectivity) might also shape the coachee's perception of the value of the coaching received (Dolan & Kawamura, 2015). Thus, albeit the advance on research with regard coach's competencies and characteristics, there is still a need to look at whether there are specific constructs perceived by the coachee that would shed light on: (1) *how the coach's skills and competences can affect the overall coaching process usefulness*; (2) *whether other conditions (inside-outside client's context) might be vital when considering the coachee's perception of coaching value.*

4.4.2 Coachee skills and competences

From the coachee perspective, there is a stream of research that focuses on studying the role of motivation in developmental processes and their outcomes (Kirwan & Birchall, 2006; Schneider & Klauer, 2001). More specifically, the research points to the potential of motivation in increasing orientation, intensity and persistence of the individual's efforts to acquire new knowledge and/or skills (Baron & Morin, 2009). Likewise, there is evidence that individual characteristics may influence the client's value perception of the coaching processes. For instance, the individual's levels of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1980), personality differences and personality match (Duckworth et al., 2012), outcome expectancies (De Haan et al., 2013), agency and pathways thinking (Snyder, 1991) could result as crucial elements to consider when

a coaching process is being evaluated by its direct recipient (the executive coachee). Nonetheless, beyond present research on coachees' motivational processes and the advances made in psychotherapy literature, we still do not know whether other factors also bear on how coachee perceives the value of the guidance throughout the process received. Such factors may not necessarily lie directly on either the coach or the coachee (i.e., contextual). Thus, the overarching exploratory research question this study seeks to answer is: *What are the crucial elements that might be moderating client's (high) value perception of an executive coaching process?*

4.5 Methodology

We collected the empirical data for this paper through a set of 197 semi-structured interviews that lasted about 30 minutes and analyzed them through thematic analyses (Boyatzis, 1998) to explore what possible elements could affect a perception of high coaching value by coachee (the executives). Thematic analysis is described as a qualitative method to classify written or oral materials into identified categories of similar meanings (Moretti *et al.*, 2011); is a useful and flexible way of identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns and themes within collected data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). These categories represent either explicit or inferred communication (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). As a method for systematically describing common meaning (Schreier, 2012), it should be thought of a tool that spans its use across different methods (Boyatzis, 1998). Then, we proposed an integrative framework of propositions driven by the content analysis done.

4.5.1 Research setting and procedure

The research data was generated from 197 semi-structured face-to-face interviews. We managed to arrange those with a group of Spanish executive bank branches executives (M=44, sd=2.91; 73% men) who went through a 3 months coaching program offered by their employer. They received their coaching processes from 7 coaches using diverse techniques but who all built on a common vision, strength base framework. Interviews were conducted one month after finishing the 3 months coaching processes. As an external party, we mitigated the risk of self-reporting and social desirability by conducting our set of interviews through two external individuals who were not employed by the bank. None of the coaches developing the coaching processes were employed by the bank. We believe that this fostered openness and trust when collecting data, since the respondents knew from the outset that their answers would not be shared with their employer, so that confidentiality was entirely preserved throughout the whole study.

4.5.2 Interview questions

We prepared a semi-structured interview based on 7 questions that included 1 closed one, 2 dichotomous and 4 open-ended questions. The purpose of the first question (1. "How useful was the coaching process for your work?"; providing as possible answers "*Very useful*"; "*Useful*"; "*Not too useful*"; "*Not useful at all*") was to identify the executive's overall perception of the coaching process usefulness.

The two questions with dichotomous answers were: (2) "Has a trustful relationship with the coach been created?" and (3) "Did you feel listened and managed to cover with the coach those aspects you were primarily interested into?". Additional open questions were: (4) "Could you describe how the coaching process has been useful for you in your work?"; (5) "What have been the most positive aspects of the coaching process?"; (6) "What improvements would you introduce for future

coaching processes?"; (7) "What was your general opinion about the coaching process?".

Questions 2 and 3 where built upon previous grounded relational reliability research on trust and presence competencies as it has been explicitly stated in the conceptual framework (Maltbia, Ghosh, & Marsick, 2011), being used as dichotomous to first discriminate the percentage of the sample for which a trusting relationship had been built with the coach (only 3 out the 197 executives sample answered 'no' to those questions). The subsequent intent of the 4 open questions was to let executives come up with rich answers that would provide a variety of information in terms of dispersion of insights for our coding process. Those 4 open questions were, bottom-line, intended to gather similar type of insights from slightly different perspectives with a view to boosting the reliability of answers through iteration and triangulation during the coding process.

4.5.3 Data collection & coding

We conducted our coding by using *thematic analysis* methodology (Boyatzis, 1998). The *inter-rater reliability agreement* (IRR) of the data analysis was pursued by using a group of 2 independent coders. The coding system used for the analysis of data (presence/absence of constructs) is shown below. The 2 independent coders first came up with diverse dimensions on which the upcoming coding could be based on. Both coders first agreed on these global dimensions as a result of an initial reading of the whole set of interviews.

Relationship between coach-coachee

The purpose of this coding was to identify what specific terms the coachee used to describe elements that made them perceive a positive-meaningful relationship with the coach.

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– Express the importance of *trust* and/or *presence* generated between coach and coachee.

– Express other further connected elements generated between coach-coachee.

Example: *"We had a trustworthy climate, I could share all kind of questions I had and discuss them with the coach without any limitation."*

Coach skills and competences

The purpose of this code was to identify what skills, competences or traits from the coach were perceived by the coachee and they thought had an impact on their coaching sessions.

– Express certain behaviors performed by the coach that were perceived as having a positive or negative impact on the executive's coaching process.

– Express certain traits or attributes of the coach that the executive perceived to have a positive or negative impact on his/her coaching process.

Example: *"Thanks to the professionalism of my coach I saw a "before and after" in my own professional development."*

Coachee skills and competences

The purpose of this code was to identify whether the executive perceived that some of his/her pre-coaching (acquired before the coaching) skills, competences or capabilities could have had an impact on the perception of the coaching process.

– Coachee mentions a skill or competence he or she already had and thinks could have had a positive or negative impact on the coaching session.

– Coachee identifies a skill or competence he or she is lacking and considers whether it could have had a positive impact on the coaching session.

Example: *"The coaching process helped me to identify my weaknesses and, therefore, establish my development plan, and also to identify my main strengths to build upon them…"*

Environment

The purpose of this code was to identify whether the executive consider that there could have been other elements, beyond the skills and capabilities of the coach or him/herself that he/she thinks either had or could have had a positive or negative impact on the coaching session.

–　　　Coachee identifies an element that is neither linked to the skills or capabilities of the coach nor the coachee and that he/she considers had or could have had a positive or negative impact on the coaching sessions.

–　　　Coachee expresses suggestions on how the coaching sessions could have been better without referring to the coach or coachee skills or competences.

Example: *"I would have loved to have more availability for face-to-face sessions"* *"I think that there was not enough room for establishing a proper development plan and following up."*

4.6 Findings

In order to present our findings, we split the coding into two separate stages. First, through content analysis, we identified in which interviews the coachees referred to any of the suggested foregoing global codes to detect whether those elements were present or not in their insights. For this first step, we first filtered the coachees' insights to identify those interviews in which we potentially might categorize new constructs (inductive approach).

The summary tables below show the first stage of our findings and the presence or absence of constructs detected by the two independent coders.

Relationship between coach-coachee		
Identifiers	**Coder 1**	**Coder 2**
Express the importance of trust or other connected elements generated between coach and executive (and primarily facilitated by the coach).	64% (126)	70% (137)

Table 4-2 *Coach-Coachee Relationship*

Coach skills and competences		
Identifiers	**Coder 1**	**Coder 2**
Express certain behaviors or attributes performed by the coach that were perceived as having a positive or negative impact on the executive's coaching process.	92% (182)	91% (179)

Table 4-3 *Coach Skills and Competencies*

Coachee skills and competences		
Identifiers	**Coder 1**	**Coder 2**
Executive mentions a skill or competence he/she had and they think could have had a positive or negative impact on the coaching process, or identify a skill or competence he/she is lacking and thinks that in case of having it could have had a positive impact on the overall coaching process.	85% (167)	78% (153)

Table 4-4 *Coachee Skills and Competencies*

Environment or context		
Identifiers	**Coder 1**	**Coder 2**
Executive identifies an element that is not related to the skills or capabilities of the coach neither him/herself that it is considered to have had a positive or negative impact on the coaching sessions; or expresses suggestions on how the coaching sessions could have been better without referring to coach or coachee skills or competences.	80% (158)	71% (140)

Table 4-5 *Environment & Context*

The second stage in drawing up our findings was to further analyze those interviews where certain constructs were evident. Based on the number of times (*frecuency of presence*) that a wide given construct was mentioned across all the analyzed 197 interviews and within a specific coding group (shown on *tables 4-2, 4-3, 4-4, 4-5*), we identify a set of 4 relationships (*moderator factors*) that appeared to be mentioned recurrently when the executives identified potential elements that considered could have affected the value perception of their coaching (kappa ≥ 0.8 in each of them). Below we elaborate further on the relationships identified.

Reliableness → High Value Perception

We refer as to the construct of *reliableness* when describing those crucial elements that the executive coachees considered had a positive impact on their value perception. Hence, '*reliableness*' has been referred as a high degree of *transparency* and *trust* (93% of the sample mentioned one and/or another of those elements) in the executives' relationship with their coach, in which they felt that could rely on their coach and frankly share their thoughts with him/her *("It is a gift to have the opportunity to reflect on your professional advance with a person able to create a supportive yet professional space where you can actually speak up and*

be yourself"; "from the beginning, the relationship with the coach was comfortable, trustworthy, and very thoughtful"; "she built my confidence"). When mentioning this construct, coachees recurrently prized the coach's ability to shift focus to the 'here and now' in the conversation – something we labeled as *presence* (89%) *("I felt truly listened"; "She was absolutely present"*, as if anything more would exist, as well as the coach's *availability* (73%) along the whole process (which was not confined only to coaching sessions happened). An example of this availability is furnished by comments like: *"My coach was available throughout the coaching process, not just during the coaching sessions. That was a kind of support that I highly valued on him"; "we maintained contact beyond the coaching sessions and that was helpful"; "exchange of emails kept me close and more engaged to the process"; "it was good to know that she was there even out of our meetings".*

From the evidence collected, experiencing *presence* at the beginning of the coaching process serves to strengthen the personal bond needed for both the coach and client to successfully navigate and overcome the vulnerability, sense of risk, and personal reliance often associated with seeking help from others. Additionally, there was a qualitative agreed appreciation from the independent coders that there was certainly a client's manifested coach-coachee feedback loop in terms of both being present and open. Albeit this construct focused on revealing those active ingredients that might foster a high-quality coaching relationship, the analysis reveals that those elements were mainly considered as 'enabling' by the coach.

Coach's Meaningful Guidance →High Value Perception

91% of the sample described in their insights how the direction of the coach throughout the coaching process affected their valuable perception of the coaching they received. The term *'meaningful guidance'* referred to specific actions taken by the coach in pro-actively approaching coaching goals through a vision-based engaging process. According to the wide comments, coaches did so by revealing, clarifying, helping to align what the client wanted to achieve with their goals;

encouraging executives to discover things for themselves; eliciting solutions and strategies which underplaying their own responsibility and accountability in the process; stimulating to practice what they were learning about theirselves in the sessions, agreeing a joint meaningful plan for their actions. Some precise examples are: *"She was a door opener through the sessions"; "she guided me through the process and gave me tools to think about what I wanted and how I wanted it; it made a lot of sense to me"; "the direction established by the coach helped for achieving my vision"; "through the process, he encouraged me to improve some significant areas"; "she read between lines and made me reflect alongside the sessions, encouraging me to pursuing what I want to do. It is good to go through a guided process like this when you have to make a decision"; "simultaneously to the sessions, he encouraged me to start practising now in team work to interact with people and improve on it".*

Coachee's Self-awareness → High Value Perception

72% of the coachees referred to their '*self-awareness*' as a key element for perceiving and taking most of the value provided by the coaching process. This construct was consistently described by executives as in-sessions acquired knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses and that allowed them to more clearly identify what areas they wanted to work in and on what others they might base their learning agenda and developmental process. This was also cited as one of the elements that could influence the drawing up of a suitable coaching agenda. We also observed that this construct might indirectly influence other constructs identified through this study – such as *coach's meaningful guidance* (given that in some cases it seemed to be linked to the fact that the executive reached a clear vision on the areas in which he/she wanted to progress). Some examples of quotations on this construct are: "*It helped me understand the situation and my outlook on facing it"; "I am more focused and aware of the parts I need to change"; "made me critically question the whys"; "I realized I always choose the safer option, not the dreamy one"; "It was good to talk to somebody that makes you*

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question why you want to do this and learn about who you are";" "I realized that I don't want some things right away"; "It was good to reflect on my strengths and weaknesses to re-set my goals for the near future"; "the process was important to learn and discuss some tools and practical ways to strengthen some traits and minimize some flaws"; "made certain loops visible"; "I was unaware I was connecting a lot my family situation with my future".

Coachee's Adherence → High Value Perception

71% out of the sample referred to their willingness to be coached (in terms of time and/or commitment to reflect upon) as one of the elements that had a potential influence on their perception of the value they have received out of the coaching sessions. At least 140 coachees out of the sample mentioned that with more room and/or personal commitment throughout the reflection process, they could have got more value out the sessions and the overall process and thus claimed this as one of the elements that somehow condition their perception of the coaching value. Some examples referring to this construct are: *"I wish I could have had more time for face-to-face sessions"; "a longer process with more time availability would let me go deeper in my projects development"; "I would have liked to devote more time and dedication to the reflection process"; "I found the process brief yet valuable. More time to reflect upon would have been preferable".*

4.7 Overall Picture

Based on the insights provided by the executives and the constructs consistency identified through the content analysis exposed, we contend that this set of constructs might have a moderating effect on the executives' perceived value of their coaching. Thus, driven on the gathered evidence, we suggest the following model (*Figure 4-1*) illustrates the specific moderating effects. We elaborate upon each one in the discussion section.
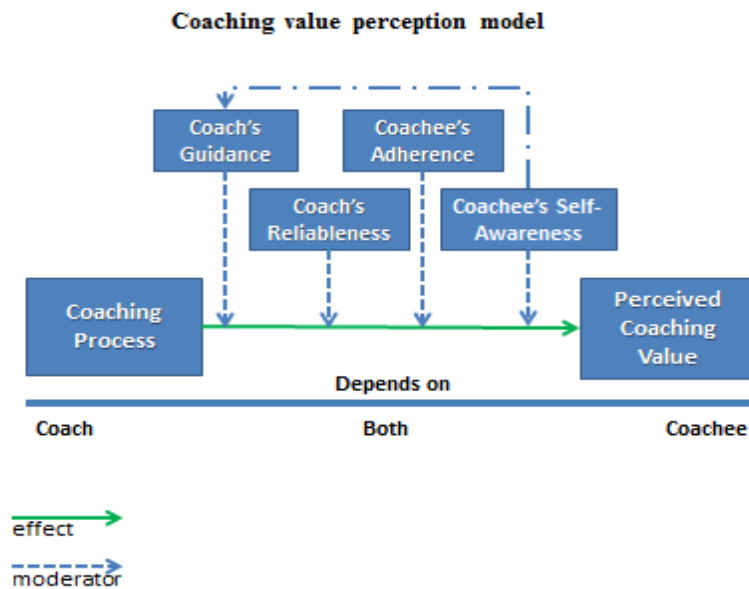
Figure 4-1 Theoretical Constructs Moderators

4.8 Towards a framework of coaching value perception

The clearest message emanating from this qualitative exploratory study is that coaching relationship is not only playing a powerful role in coaching outcomes (i.e., reinforced commitment to goals connected to vision), but is also significant itself on the perception of high value of the coaching process by its recipient. The 95% of the executive coachees explicitly or indirectly referred to the quality of the relationship as a crucial factor on their processes value assessment. This has been showed herein when exposing the four constructs. This therefore signals and allows common ground for further exploration on this research direction, especially with regard to the moderator factors of high value perception.

Hence, we posit that our model of coaching value perception helps in: (1) identifying the active ingredients perceived by the executives as highly valuable on

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their 3 months coaching processes; (2) predicting the potential effectiveness of vision-based coaching processes; (3) signaling directions which further research on coaching effectiveness moderators should focus on.

4.8.1 Propositions

Based on our findings and the previous aforementioned literature on trust in relationships, we have explored what we termed as '*reliableness*'. This construct was linked to the degree of *transparency, trust, and presence* facilitated by the coach, combined with his/her *availability* beyond the coaching sessions. We consider that this construct could be a potential moderator of the perceived value of coaching as it was mainly observed by those executives who also had positive feedback with regard to the coaching process usefulness. This moderator, informed by the perspective of learning from and through experience in the form of executive coaching process, might boost a specific direction in the professional practice of executive coaches by considering our first data-driven proposition:

Proposition 1: *The executive's perceived value of coaching is contingent on 'reliableness', understood as a composite of transparency, trust, presence, and availability primarily generated by the coach*

This proposition might support previous research on the foundational competencies of establishing trust and coach presence (Maltbia, Ghosh, & Marsick, 2011) by being an essential element of the coaching relationship which facilitates clients learning from their experience to achieving their intended outcomes, connected to a meaningful holistic vision. Indeed, trust seems to be the key element for creating the openness required for the coaching to be able to "go deep". Kühlmann (2008) distinguishes between 'trust in person' and 'trust in context.' Trust in context can be gained by creating a common cultural framework, though trust in a person is built up over time and contact and can be strongly influenced by cross-cultural

differences, as some interviewees noted. Therefore, the number of coaching sessions needed to build up a sufficient level of trust can vary between cultures. This also suggests implications for further cross-cultural competency research development in the area of executive coaching given that the construct has emerged as one of the key factors to which executives' perception of coaching value is contingent on.

We have furthermore observed that executives consistently referred in their interviews to the fact that being able to define meaningful goals or objectives from the outset together with the coach helped enhance their perception of the value of the coaching process. In this respect, the construct '*professional and meaningful guidance*' by which the coach moved the executive throughout the coaching process, allowed them to frame and plan their coaching process to achieve certain specific aims to focus on their own agendas. At the same time, those coachees who did not perceive marked value from the coaching (though it was only a 3% of the sample size) said that superior exploration through the process and the professional direction by the coach could improve future coaching. Based on the gathered evidence, our second proposition is:

Proposition 2. *The perceived value of coaching is contingent on the coach's professional and meaningful guidance as the capacity to comprehend and focus on the coachee's evocative agenda and conduct the successive process meaningfully and coherently*

This proposition enshrines the idea that perception of coaching's value lies in the coach's ability to clarify the coachee's focus by primarily inquiring about vision-based goals (i.e., desired engaging state), by meanwhile considering current reality, current and future options for action; and determining the way forward by identifying priorities, next steps, and the support needed for goal attainment (what connects to goal-setting and self-directed behavior change).

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Another construct that we identified as a potential moderator of executives' perceived value of the coaching is what was referred to as *'coachee's self-awareness'*. From evidences collected, we observe that executives were referring to the fact that their awareness of their potential limitations and room for improvement is raised from the outset as key elements to facilitate the elaboration of significant goals for the coaching sessions together with the coach. Hence, according to our analysis, we contend that the degree of coachee's self-awareness attained through the coaching process might be a potential moderator of the perceived value of the executive coaching given its twofold impact on the process −on one hand, on drawing up the goals expected to be achieved through the overall process, and, on the other hand, on the degree of readiness to work on the strengths or weaknesses identified by the executive (which further connects to the strive to heighten client's awareness of perceived importance for engaging in coaching). Therefore, our third proposition is:

Proposition 3. *The perceived value of the whole coaching process is contingent on the extent to which the coachee's becomes more aware of both his/her strengths and weaknesses throughout the process*

Hence, using the lens of learning from and through experience (Kolb, 1984), from this insight we see a need to go further on how coaches partner with executives to build ongoing, deeper self-awareness as they make sense of strategies used between sessions through guided reflection (the key, between-sessions process). Such self-awareness deployment might certainly raise a significant difference in executives' overall assessment of coaching value.

Finally, although we mainly focused on identifying the elements in the coach-coachee relationship that could affect how executives assess the value of their 3 months processes, we found that clients consistently mentioned their willingness to be coached in both face-to-face sessions and through reflection between-sessions −what refers to a more inside-outside contextual piece on clients. Such elements (i.e., *willingness* and *commitment*) allowed them to perceive and positively process

the utility of the overall coaching method as useful. Hence, executives referred to their agendas on the one hand and their willingness to take coaching on the other and fit it into their busy work schedules. Repeated reference was made to such commitment, what appears to be a major factor potentially moderating coaching value perceived. Therefore, the fourth proposition to emerge from the analysis is:

Proposition 4. *The perceived value of the whole coaching process is contingent on the coachee's adherence to the process, as his/her willingness to be involved and engage in, and his or her commitment to reflect upon what underlies it*

From the outset, coaches involved clients in jointly defining coaching objectives based on: (a) their strengths; charting session agendas; (b) determining indicators of both progress and success with regard to their personal vision; (c) grasping the impact of the work already done on the client's focus and development. Both, the executive's willingness toward the process and their commitment to reflect between sessions seem to play a crucial role in executives having a high valuable perception opinion of their coaching processes usefulness. This idea indeed links both sides of the coaching relationship, coach and coachee. From the coach's side, tying in which contracting and execution competencies (i.e., see Maltbia, Marsick & Ghosh, 2013). Such competencies are not only crucial halfway through the coaching (for perspective-taking, feedback, exploring options and agreeing on the next steps for reflecting-on-action). From the coachee's perspective, they are also vital for bringing the process to a successful conclusion, boosting the coachee's ability to undertake repeated action/reflection cycles and progress in achieving goals; joining to the discussion of inner motivation in the coaching process as well as executives' willingness to be involved ('*coachability*') – a complex, multi-layered concept that needs to be further understood given that it may also affect coaching effectiveness (i.e., see Kauffman, Russell, & Bush, 2008; Kretzschmar, 2010). Indeed, from our last proposition it follows that a competent coach may not be enough to achieve the desired coaching outcomes if the coachee is not ready and/or does not reach sufficiently self-motivation and commitment to, as the ineludible inner stimulus in

the person on wanting to change and develop. Still, a competent coach is the one able to manage the stimulation of those executive's vital ingredients that will enhance motivation and engage coachee in a personal meaningful process.

4.9 Limitations

Although our key findings seem fairly robust, when our method is revisited, it is clear that interviewing technique in which the thematic analysis is done by expert coders is resource intensive (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). The limitations associated with this technique can be offset if mono method bias is avoided through 'triangulation', i.e. the use of different measures to evaluate the same concept through various perspectives as suggested by Campbell and Fiske (1959) in the multi-trait multi method approach (Batista-Foguet & Saris, 1992; Campbell & Fiske, 1959; Saris, Satorra, & Coenders, 2004; Saris & Gallhofer, 2007).

There might also be other constructs that we have not detected and which might be dependent on nuances in coach skills (given that there were 7 coaches, differences between-coaches might apply) though the high consistency found throughout the constructs frequency agreement suggests that when assessing the overall coaching value, no substantial differences were perceived among approaches nor styles or techniques. That may be because all the coaching was based on strength-based and visioning-focused approaches, albeit coaches were trained by different schools.

Additionally, it would have been preferable to have held a follow-up interview to clarify further certain constructs. This is because although there was an overall high interrater reliability Coder 1 - Coder 2 (high agreement on every particular construct on the second phase of the analysis), there might still have been different perceptions on what the coachee said, in the thrust of what he/she said and therefore what the coders assumed. That said, this study was built upon a rigorous content analysis process and demonstrated consistency throughout, and interviews were

independently analyzed by two coders who did not know the participants (executives coachees) (i.e., Ryan, Emmerling, & Spencer, 2009b). Further studies on coaching value perception with other samples would do well to pursue this still scarce-explored line of research.

4.10 Theoretical implications and future research. Discussion

Building on the literature on how the role of trust and transparency can affect the coach-coachee relationship (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007), we reported further findings that support those dimensions while adding dimensions like presence and availability throughout (and beyond) the process. Those are seen as key factors in facilitating a high-quality relationship as perceived by the executives. Furthermore, through the collected insights, we managed to identify how the coachees might describe the observable outcome of those factors. As we observed, *reliableness* seems to be a construct that most of the executives related to factors primarily enabled by the coach. We contend this construct might be a valid artifact to measure the extent to which these dimensions are present in forging a coaching relationship, but other dimensions might be still untangled, since the construct itself has been driven from a reflective approach.

Thus, it is posited that the role of the coach's *meaningful guidance* should be explored in greater detail. For instance, one needs to ascertain the coach's role in: (a) identifying coachee's personal resources for, and potential barriers to making real goals explicit; (b) desired state (ideal self); (c) carrying out a thorough assessment of the current situation (real-self) vis-à-vis the goals (prior to); (d) reviewing options employed to date or for potential future action; (e) charting the way forward by identifying priorities, next steps, and the supporting structures needed to attain the goals. In delving into this construct, it should be also noted that

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said guidance more often seems to affect perception of the relationship (and hence the executive's overall perception of the coaching's value) than the other dimensions highlighted in the literature (such as the coach´s business knowledge and specific acumen).

Regarding the coachee perspective, our findings yield a view on coachee dimensions that have been mostly overlooked in the literature - which has mainly focused on the role of motivation in developmental processes of coaching recipients (Kirwan & Birchall, 2006; Schneider & Klauer, 2001). The insights attained build upon the literature by identifying the coachee's self-reflection as a key dimension in boosting the individual's orientation, effort and persistence in pursuing new knowledge and development, but goes a step further toward client levels of 'coachability' or readiness to change, being necessary to be considered to work through. Connecting to this, we detected a key dimension and its substantive nuances, such that the coachee's level of *self-awareness* deployed throughout the process and his/her *willingness* and *commitment* to spend time and to reflect upon and beyond sessions were of vital importance. These dimensions could: (a) shed light on what other coachee-dependent dimensions might influence executive perception of coaching value; (b) provide a sharper view and understanding of the role of readiness to be coached and potential other barriers to engaging in the whole process.

4.11 Implications for practitioners

When looking at existing research, the focus has been mainly on the skills and capabilities of the coach and, therefore, the success of the coaching process tends to be more linked to coach's aptitudes rather than coachee's capabilities. Nevertheless, as some studies have suggested, the role of the person being coached in developmental processes already signals how the perceived quality of the coaching

process may be contingent on his/her disposition toward the process and reflection and actions arising there from. We contend that one of the main 'take-aways' for practitioners from our research is the value of assessing coachees' self-awareness before embarking on the coaching itself, since according to our insights clients' readiness for coaching seem to emerge as a multi-layered and complex construct. As we have seen, there are good reasons for thinking that self-awareness deployment through the process is strongly linked to coaching success with regard to valuable perception of its usefulness. There are also grounds for believing that professional coaches should take other external, environmental factors (client's *inside-outside* particular context) into account and that these may not directly depend on either the coach or the coachee conscious direction. Hence, the need to explore such dimensions discussed in an organizational context should be subsequently approached and further analyzed.

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Chapter 5: Understanding Cognitive-Emotional Processing through a Coaching Process: The Influence of Coaching on Vision, Goal-directed Energy, and Resilience

5.1 Abstract

This study is based on Intentional Change Theory (ICT) and supports cognitive-emotion and social complexity perspectives regarding positive and negative affect. We examine how a coaching experience guided by a specific theoretical approach within a leadership development program at a European business school influences cognitive-emotional processing of MBA students with regard to their levels of personal vision comprehensiveness and strength, goal-directed energy, and resilience. A within-subjects pre-post Non-Equivalent Dependent Variables (NEDV) design with a total of 76 students was conducted using survey methods. A rigorous analysis sheds light on how ICT-based coaching enhances individual self-development processes. Participants stated higher levels of personal vision, goal-directed energy and resilience post-coaching. A series of moderator effects were identified regarding the quality of the coaching connection (i.e., overall emotional saliency) and the general self-efficacy of participants. Implications concerning how coaching processes may be enriched through the establishment of high-quality coaching connections are discussed.

5.2 Keywords

Coaching, high quality connections, ideal self, emotional attractors, leadership development.

5.3 Introduction

Coaching has recently emerged as a discipline, a profession, a leadership style, and a new area of empirical research. The practice of coaching has been around for millennia in the form of individualized professional advice and training but has

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only recently been formally recognized as a psychological construct within corporate and academic arenas (Poelmans, 2009). Current research on coaching seems to be primarily occupied by the question, 'Does it work?' This is reasonable since evidence of effective outcomes is critical for establishing legitimacy (Gregory, Levy, & Jeffers, 2008; Segers, Vloeberghs, Hendrickx, & Inceoglu, 2011). Yet how do coaches help clients make meaningful and lasting change in their lives? This question is fundamental for coaching practice, and is particularly relevant to high-engagement coaching relationships that involve a holistic and developmental approach to enhancing leadership capability (Segers, Vloeberghs, Henderickx & Inceoglu, 2011). Little attention has been given to the systematic study of theoretical frameworks, methodologies, or approaches that guide the coaching process (Gregory, Levy, & Jeffers, 2008; Segers *et al.*, 2011). Indeed, due to the rapid growth of practice, coaches adopt frameworks and methodologies to guide the process in an effort to structure their work. However, many of these frameworks and methodologies are not well-grounded in research on the complex web of cause and effect that shapes coaching outcomes (Bennett, 2006; Spence, 2007).

 Two approaches typically occur in coaching: one focuses on performance targets and individual weaknesses, the other seeks to inspire stronger performance by focusing on the coachee's strengths, aspirations, and personal development. In fact, over the last 15 years, coaching has refocused toward strength-based approaches, orienting individuals to focus on things they do well. A number of approaches to coaching have adopted this broad framework, including: Fredrickson's flourishing (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005); Higgins' promotion versus prevention (Higgins, Roney, Crowe & Hymes, 1994); Deci & Ryan's self-determination theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000).

Concern about the theory gap in coaching has triggered numerous calls for more empirical investigation into the elements that make the difference between successful coaching outcomes from mediocre or unsuccessful results (Brotman,

Liberi & Wasylyshyn, 1998; Kilburg, 2001; Wasylyshyn, 2003). Calls have additionally been made for research on: coaching antecedents (coach/coachee characteristics, and organizational/client support); coaching process (coaching approach, coaching relationship, and feedback receptivity); proximal coaching outcomes (self-awareness, behavioral change, and learning); and distal coaching outcomes (individual success and organizational success) (Baek-Kyoo, 2005). In addition to the research agendas above, Bennett (2006) published a meta review and qualitative content analysis of scholarly works on coaching in which he specifically challenged researchers to generate work that will help build a scholarly, evidence-based foundation for coaching practice and teaching. From their suggested theoretical framework, Segers *et al.*, (2011: 208) observed that the biggest gap in the existing coaching literature is in the "how" dimension of their 'coaching cube' (i.e. which coaching approaches are being used) and particularly, with regards to the differences in impact and the effectiveness of diverse approaches.

At the same time, the fact that coaching has become part of leadership development programs has prompted studies that empirically or theoretically justify the use of coaching techniques that: increase self-awareness through consciousness-raising experiences in executive development programs (Mirvis, 2008; Sadler-Smith & Shefy, 2008); boost reflective practices by managers and enhance decision-making processes within the context of MBA programs (De Déa Roglio & Light, 2009); boost career learning in terms of personal development (Parker, Hall & Kram, 2008); improve performance following an executive education program by supplementing the coaching with multi-source feedback (Hooijberg & Lane, 2009; Smither, London, Flautt, Vargas, & Kucine, 2003).

Despite the increased use of coaching practices in leadership development processes, few empirical studies have examined the coaching process itself and its influence on the internal processing of the individual being coached (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). Additionally, there is a lack of

theory related to the crucial elements in the quality of the coach-coachee relationship and its potential implications for coaching outcomes, even though this is a growing field (i.e., see Baron & Morin, 2009; Boyatzis, Smith, & Beveridge, 2012; Howard, 2006; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Passarelli, 2014).

Clearly, one cannot, say, raise the quality of coach training or improve selection process of coaches used in leadership development programs if one does not know: (1) the characteristics of the industry in terms of the approaches being used; (2) the most relevant elements that most need to be incorporated in the coaching process to maximize success in coachee leadership development processes (Maltbia, Marsick & Ghosh, 2014; Segers *et al.*, 2011). Coaching therefore extends beyond a process or technique for developing competencies and reaching ambitious goals, and represents a new paradigm in management based on a new type of formalized high-quality relationship in which skilled professionals help clients make their wishes for life changes come true.

5.4 Establishing a coaching relationship

Many researchers hold that it is within the context of a high-quality relationship that growth and transformation occur (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003; Josselson, 1996; Miller & Stiver, 1997). The research literature on coaching that focuses on outcomes related to the relational competencies is relatively recent and somewhat limited. The coach–coachee working relationship has been identified as one of the key variables of the coaching process (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Smither, London & Reilly, 2005). Many of these early studies were qualitative in nature. Wasylyshyn (2003) evaluated one coach from the perspective of 86 clients. Findings indicated the top three personal characteristics of an effective executive coach as: (a) the ability to form a strong "connection" with the executive (86%); (b) professionalism (82%); and (c) use of a clear and sound coaching methodology.

Gyllesten & Parker (2007) also found the coaching relationship to be of critical importance. Positive coaching relationships were established on a foundation on high levels of trust and transparency, which promoted psychological 'safety' and active participation in the process. Bluckert (2005) added rapport, support, challenge, and trust as key elements of a successful coaching relationship. Although these earlier qualitative studies provide rich explorations of smaller case study samples, the field has also begun to see the emergence of mixed methodology, quasi-experimental, and field studies. An example of this is one of the larger studies provided by Boyce, Jackson, and Neal (2010) in which 74 coach-client pairs participated in a voluntary leadership coaching program. Results indicated that trust was the most important coaching attribute for all rater groups, signaling the primacy of the relationship aspects of coaching. Specifically, relationship processes of building rapport, trust, and commitment positively predicted coaching program outcomes, including coach and client responses, and changed behavioral and coaching program results.

The mixed methods study of Beets and Goodman (2012), who employed the Success Case Method (SCM) using 80 participants in a training program comparing successful with less successful cases of skill transfer show that establishing mutual trust, respect, and freedom of expression were among the highest predictors of successful outcomes. A field study by Baron and Morin (2010) also provided pre- and post-coaching measures on the Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI) and the Working-Alliance Inventory-Short Revised (WAI-SR) and demonstrated a statistically significant increase in coachee's self-efficacy.

According to Gregory & Levy (2010), high-quality coaching relationships are evidenced by a genuineness and comfort in the relationship, as well as by positive communication and the facilitation of development. A series of longitudinal studies indicated that coaching based on Positive Emotional Attractors (PEA), which refers to coaching relationships characterized by an overall positive emotional tone, foster psychological states that optimally support behavioral change by facilitating the

formation of trust, rapport, and interpersonal closeness in the coaching relationship (Passarelli, 2014). Indeed, the ability to establish resonant relationships is fundamental to coaching practice, and arises from striking the optimal balance for the coachee's emotional attractors (positive and negative emotional attractors; PEA/NEA). In this scenario, the coach demonstrates empathetic attunement, understanding, and shares in the affective-cognitive experience of the client (Jordan, 1986; Passarelli, 2014), and by sensing this level of acceptance and affirmation, the client feel 'safe' experiences safety and positive emotional bonding that enhances the affective state of both parties (Boyatzis, Smith & Blaize, 2006).

Overall, a number of studies have shown that the quality of connection between coach-coachee that is evident throughout the coaching process plays a fundamental role for coaching success (Boyatzis, Smith & Blaize, 2006; Maethner, Jasen & Bahmann, 2005; Parker *et al*., 2008; Runde & Bastians, 2005). Indeed, according to Intentional Change Theory (ICT; Boyatzis, 2001, 2006, 2008), high-quality resonant relationships are the center around which desired and sustained change evolve. Such relationships have been found to ease career transitions (Ibarra, 2003), enhance and enrich identity (Roberts, 2006), and establish interpersonal trust that facilitates learning from failure (Carmeli & Gittell, 2009; Carmeli, Brueller & Dutton, 2009). Resonant relationships also have physiological benefits, including improved immune system functioning, cardiovascular health, and patterns of neuroendocrine activity that contribute to resilience and engagement at work (Heaphy & Dutton, 2008).

In the current study, some of those reviewed vital dimensions of the coaching connection are represented as shared vision, shared compassion, and overall positive mood between coach and coachee. These elements will be referred to throughout this study as 'emotional saliency' and as covering the positive emotional tone attained through the coaching space as the subjective sense of being in synchrony with one another (from the coachee's perspective). Hence, this paper proposes ICT-based coaching as an alternative to traditional coaching approaches to

primarily emphasize the exploration and articulation of an individual's ideal self (IS) as the driver of a developmental process.

5.5 Conceptual Framing of the Study

As a coaching framework and having evolved from self-directed learning theory (Kolb & Boyatzis, 1970), Intentional Change Theory (ICT; Boyatzis, 2001, 2006, 2008) is a comprehensive integrative self-directed learning theory that embraces a non-linear process model. It can be considered developmental because it adopts a holistic perspective on human growth and behavior change (Segers *et al*., 2011). Specifically, ICT-based coaching assists individuals in creating sustained and desired change through a process involving several epiphanies: discovery and articulation of one's ideal self (values, core identity, dreams, and aspirations); assessment of one's real self (current realities) as compared to the ideal self; formulation of learning goals; implementation of deliberate practices; and the development of a mutually positive coaching relationship.

In the following section, we first present a brief overview of the conceptual umbrella (ICT) in which the current study is framed and include an examination of the relevant variables analyzed. We then outline an analysis conducted on: the influence of a coaching session (independent variable) on each of the dependent variables (i.e., personal vision, goal-directed energy, and resilience) in relation to the quality of the connection between the coach and coachee (i.e., in terms of the emotional saliency perceived by the coachee) and with the coachee's general self-efficacy as possible moderators. Finally, we discuss the results and limitations of the present study, as well as potential implications for future research and practices based on the aforesaid conceptual framework.

5.5.1 Intentional Change Theory and the role of PEA/NEA

Intentional Change Theory (ICT; Boyatzis, Smith & Blaize, 2006) is a change methodology often used in coaching that may help bridge the current theoretical coaching research gap. According to ICT, sustainable learning, change, and development are stimulated by primarily by arousing the positive emotional attractor (PEA), which is a state that reflects what a person would love to be and what he/she would love their life to be, as in their ideal self (Howard, 2006). Coaching with regard to the PEA involves focusing on the client, emphasizing his or her ideal self, and maintaining an overall positive emotional tone (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006). In contrast, coaching to the negative emotional attractor (NEA) involves imposing external standards, pressures, or controls on the individual being coached (Boyatzis, Smith & Beveridge, 2012; Higgins, Roney, Crowe & Hymes, 1994). The NEA often arises in the context of an individual's real self as he or she explores the question, "Who am I now?" (Taylor, 2006), whereas the PEA arises from the question, "Who do I wish to be?" (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006).

The psychological components of the PEA state are embodied in its physiological correlates (Cacioppo & Tassinary, 1990). PEA states have been associated with autonomic activity that supports the release of bonding hormones (oxytocin in women and vasopressin in men; McCall & Singer, 2012); neurological activity in regions of the brain associated with social cognition (the default mode network; Jack, Boyatzis, Khawaja, Passareli & Leckie, 2013); and social engagement and recovery from stress (increased parasympathetic activity; Porges, 2003). However, highly intense or prolonged periods of NEA trigger individual defense mechanisms and may hinder learning and development (Passarelli, 2015) since it has been associated with the experience of negative emotions, cognitive impairment, and a greater influence of the sympathetic nervous system on autonomic functioning (Boyatzis, 2008).

Longitudinal studies have shown that coaching on the basis of PEA results in dramatic improvements in MBA students' social and emotional competencies, resulting in more effective management performance (Boyatzis, Smith, Oosten & Woolford, 2013; Boyatzis, Stubbs & Taylor, 2002). Subsequent work provides evidence that PEA coaching improves outcomes in other contexts. For example, in medicine, research has attempted to improve the degree to which patients listen to advice from their doctors and take their medicine (treatment adherence is low at 50% for diagnosed Type II diabetics worldwide and 50% for orthopedic surgery patients (Khawaja, 2011)). Khawaja (2011) showed that treatment adherence was enhanced when the patient experienced the relationship with the doctor as having more shared vision and positive mood – key aspects in a PEA mentoring relationship. Other work has looked at medical student-standardized patient interactions (Dyck, 2010); father-daughter relationships in family businesses (Overbeke, 2009); Information Technology (IT) manager-subordinate relationships (Pittenger, 2012); and physician leadership effectiveness (Quinn, 2013). In each of these studies, the perception of shared vision was the statistically strongest factor in predicting an effective outcome for the dependent variable; sharing a vision for the desired future is mutually exciting and motivating.

ICT posits that PEA has a calming or energizing effect that is activated by the experience of hope, compassion, mindfulness, and/or playfulness (Boyatzis & McKee, 2005; Ayan, 2009), and the sequencing and salience of PEA and NEA have a profound effect on coaching effectiveness (Howard, 2006). Using a mixed method approach, Buse (2011) also found that career longevity among women engineers was predicted by a sense of purpose and feelings of hope that were congruent with their profession (both aspects of ICT). Thus, increasing evidence suggests that the PEA and NEA states are associated with distinct emotional, cognitive, and physiological characteristics that affect behavior at both conscious and unconscious levels (Buse, 2011; Jack, *et al.*, 2013; Khawaja, 2011; Passarelli, 2014; 2015). Although both states are necessary and contribute to the

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developmental process, ICT posits that the clients who experience greater PEA (relative to NEA) are more likely to sustain meaningful changes in their lives.

5.5.2 Study overview

Our ultimate aim in this study is to shed light on how coaches using ICT effectively help individuals engage in desired and sustainable change, which in the context of this study is considered a developmental process that enriches both their leadership careers and lives. Hence, this study makes a unique contribution by shedding light on how a coaching interaction (understood as a 90-minute conversation that is intended for the purpose of developing others) affects the motivational resources of the participants (i.e., emotional and cognitive) and subsequently helps coaches more masterfully facilitate personal and professional change.

Specifically, we sought to understand the extent to which a coaching session based primarily on participants' PEA affected the emotional-cognitive processing that supports the developmental process with regard to the ideal self-construction of participants (revealed in their personal vision), goal-directed energy, and resilience. In addition, we examined whether the quality of the coaching connection (in terms of emotional saliency as relational energy perceived by the coachee) and the coachee's general self-efficacy affected the expected coaching outcome.

The following section introduces each of the relevant variables that were included in this study. The independent variables are the treatment (i.e., coaching session), the perception of the quality of the coaching connection, and the general self-efficacy. The treatment (i.e., coaching session) refers to a 90-minute coaching conversation that has two values, which will be referred to as pre–post. Each of the following sub-sections presents the research questions that provoke our analysis and subsequent hypotheses.

5.6 Variables

5.6.1 The Ideal Self as Personal Vision

The personal vision refers to the outward expression of the Ideal Self (IS) (i.e., "Who do I wish to be?"). The ideal self, according to ICT, combines the future-focused nature of Higgins *et al*., (1994) *ideal self* with present state elements of Roberts, Dutton, Spreitzer, Heaphy, and Quinn's (2005) *best self* (Passarelli, 2015). Greater awareness of the ideal self is accompanied by affirming thoughts, a connection to something which is deeply meaningful, and a sense of optimism and self-efficacy that correspond to an increase in positive emotions (Howard, 2006). The ideal self serves as a catalyst for the change process by creating a discrepancy between one's current real self and the self to which one aspires (Higgins *et al.*, 1994; Oettigan & Schnetter, 2001). It also gives rise to a growth-oriented psycho-physiological state (Howard, 2006). Indeed, the development of alternate future scenarios, which was first referred to as prospection by Gilbert and Wilson (2007) is a cognitive process with profound emotional features. This process enables behaviorism and cognitive determinism to be transcended (Seligman, Railton, Baumeister & Sripada, 2013) to envision a version of a future self that is consistent with a person's core values and that is both aspirational and inspirational (Boyatzis, Rochford, & Taylor, 2015).

Positive visioning helps guide future behavior in sports psychology (Loehr & Schwartz, 2003), medical treatments (Roffe, Schmidt & Ernst, 2005), musical performances (Meister, Krings, Foltys, Boroojerdi, Muller, Topper & Thron, 2004), and academic performances (Curry, Snyder, Cook, Ruby & Rehm, 1997). Focused goals without the context of a broader meaningful picture can result in short-term behavior modification that lacks the emotional commitment required to sustain one's strivings over an extended period of time. Specifically, personal vision includes: (a) a compelling image of a person's ideal self; (b) a comprehensive sense

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of his or her real self as the core identity (e.g., strengths, traits, and other dispositions); and (c) hope (with its constituents, self-efficacy and optimism) (Boyatzis *et al.*, 2012). When the coaching process engages in exercises such as envisioning a desired future, reconnecting with personal values, discovering strengths, and expressing gratitude for supportive relationships, the PEA state is evoked (Boyatzis *et al.*, 2006). In this study, the specific influence of a coaching process related predominantly to participants' PEA is examined with regard to the dimensions that the ideal self theoretically comprises: *holistic vision*, an integral imagery of a desired future; *sense of purpose*, the articulation or realization of deep dreams; *hope* (described here as the affective driver caused by the degree of optimism); *fun*, as the result of the intrinsic motivation and self-satisfaction attached to the holistic imagery created; *deeper meaning,*[2] as connected to the individual's values, philosophy, and calling or purpose (Boyatzis, Buse, & Taylor, 2010; Buse & Bilimoria, 2015).

The research question underlying our study is as follows: *Does a coaching process connected primarily to PEA significantly influence the coachee's personal vision?* We hypothesize that the coaching session will positively influence at least four of the five dimensions for the IS, as follows; however, we propose that more than one coaching session is needed to influence deeper meaning.

> **Hypothesis 1a.** *There is a positive main effect of the coaching session on coachee's hope.*
>
> **Hypothesis 1b.** *There is a positive main effect of the coaching session on coachee's sense of* purpose.
>
> **Hypothesis 1c.** *There is a positive main effect of the coaching session on coachee's holistic vision.*

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[2] From our perspective, the overall measure of Ideal Self (i.e., IS overall) provides consistent information regarding the level of personal vision comprehensiveness and strength.

Hypothesis 1d. *There is a positive main effect of the coaching session on coachee's fun.*

Hypothesis 1e. *There is no effect of the coaching session on coachee's deeper meaning.*

5.6.2 Goal-directed energy

The IS contains imagery bearing on a desired future that is an articulation or realization of a person's aspirations and fantasies (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006). Associated with that imagery are goals that provide a clear route and are a critical component of coaching. Once a person has reflected on and developed goals, the hard work of pursuing these goals can begin (Morin & Latham, 2000). During coaching processes, goals that are associated with factors that make life worth living and work worth doing may generate the psychological energy needed to pursue and attain them (Sheldon, London, Flautt, Vargas & Kucine, 2002). Research has shown that having and progressing toward significant goals are associated with personal growth, greater meaning, having a purpose in life (Green, Oades & Grant, 2006) and well-being (Sheldon *et al.*, 2002). Previous studies (Howard, 2009; Grant & Dutton, 2012; Passarelli, 2014) suggest that the distinction between PEA- and NEA-based coaching approaches is not simply whether or not coachees set goals but rather lies in the nature of the goals set and the degree to which these differences affect striving toward one's goals.

Snyder (1991) defines goal-directed energy through the construct of 'hope' as, "a cognitive set that is composed of a reciprocally derived sense of successful (a) *agency* (i.e., goal-directed determination) and (b) *pathways* (i.e., planning ways to meet goals)" (p.571). In other words, from a primarily cognitive perspective, hope is the perceived capability to derive routes or pathways to desired goals and motivate oneself to reach those pathways (Snyder, Sympson, Ybasco, Babyak & Higgins, 1996). We were interested in exploring how a coaching session primarily focused on PEA may stimulate participants' ability to find new ways to achieve their goals – considering positive emotions as a component within an individual's

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PEA, and their role in broadening the scope of cognition through an enhanced ability to see interconnections between concepts and more inclusive cognitive categories as well as enhanced creativity. Thus, the subsequent research question emerges: *Does a coaching experience primarily related to PEA influence the coachee's goal-directed energy?* We hypothesize the following:

> **Hypothesis 2a:** *There is a positive main effect of the coaching session on coachee's agency.*
>
> **Hypothesis 2b:** *There is a positive main effect of the coaching session on coachee's pathways.*

5.6.3 Resilience

The IS serves as a mechanism that is associated with self-regulation, as it aids in: (1) organizing the will to change and directs a person to desired future accomplishments despite potentially harsh conditions; (2) maintaining and sustaining current ideal states in life and work (i.e., see Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006). Within cognitive-affective processing, the capacity to rebound from adversity with greater strength and resourcefulness is essential for flourishing during developmental processes such as coaching (Sutcliffe & Vogus, 2003). However, it is essential to distinguish between resiliency as a personality trait (which is derived from ego-resiliency) and resilience as a process that can be leveraged (i.e., see Masten, 1994). We focus on the latter due to its developmental component, as an examination of the personal connections established between coach-coachee will provide insights regarding how specific aspects of the coaching process (such as the quality of the connection built by the coach and perceived by the coachee in terms of emotional saliency) may be related to leveraging resilience. Therefore, we propose the following research question: *Does a coaching experience primarily based on PEA significantly influence the coachee's resilience?* We hypothesize the following:

Hypothesis 3: *There is a positive main effect of the coaching session on coachee's resilience.*

5.6.4 *General self-efficacy*

The IS is hypothesized as being emotionally driven by hope. Although the psychological processes related to hope are still being studied (i.e., see Buse & Bilimoria, 2014; Curry *et al.*, 1997; Snyder *et al.*, 1996), most researchers agree that hope is caused by the level of a person's optimism and that it is the expression of a person's degree of self-efficacy (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to muster the cognitive, motivational, and behavioral resources required to perform in a given situation (Bandura, 1977, 1982). In recent years, a derivative of self-efficacy called General Self-Efficacy (GSE) has been developed (Scherbaum, Cohen-Charash & Kern, 2006). General self-efficacy refers to, "individuals' perception of their ability to perform across a variety of different situations" (Judge, Erez & Bono, 2000, p. 170) and is a trait-like belief in one's competence. This operationalization is in contrast to Bandura's (1982) original formulations of self-efficacy as a state-like belief in one's competence. GSE is a more stable situation-independent competence belief. This distinction becomes crucial given that GSE's consideration as a general trait-like belief may influence conclusions regarding its relationships with other variables (Lee & Bobko, 1994). Indeed, these varying results are relevant when considering that general beliefs in their efficacy influence the type of anticipatory scenarios that individuals construct and rehearse when working with a coach (Baron & Morin, 2010). The relationship between self-efficacy and various aspects of an individual's organizational life (Gist & Stevens, 1998; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998), learning processes (Colquitt, Lepine, & Noe, 2000), and post-training variables, such as performance, have been observed in numerous studies (Gaudine & Saks, 2004; Mathieu, Martineau, & Tannenbaum, 1993; Morin & Latham, 2000).

Given the power of the IS to arouse a positive emotional state (i.e., PEA) that, upon activation, has executive and motivational functions within the self via monitoring and guiding actions and decisions in a direction that ensures deeper self-satisfaction (Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006), we propose the following research question: *to what extent does the coachee's general self-efficacy moderate the potential influence of coaching?* We hypothesize that general self-efficacy may moderate the expected influence of coaching when the PEA coaching focuses on personal vision, such that participants who rate their self-efficacy as high will also report higher levels of personal vision (i.e., IS overall score) and higher levels of resilience than participants who rate their self-efficacy as low.

> **Hypothesis 4a:** *General self-efficacy positively moderates the effect of the coaching session on coachee's personal vision.*

> **Hypothesis 4b:** *General self-efficacy positively moderates the effect of the coaching session on coachee's resilience.*

5.6.5 *Quality of the coaching connection*

Drawing on previous studies examining positive affect and high quality connections, scholarly research has expanded management knowledge to include the influence of emotions on positive interpersonal interactions (i.e., high quality connections, Heaphy & Dutton, 2008). For example, research has shown that the quality of the coaching relationship (i.e., perceived shared vision, compassion, and overall positive mood) between bank executives and an executive coach enhanced the influence of emotional and social competence on the leadership effectiveness of bank executives in terms of performance and engagement (Van Oosten, 2013). To be successful, a coach utilizing the ICT-based coaching must establish a safe and trusting connection with his or her coachees, such that they feel comfortable discussing their hopes and dreams. Coachees must feel sufficiently safe to explore their new thoughts and behavior and so attain their vision (Kampa-Kokesch &

Anderson, 2001). Thus, we hypothesize that coaching, when properly developed by a skilled coach, should lead to a high-quality connection, which is reflected in a short-term dyadic interaction that is positive with regard to the subjective experience of the connected individuals (Stephens, Heaphy & Dutton, 2011). This positive interaction should lead to increases in relationship closeness, relational enjoyment (Berry & Hansen, 1996; Waugh & Fredrickson, 2006), and self-disclosure (Cunningham, 1988; Vittengl & Holt, 2000).

ICT posits that coaches who anchor their coaching process according to the coaching recipient's IS will cause positive cognitive affective processing that: (a) is associated with low dimensional chaotic attractors and highly flexible emotional space (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005; Losada & Heaphy, 2004); (b) optimizes the coachee's sustainable learning, development, and changes. Therefore, our research question is the following: *to what extent does the quality of the coaching session, as perceived by the coachee, moderate the potential influence of the coaching session?* We hypothesize that the coachee's perception of the quality of the connection moderates the effect of the coaching session on resilience and personal vision. Specifically, participants who perceive the coaching session as highly emotionally salient will gain more from the coaching session with regard to higher levels of resilience and personal vision than participants who rate the coaching connection as low in emotional salience.

> **Hypothesis 5a:** *Coachee's perception of the quality of the connection positively moderates the effect of the coaching session on coachee's resilience.*

> **Hypothesis 5b**: *Coachee's perception of the quality of the connection positively moderates the effect of the coaching session on coachee's personal vision.*

In sum, we aim to enrich the theorizing regarding ICT-based coaching processes by examining the effect that a coaching session primarily tied to participants' PEA may have on select relevant variables – with consideration granted to both the quality of the coaching experience (as perceived by the coachee) and the coachee's general self-efficacy as potential moderators.

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5.7 Method

Data (n=76) was collected from MBA students attending a leadership development course as part of an MBA program at a European business school. Students were all post-graduate with an average age of 28.9 years with a standard deviation of 3.21, and 68.4% of the participants (n=52) were men. Approximately 36% of the sample were Asian, 25% were South American, 22% were European, 11% were North American, 4% were Central American, and 3% were African. All participants were fluent in English (which was the program and questionnaire language).

5.7.1 Procedure

This study used a within-subject pre-post design. Systematic random sampling among the 2013-14 MBA course participants was used to collect the data. The MBA attendees were informed that participation in the study was entirely voluntary and that their responses would be confidential. No compensation or incentives were provided for participation in this study. Participants serving as coachees voluntarily completed three self-report measures regarding personal vision, goal-directed energy and resilience. The pre-coaching (pre) occurred approximately 48 hours prior to participation in a 90-minute coaching session, and the post-coaching (post) occurred immediately after the coaching session. The pre-test was administered approximately 48 hours before the coaching session to avoid testing threats to the internal validity of this study (Campbell, 1967; Campbell & Standley 1963). During the pos-ttest, participants completed two additional measures regarding the quality of the coaching connection and their general self-efficacy.

A total of 10 senior coaches with an average age of 45 (of which 60% were women and 40% men), developed the coaching sessions with participants (all of whom has a psychology and/or business administration educational background). In addition to the coaches' initial coaching training and more than ten years of coaching

practice, all received identical specific training in ICT-based coaching in order to explicitly develop their sessions according to the theoretical umbrella. The sessions were focused on invoking individuals' *ideal self* (primarily based on the individual's purpose, values, strengths, and their image of the desired future) to initiate and guide changes and developmental processes among the participants, while also considering their reality (i.e., 360º feedback, current challenges, and potential gaps; *real self*). Although the major anchor of the coaching session was PEA, the role of NEA and its crucial balance with PEA was used to motivate participants to achieve their vision and stimulate their drive from vision to action.

5.7.2 Measures

Three questionnaires were administered during the pre-post coaching sessions:

1. The *ideal-self test* (IST) (Boyatzis, Buse & Taylor, 2010) measures personal vision comprehensiveness and strength as an outward expression of one's IS. The development of this measure used the research paradigm suggested by Churchill (1979). The initial instrument contained 32 items built on theory that were measured on a 7-point Likert scale. Doctoral students at a Midwestern American university completed the initial instrument and participated in a focus group to provide feedback. Twenty items were selected for appropriateness, uniqueness, and ability to convey the concept of the ideal self (Boyatzis, Buse, & Taylor, 2010). A pilot study was then undertaken to assess the validity and reliability of the measure. The survey instrument included the 20 items along with demographic questions. Respondents were asked to "Think about your ideal life in 10 to 15 years" and how it might include, "your legacy" and "sense of purpose". The survey was distributed to members of four non-profit organizations known to the first author (n=96) and to business students at a Midwestern university (n=16), resulting in 112 completed instruments. In previous studies (Buse, 2011; Buse & Bilimoria, 2015), data analysis yielded a scale with five theorized factors. The ideal self hope factor

included eight items relating to feelings of possibilities; the ideal self sense of purpose scale included four items assessing relative priorities related to one's legacy or calling; the ideal self holistic vision assessed family and relationships using four items; the ideal self deeper meaning had two items relating to one's values; and the ideal self fun included two items relating to the importance of fun in leisure. Overall, this measure provided an appropriate sense of the comprehensiveness and strength of an individual's personal vision (i.e., see Boyatzis & Akrivou, 2006). Internal consistency was shown to be 0.86 or greater (Buse & Bilimoria, 2015; Jack *et al.*, 2013; Passarelli, 2014, 2015). The following are example items: "My vision reflects many possibilities"; "My vision includes my work in terms of my job and career"; "My vision includes my physical health"; "I am excited about my vision"; and "I have a clear vision of my desired future". A 7-point scale was used for scoring in which 1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=somewhat disagree; 4=neither agree nor disagree; 5=somewhat agree; 6=agree; and 7=strongly agree.

2. The *hope scale* (Snyder, Sympson, Ybasco, Babyak & Higgins 1996) is an internally consistent cognitive measure of goal-directed energy that evaluates the pre–post levels of the theorized participant agency and pathway components. It consists of three items for each dimension measured. Snyder *et al.* (1996) discussed four studies that were conducted to validate this construct[3] with α reliabilities ranging from 0.83 to 0.95. Additionally, convergent and discriminate validities were tested in each of the four studies with the authors using correlational and

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[3] Prior to using Cronbach's alpha for each construct measured in this paper, we checked the application conditions, as each item must be tau-equivalent (Bollen, 1989), which generally means having unidimensional factorial structures and equal-item variances. When these conditions were not fulfilled, we applied Heise and Bohrnstedt's (1970) coefficient, which only requires the factor structure.

causal designs to conclude that there was construct validity. Specific items included were as follows: "At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my goals"; "There are a lot of ways around any problem that I am currently facing"; "I can think of many ways to reach my current goals"; and "At this time, I am meeting the goals that I have set for myself". An 8-point scale was used for scoring in which 1=definitely false; 2=mostly false; 3=somewhat false; 4=slightly false; 5=slightly true 6=somewhat true; 7=mostly true; and 8=definitely true.

3. The *resilience scale,* which measures individual resilience and consists of five items that were first proposed by Caza & Bagozzi (2010) and later incorporated as a sub-scale of resilience in a survey measuring relationship quality and virtuousness (i.e., see Stephens, Heaphy, Carmeli, Spreitzer & Dutton, 2013). This resilience scale provides specific information regarding the levels of an individual's resilience. The reliability was .87. In this study, this scale was used to measure resilience. A sample of the items is as follows: "I am getting better at my work because I learn from my mistakes"; "Dealing with difficult colleagues (or situations) enables me to grow"; and "I see current challenges as an opportunity to develop".

Two additional measures were administered during the post-test to collect information regarding the two possible moderators that were theoretically justified in the previous section.

 4. The *quality of the coaching connection* measure, which was based on the *PNEA* (i.e., Positive and Negative Emotional Attractors Survey, Boyatzis, 2008) consists of 20 statements inquiring about the quality of the connection with the coach. It measures how the coachee perceived the coach according to the following three main dimensions: (a) shared vision; (b) compassion; and (c) overall positive mood. The reliability was .84 (i.e., see also Van Oosten, 2013; Mahon, Taylor & Boyatzis, 2015). This measure includes items such as the following: "I felt inspired by my vision while working with my coach"; "I feel trusted by my coach"; "We discussed possibilities for the future"; and "I care about my coach". The overall PNEA scores

were used to classify individuals into two extreme groups (1st & 4th quartiles) as either high or low in emotional salience. Thus, groups were formed to aggregate participants who reported similar qualities with regard to the coaching connection in order to analyze whether this factor moderates the expected effect of coaching on the dependent variables.

5. The *general self-efficacy scale* was administered only once (post). General self-efficacy is a stable dimension that many researchers consider to be a motivational trait[4] (Chen, Gully & Eden, 2001); therefore, this measure was included in our analysis as a possible moderator. In samples from 23 nations, reliability alphas ranged from 0.76 to 0.90 and most were in the high 0.80s. This 10-item scale is unidimensional, and higher scores indicate higher levels of general self-efficacy as a trait-like belief. Notable psychometric properties have been reported by several item response theory analyses that support its reliability evidence and basic measurement properties (e.g., item parameters), as well as the discriminant and convergent validity of this measure (i.e., for more details see Scherbaum, Cohen-Charash & Kern, 2006). Its items reflect a general set of expectations that an individual may have regarding new situations. Specific items include the following: "I am confident that I can deal efficiently with unexpected events"; "Thanks to my resourcefulness, I know how to handle unforeseen situations"; "If I am in trouble, I can typically think of a solution"; and "I can usually handle whatever comes my way". Items were scored on a 4-point basis in which 1=not at all true; 2=hardly true; 3=moderately true; and 4=exactly true. The measure of general self-efficacy was used to analyze whether it moderates the expected effect of coaching on the dependent variables.

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[4] A further justification for general self-efficacy as a situation-independent competence belief was provided in the conceptual framing (pages 10-11).

5.7.3 Data analysis strategy and statistical models

Based on the supporting theory, we developed three models to guide this quantitative study, which are presented in *Figures 5-1, 5-2*, and *5-3* (page 119). Analyses were firstly conducted examining the main effects of the coaching session on the five dimensions related to participants' personal vision (i.e., hope, sense of purpose, holistic vision, fun, and deeper meaning); goal-directed energy (i.e., agency and pathways); and resilience. We also examined whether the following two independent variables moderated the effects on the coaching session: (a) participant perceptions regarding the quality of the coaching connection (i.e., what we refer to as emotional saliency) and (b) participants' general self-efficacy.

5.7.4 Design

A pre–post design with the same individuals is powerful when there is no control group available. Each subject serves as his or her own control, and the difference between his or her pre- and post-test scores represents a stringent measure of the degree to which 'real life' program goals have been achieved (i.e., see Duckart, 1998; Gottman, Mcfall, & Barnett, 1969; Trochim, 1986). Furthermore, a within-subjects pre-post design was appropriate for this study given the specific characteristics of our sample, as none of the potential threats to internal validity were plausible (i.e., maturation, history, testing, and attrition). Specifically, given the average age of the participants (M=28.9) and the short time span between pre-post measures (approximately 48 hours), maturation and history were not likely to influence our results. To avoid the threat of testing, we collected the pre- measures about 48 hours prior to the coaching session. Attrition was not likely to occur given that participation in this study was voluntary and that coaching is an essential part of the leadership development program. Therefore, students take advantage of the opportunity to engage in the coaching process as part of their growth processes.

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Due to the single group pre-post design, we are able to consider the whole set of personal vision or IS dimensions to aid in building a pattern matching nonequivalent dependent variables (NEDV) design. Because our program consisted of only one 90-minute coaching session, our expectations were that this program may change some dimensions of the IS, such as hope, sense of purpose, holistic vision, and fun, but not others, such as deeper meaning (see Hypothesis 1e), as this may require multiple coaching sessions.

5.8 Findings

A series of paired-samples t-tests were conducted to examine participant responses with regard to the three dependent variables (i.e., personal vision, goal-directed energy, and resilience). Descriptive data for these analyses is presented in *Table 5-1* (see *Descriptives,* page 120). Regarding personal vision (IS), the participants endorsed a significantly greater degree of overall IS after their coaching session, $t(71)=-3.35$, $p=.001$. Specifically, the participants endorsed a significantly greater degree on four of the five dimensions that comprise IS, as follows: hope (IST), $t(71)=-2.84$, $p=.006$; sense of purpose, $t(71)=-3.65$, $p<.001$; holistic vision, $t(71)=-2.01$, $p=.048$; and fun, $t(71)=-2.45$, $p=.017$. As expected, the participants did not report a significant change with regard to the fifth dimension of personal vision (IS), which was deeper meaning. An analysis of goal-directed energy revealed that the participants endorsed a significantly greater degree on the pathways dimension, $t(69)=-2.89$, $p=.005$, whereas there was no significant increase with regard to the agency dimension, $t(69)=-1.91$, $p=.061$. However, this result may be considered slightly significant as our relatively small sample size may have led to a low power situation for this particular dimension. Furthermore, the participants endorsed a significantly greater degree on the resilience dimension after the coaching session, $t(75)=-2.21$, $p=.030$ (see *Figure 5-4* for a visual representation of these changes,

page 120). These results support Hypotheses 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e, Hypothesis 2b, and Hypothesis 3.

Furthermore, the variability for each measure decreased after the coaching session (see *Table 5-1*, page 120), which suggests that the participants more accurately evaluated the dependent variables after the coaching session. This result may be due to the participants' familiarity with the variables from the pre-evaluation. These more homogenous patterns of responses suggest that some awareness process is a desirable byproduct of the coaching session.
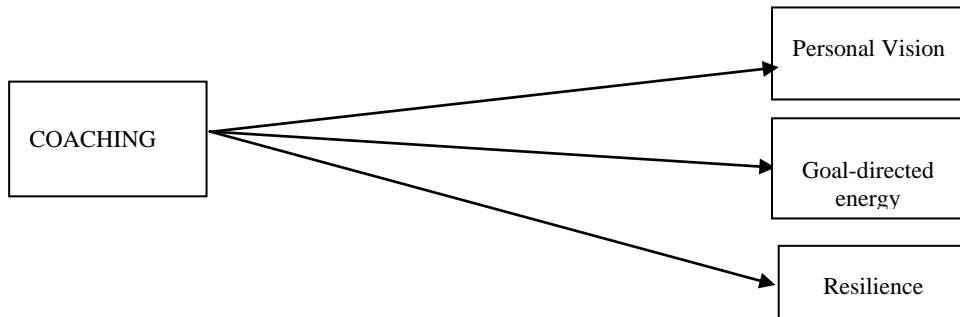
Figure 5-1 *Theoretical Model 1: direct effects of coaching on the dependent variables*
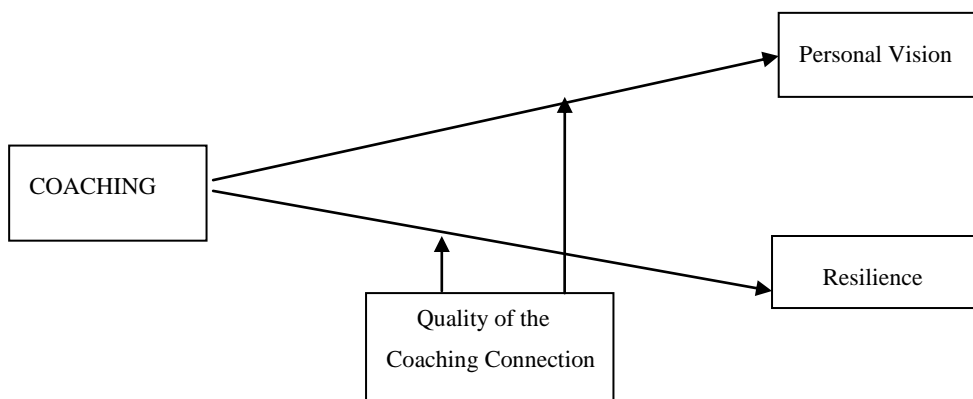
Figure 5-2 *Theoretical Model 2: moderating effect of the quality of the coaching connection*
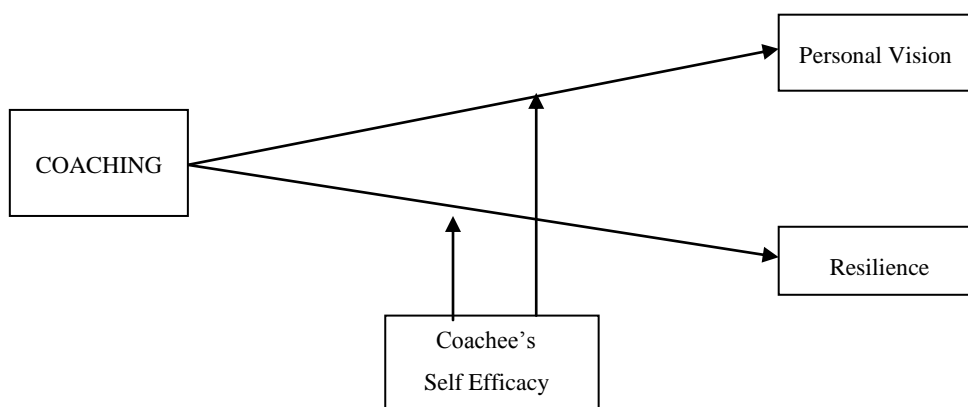
Figure 5-3*Theoretical Model 3: moderating effect of the coachee's self-efficacy*

Measure	N	Pre Mean (SD)	Post Mean (SD)	Effect Size
Pathways	76	6.36 (0.85)	6.61 (0.75)	0.36
Resilience	76	5.83 (0.75)	6.01 (0.58)	0.28
Ideal self overall	76	5.85 (0.69)	6.06 (0.60)	0.43
IS_hope	76	5.91 (0.72)	6.11 (0.67)	0.39
IS_purpose	76	5.74 (0.87)	6.05 (0.68)	0.48
IS_vision	76	5.74 (1.02)	5.94 (0.85)	0.37
IS_fun	76	5.93 (1.12)	6.21 (0.85)	0.27

Table 5-1 *Descriptives*
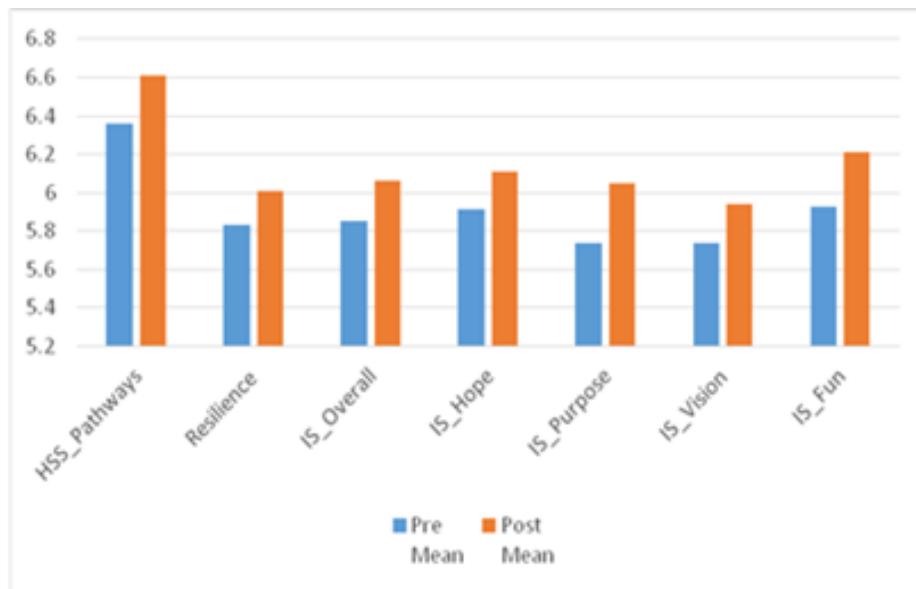
Figure 5-4 *Visual Presentation of the Pre-Post Changes in the Dependent Variables*

To examine the effects of a single coaching session primarily focused on participant PEA (i.e., treatment) on the relevant variables, a series of 2 (Time point) x 2 (Group) split-plot (or mixed-design) analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted. In all of the analyses, time point was a within-subjects variable with the following two levels: 1) pre- and 2) post-coaching session. To examine the differential effects of the coaching session according to the participants' self-reported perception of the quality of the connection (i.e., emotional saliency), groups were formed to aggregate the participants who reported similar quality levels (low *versus* high emotional salience in the coaching connection) using the PNEA overall scores. For each of the between-subject independent variables, participants were divided into the following two groups: low (scores below the 25th percentile) and high (scores above the 75th percentile) (for statistical approach justifications, see Abrahams & Alf, 1978; Borich & Godbout, 1974; Kagan, Snidman & Arcus, 1998; Preacher, Rucker, MacCallum, & Nicewander, 2005; Torgesen, 1991). *Table 5-2* (page 122) presents the mean scores for each group included in the following 2 x 2 split-plot ANOVAs.

A 2 x 2 split-plot ANOVA was conducted using the resilience scale as the dependent variable and including the factors of time point (pre *versus* post) and group (low *versus* high emotional saliency). Neither the main effect of time point, t(35)= 0.115, p=.909, nor group, t(34)= 0.314, p=.756, was significant. Importantly, a significant interaction between time point and group was evident, F(1,34)=14.463, p=.001. Post-hoc t-tests indicated that resilience scores decreased significantly from pre- to post-coaching session in the low emotional saliency group, t(17)= 2.549, p=.021, whereas the resilience scores increased significantly in the high emotional saliency group, t(17)= -2.889, p=.010 (see *Figure 5-5,* page 123). Thus, low emotional saliency regarding the perceived quality of the coaching connection was associated with a decrease in resilience scores after the coaching session, whereas high emotional saliency, as perceived by the coachee, was associated with an increase in resilience scores after the coaching session. Accordingly, conclusions

about the effect of the coaching session related to participants' PEA on resilience should consider the quality of the coaching session as perceived by the coachee (at least when examining the upper and lower quartiles of participants when grouped by their overall PNEA scores). Thus, Hypothesis 5a was supported.

Variable	Pre	Post	Group Mean
Resilience score mean (SD) for low emotional salience	6.04 (.82)	5.72 (.67)	5.88 (.70)
Resilience score mean (SD) for high emotional salience	5.67 (.68)	5.97 (.54)	5.82 (.57)
IS total score mean (SD) for low emotional salience	6.00 (.81)	6.04 (.71)	6.02 (.72)
IS total score mean (SD) for high emotional salience	5.68 (.60)	6.04 (.47)	5.86 (.47)

Variable	Pre	Post	Group Mean
Resilience score mean (SD) for low general self-efficacy	5.32 (.80)	5.67 (.57)	5.49 (.59)
Resilience score mean (sd) for high general self-efficacy	6.15 (.55)	6.09 (.61)	6.12 (.50)
IS total score mean (sd) for low general self-efficacy	5.45 (.80)	5.69 (.58)	5.57 (.64)
IS total score mean (SD) for high general self-efficacy	6.08 (.51)	6.18 (.44)	6.13 (.40)

Table 5-2 *Pre versus post and group mean scores for the general linear model analyses*
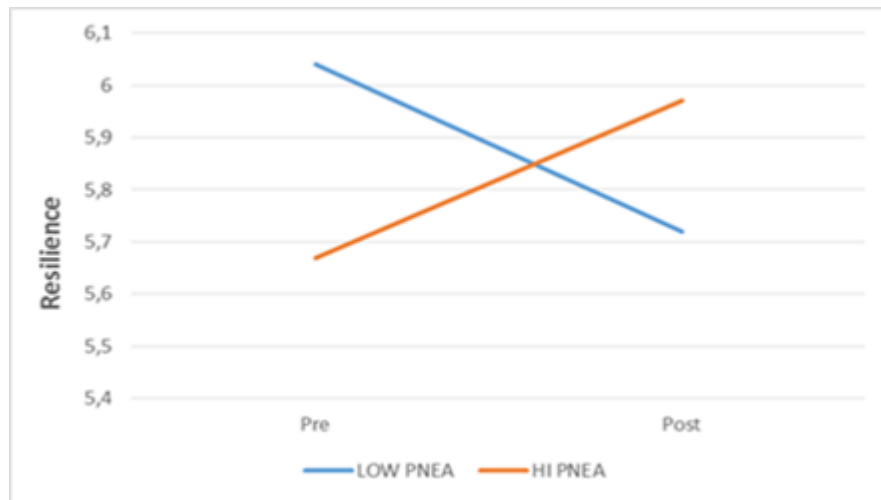
Figure 5-5 *Pre versus post resilience scores at the different levels of emotional salience (PNEA total score low versus high)*

A 2 x 2 split-plot ANOVA was conducted using IS Total Score as the personal vision dependent variable and including the factors of time point (pre *versus* post) and group (low *versus* high emotional saliency). There was a significant main effect of time point, $t(34)= -2.208$, $p=.034$. The main effect of group was insignificant, $t(41)= 0.764$, $p=.450$, and there was no significant interaction, $F(1,33)= 3.143$, $p=.085$, as shown in *Figure 5-6* (page 124). According to this analysis, the participants who reported the quality of the coaching session as emotionally salient (high score group) showed a significant increase in their ideal self scores. Therefore, Hypothesis 5b was supported. Furthermore, the participants who reported the quality of the coaching session as emotionally low did not show any significant increase in their ideal self scores (indeed, they showed a *ceiling effect;* see *Figure 5-6*, page 124) what might be seen as a signal of how powerful coaching was for those who did not have a clear image of their ideal self pre-coaching, with regard to both the emotional saliency of the coaching experience and their personal vision construction.

A 2 x 2 split-plot ANOVA was conducted using the resilience scale as the dependent variable and including the factors of time point (pre *versus* post) and group (low *versus* high self-efficacy). The main effect of time point was insignificant, $t(37)= -1.375$, $p=.177$, whereas the main effect of group was significant, $t(36)= -3.521$, $p=.001$. There was no significant interaction between time point and group in this analysis, $F(1,36)=3.668$, $p=.063$ (see *Figure 5-7*, page 125). This analysis reveals that the high self-efficacy group scored higher on resilience than the low self-efficacy group. According to this analysis, overall (pre + post) resilience scores were significantly higher for the high self-efficacy group compared to the low self-efficacy group. Therefore, Hypothesis 4b was supported.
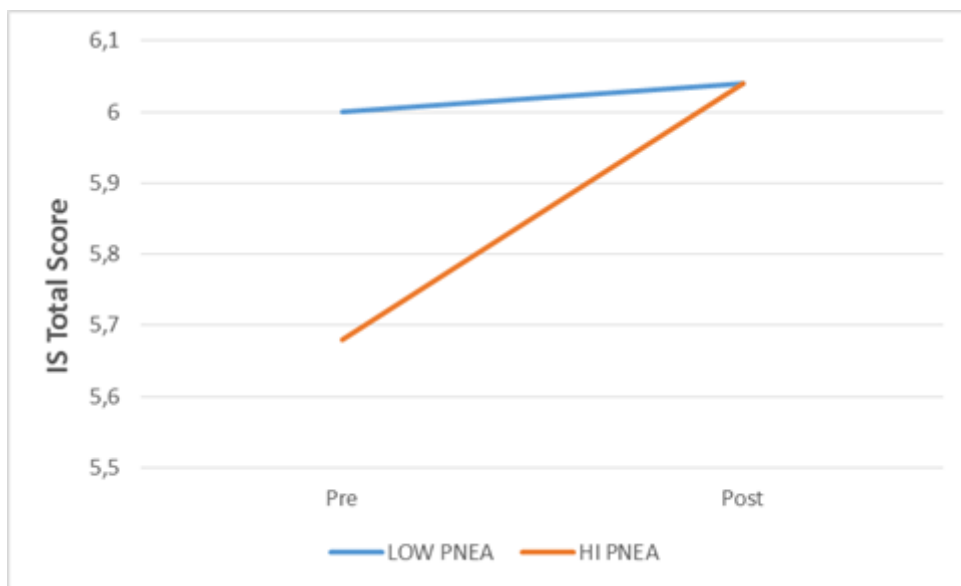
Figure 5-6 *Pre versus post IS total scores at the different levels of emotional salience*
(low versus high emotional saliency)
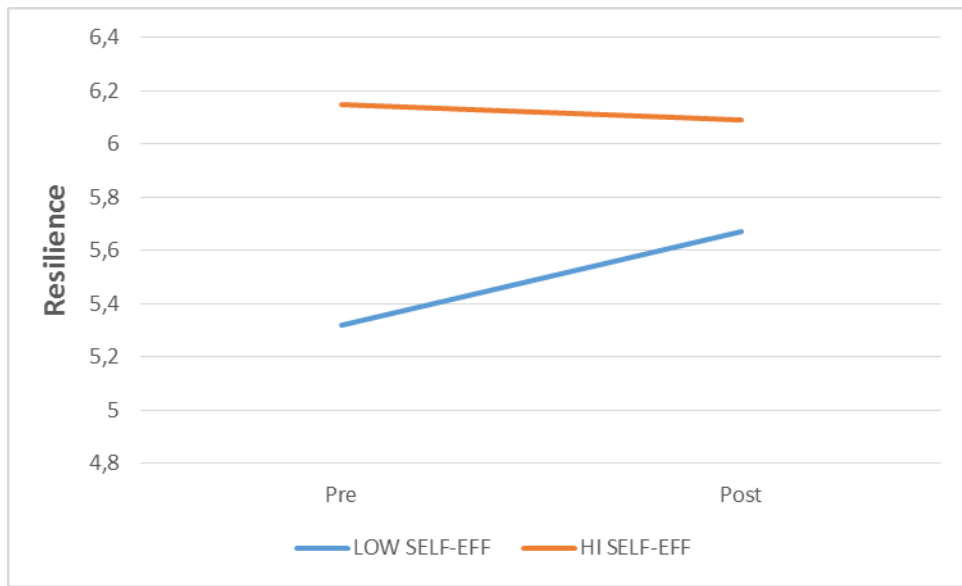
Figure 5-7 *Pre versus post resilience at the different levels of self-efficacy*
(low versus high emotional saliency)

A 2 x 2 split-plot ANOVA was conducted using IS total score as the personal vision dependent variable and including the factors of time point (pre *versus* post) and group (low *versus* high self-efficacy). The main effect of time point was not significant, t(34)= -1.847, p=.074, whereas the main effect of group was significant, t(33)= -3.175, p=.003. There was no significant interaction between time point and group in this analysis, F(1,33)=0.564, p=.458, as shown in *Figure 5-8* (page 126). This analysis reveals that the high self-efficacy group scored higher on personal vision than the low self-efficacy group after the coaching session. There was no effect of time (across the groups) and no interaction effect. According to this analysis, overall (pre + post) personal vision was significantly higher for the high self-efficacy group compared to the low self-efficacy group. Thus, Hypothesis 4a was supported.
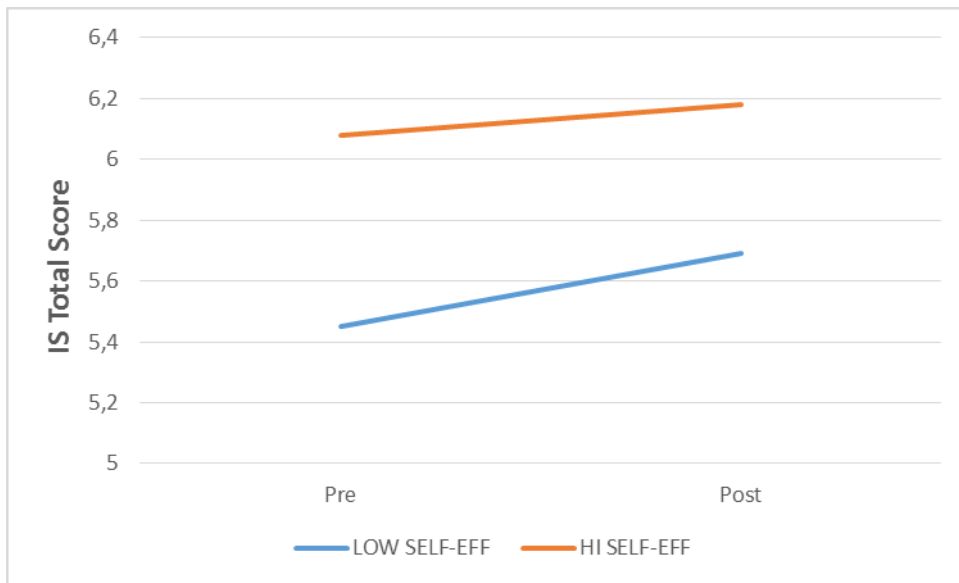
Figure 5-8 *Pre versus post IS total scores at the different levels of self-efficacy*
(low versus high)

5.9 Discussion

This article aims to enrich the theorizing on coaching and its outcomes, with a focus on the theorizing associated with ICT-based coaching. Our study provides several theoretical contributions and has great potential to influence the teaching and application of effective coaching, a critical development for a professional field in which the rapid growth of practice has outpaced research. Firstly, the results indicated a significant increase in several variables related to the participants' cognitive–affective processing as a result of a 90-minute coaching process as part of a leadership development program. Specifically, the participants reported a significantly greater degree of personal vision comprehensiveness and strength, which was reflected in the increases in their overall ideal self scores. This increase was evident in four of the five dimensions related to the operationalization of the ideal self (i.e., hope, sense of purpose, holistic vision, and fun; with the exception of deeper meaning). Given that previous research has shown that visioning helps

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guide future behavior (Roffe, Schmidt & Ernest, 2005) and that the effects of arousing PEA, even during a 30-minute coaching session, are substantial and enduring (Boyatzis *et al.*, 2010; Passarelli, 2015), we expected that the effects on personal vision reported by the participants of this study as a result of a 90-minute coaching session, could significantly enhance their developmental processes. The result that there was significantly higher scores on participants' levels of 'planning to meet goals' and on individual resilience due to coaching (*Figure 5-4*, page 120) provides specific empirical evidence with regard to the power that stimulating the ideal self within a safe and emotionally salient space may have on enhancing cognitive openness, flexibility, and learning processes.

In addition to the main effects of the coaching session on the ideal self dimensions, pathways (i.e., one of the two dimensions within goal-directed energy) and resilience, we also identified a series of moderation effects regarding the quality of the coaching connection and participants' general self-efficacy. The quality of the session with regard to emotional salience was an important factor, as it may have a moderating effect on resilience and personal vision, with a stronger increase when high emotional saliency was reported (see *Figure 5-5,* page 123; *Figure 5-6,* page 124). This reflects the crucial role of creating a safe atmosphere through a high-quality connection in terms of shared vision, shared compassion, and overall positive mood (relational energy deployed through the interaction) that a skilled coach should be able to enact in every coaching process. According to our results, coachees experience greater emotional salience and stronger impacts on their cognitive-emotional processing with regard to these specified variables.

Moreover, it is important to note that the significant changes that were evident for both resilience and personal vision (reflected by participants' overall ideal self scores) were also moderated by the coachees' general self-efficacy levels. Higher levels of general self-efficacy were evident for those participants who reported higher levels of resilience and overall ideal self as a result of the coaching session

(see *Figure 5-7*, page 125; *Figure 5-8*, page 126), which highlights the need for future research regarding the moderating effects on coaching outcomes.

Given that few research studies have reviewed and tested hypotheses according to an integrated, multilevel theoretical model of coaching and that there is still a lack of empirical evidence examining coaching processes that are incorporated in MBA leadership development programs, our contribution is twofold: firstly, we are contributing empirically to Intentional Change Theory as a multilevel research-based model that employs a mixed-method coaching approach with elements from the behavioral, person-centered, cognitive emotion, systems, leadership development, emotional and social intelligence, complexity, and psycho-neurobiology traditions. Secondly, we are providing empirical evidence regarding the impact of coaching and specially in regard to elements that serve as moderators that may enhance the effectiveness of coaching as a result of a set of contingencies (such as the skill of the coach in creating an emotionally salient space, in helping the coachee to pursue a strong comprehensive personal vision, and in considering the coachee's general perception of self-efficacy). Overall, we are contributing to shed light on the largest gap that is evident in the existing literature, which concerns the specified *how* dimension (i.e., coaching approaches) (Segers *et al.*, 2011).

5.10 Implications for practice

Two goals of managerial education are to facilitate learning and leadership development processes in students, and induce behavioral change (Kirkpatrick, 1996). Previous research suggests that coaching is a basic component in almost all efforts related to change and developmental processes. ICT contributes an integrated processing model for change. The practical implications of this research are vast: firstly, the results of this study indicate that (a) coaching individuals with predominant regard to their dreams, values, and passions (i.e., their ideal self)

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necessarily involves building a specific emotionally salient space as this has a significant positive effect on the coachees' perception of the quality of the coaching; and (b) significant emotional salience of the relational space contributes to higher levels of cognitive, perceptual, and emotional performances in the coachee (i.e., increased pathways as cognitive routes, and higher vision comprehensiveness and strength), as well as achieving open and healthier states in preparation for present and future challenges (i.e., resilience), what optimally support behavior change. Secondly, this evidence will help shape how coaches frame coaching conversations and develop coaching relationships; help coaches understand and manage the "embodied" coaching experience, which may have strong implications for the coachee by illuminating how clients deploy their ideal selves more efficiently; and subsequently provide information on how to best train and develop coaches. Thus, the results of the current research should be considered when developing coaching certification programs (whose theoretical models still lack empirical evidence) by showing that there are specific ways to conduct the coaching and specific consequences. Thirdly, (c) university management-education programs should expand their platforms to support ongoing ICT research and evidence-based coaching theory building. Evidence would suggest this would help the students develop as leaders and specifically be able to increase their Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Social Intelligence (SI) competencies (Batista-Foguet, Guillém, Serlavós, 2008; Boyatzis, Stubbs & Taylor, 2002).

This study addresses the paucity of research on how coaching works (Bennet, 2006; Segers *et al.*, 2011) and adds to a growing body of evidence that supports the efficacy of Intentional Change Theory as a coaching framework for fostering sustained desired change (Howard, 2009; Jack *et al.*, 2013b, Van Oosten, 2012; Passarelli, 2014; 2015).

5.11 Limitations and avenues for future research

The design utilized in the current study was appropriate given that it allowed for a thorough examination of the questions we posited. However, this study has a number of limitations. Firstly, the absence of a control group decreases the current study's internal validity. A pre-test - post-test design with a control group would have been preferable. Notwithstanding, although there was no control group per se, we devised two strategies that may satisfy the desired counterfactual role. First, by utilizing a repeated-measures design, participants may be considered as their own controls (the pre-test serves as the control prior to the intervention). Second, as previously discussed, we were able to utilize a pattern matching nonequivalent dependent variables (NEDV) design. Therefore, given that the pre-post behavior of each IS component may be affected by the same internal validity factors (such as history or maturation) the pre-post deeper meaning factor should act like a counterfactual as it models what should have occurred with the other IS pre-post scores had the program not been provided.

Another limitation is that this study exclusively utilized self-reported measures, which are prone to bias. Alternative measurement instruments (such as expert evaluations, the coding of learning plans after coaching, and using the critical incident interview method) would be informative and may help clarify these findings in future studies. Furthermore, the use of only a single 90-minute coaching session may be perceived as a limitation, as a longitudinal perspective would provide insight regarding the sustainability of these changes over time. Yet, from a different perspective, the use of a single session could be considered as positive: if significant thought-provoking findings are evident following just one coaching session according to this specific approach, it leaves open the question of how powerful this approach would be with regard to developmental processes when applying a coaching process that included a series of multiple sessions. Furthermore, considering broaden-and-built theory (Fredrickson, Tugade, Waugh & Larin, 2003; Fredrickson & Losada, 2005), the personal resources accrued during

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states of positive emotions (as in this study by primarily working on PEA) are durable; they outlast the transient emotional states that led to their acquisition.

One next step for this type of research would be to consider each specific coach-coachee dyad as the unit of analysis. An examination of the quality of the coaching, as perceived by both the coach and the coachee (and not only from the coachee's perspective, as reported in the present study) may shed light on the crucial elements that generate a positive feedback loop, with the inclusion of control variables such as gender and culture.

Regarding our decision to split the sample into high and low emotional saliency (according to the PNEA), we are aware that there are a number of tradeoffs associated with the use of this approach (e.g., an increase in statistical power − signal enhancement − but a decrease in sample size and the applicability of the findings); however, forming these groups was an appropriate way to transform the data for a specific type of analysis that would be impossible to conduct otherwise (i.e., a split-plot ANOVA) due to the nature of the data (i.e., there are both within-subjects (i.e., time point) and between-subject factors). Yet, we recognize that we have excluded information and that these groupings may not exist in such a dichotomous manner in the real world. Therefore, future research should be combined with alternative methods for analyzing the perception of the quality of the coaching connection.

5.12 Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that ICT-based coaching (as a theory-based alternative coaching that emphasizes exploration and articulation of an individual's ideal self as the driver of any evolving process) significantly influences its recipients' cognitive-emotional processing in terms of increasing clarity, awareness, comprehensiveness and strength of personal vision; increasing capacity to generate

cognitive routes or pathways; and increasing ability to face challenges and adversity (which is referred to as resilience). All of these are pillars in developmental processes (Boyatzis *et al.*, 2006, 2012; Fredrickson *et al.*, 2003; Stephens *et al.*, 2013). Beyond the statistically significant results, the average effect sizes for the coaching approach with regard to the theoretically relevant variables included in the current study reveal that it is important to deeply investigate how a coaching process primarily based on a coachee's positive emotional attractors supports building an emotionally salient coaching space (i.e., with shared vision, shared compassion, and overall positive mood). Results also revealed that the quality of the connection built by the coach, as perceived by the coachee, may indeed leverage the coachee's cognitive-emotional processes (something that stands out as particularly relevant within a coaching that involves a holistic and developmental approach to enhancing leadership capability).

In summary, these results posit that coaching relationships marked by an overall tone of PEA play a growth-oriented role in preparing individuals emotionally and cognitively by fostering a sense of positive emotional energy or inspiration, and that this sense of energy generates a host of relational and motivational resources critical to the developmental process – given that it can move an individual to adopt a new mindset or challenge a deeply held belief, try a new behavior, reflect more deeply, or even to make a major life change. Researchers should continue to empirically examine the critical factors that influence coaching outcomes and coaching processes, but particularly the factors that may moderate the hypothesized influence of a coaching intervention.

5.13 References for Chapter 5

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Chapter 6: Coaching for Cultural Sensitivity:

> **Content Analysis Applying Hofstede's**
>
> **Framework to a Select Set of the**
>
> **International Coach Federation's**
>
> **(ICF) Core Competencies**

6.1 Abstract

Grounded in a selective integrated literature review, this study deconstructs select ICF core coaching competencies, informed by an established competency modeling architecture and Hofstede's Five Cultural Dimensions. Qualitative content analysis methodology was used. Our analysis shows that directionality shifts depending on behavioral indicators associated with each competency. Results show inter-rater reliability (IRR) was highest where both competency definitions and cultural descriptions were conceptually clear —implying that a framework for understanding cultural dynamics is foundational for developing coach cultural competence. The study offers evidence-based insights for the inclusion of cultural competence in coach education, training, and credentialing processes while raises questions about whether cultural competence should be separately added or embedded into existing competencies. We conclude by summarizing observations and related implications.

6.2 Key Words

Executive coaching competencies, cultural competence, competency modeling, coach education and training.

6.3 Introduction

Organizations around the world are learning to adapt to the emerging 21st century workspace characterized by globalization, rapid advances in technology, increased demographic diversity, and the challenge to often work in cross functional and cross-cultural teams. The need for devising effective strategies and tactics to operate with impact in this exciting, yet complex, work environment is critical to

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success. Executive coaching is a commonly reported leadership development strategy in organizations today. In fact, the practice of executive coaching has emerged as one of the five top leadership-development best practices to help leaders respond to these major shifts occurring in the world of work (WanVeer & Ruthman, 2008).

Yet, differing perceptions of what constitutes coaching core competencies by academic and coach preparation programs, credentialing associations, and practitioners have obfuscated clarity of definition, roles, and implementation (Maltbia, Marsick & Rajashi, 2014). Additionally, both practitioner and academic communities have called for coaches to enhance cultural competence and cultural awareness skills (Plaister-Ten, 2009). Yet, gaps exist because competency models employed by professional associations that credential coaches: (a) have their origins in the Western hemisphere with a number of embedded cultural assumptions, and (b) do not explicitly address the cross-cultural applicability of their models. In fact, these models were originated in North America during the 1990s and are now being applied globally to prepare professional coaches, accredit training and education providers, and certify individual coaches.

This ultimate purpose of this paper is to: (1) examine the level of cultural sensitivity embedded in the widely-used International Coach Federation (ICF) competency model; in order to (2) identify implications for decision makers, practicing coaches, and researchers to continue to raise the standard to inform education, credentialing, and service delivery.

6.4 Study Design

The approach employed in this study is a combination of an integrated literature review (Torraco, 2005) including the following constructs: (1) *executive and organizational coaching*, (2) *cultural sensitivity*, including cultural competence,

and (3) *competency modeling*; combined with a qualitative content analysis approach (Krippendorff, 2013) applying Hofstede's cultural dimension framework to 6 of ICF's 11 core coaching competencies to examine potential embedded cultural assumptions.

An integrative literature review is a "form of research that reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated" (Torraco 2005, p. 356). Researchers regard content analysis as a flexible method for analyzing text data (Cavanagh, 1997) that describes a family of analytic approaches ranging from impressionistic, intuitive, interpretive analyses to systematic, strict textual analyses (Rosengren, 1981). Thus, we conceptually grounded the results of the content analysis presented in this paper in the three areas of literature aforementioned: (1) starting with executive coaching, its origins, descriptions, and key elements to situate the concept of culturally sensitive coaching; (2) adding cultural competence to further operationalize the central construct under investigation; and (3) moving to competency modeling as a foundation for understanding the ICF core competency model employed in our analysis to begin the process of exploring coaching across cultures.

6.5 Integrated Literature Review: *Conceptual Imput*

6.5.1 Executive and Organizational Coaching

The ICF, the largest professional association for coaches, provides a generalist definition of coaching (www.coachfederation.org/):

…partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential—coaches honor the

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client as the expert in his or her life and work and believe every client is creative, resourceful and whole.

Table 4-1 provides sample definitions for *executive coaching* that reveal several themes —executive coaching is a *process* (focused on learning, choice, change, growth); a *partnership* (between coach and executive); a *balance* between individual and organizational needs; a *way of working*; *the new face of leadership* for the 21ˢᵗ century; a *goal-focused* form of customized leadership development, performance improvement and skill enhancement support; a *vehicle for systematic feedback*; a form of *executive consultation*; and enabled via *Socratic dialogue*.

In short, executive coaching is a broad and inclusive concept. Important elements include: (1) the mindset of the coach; (2) their competencies; and importantly (3) the work that takes place in the space between the coach and the client (or the process). Yet, Drake (2008) argues the value of bringing coaching into the fold of evidence-based practices as it searches for a professional identity. Our content analysis of a select set of ICF core coaching competencies through the lens of a research-based cultural framework begins to articulate what would be required for practicing executive coaches to operate across cultural boundaries —a key requirement given the emergence of global workspaces.

6.5.2 Cultural Sensitivity and Cultural Competence

The word *culture* derives from the Latin word *colere*, meaning "to build", "to care for" or "to cultivate". Thus, *culture* usually refers to something that is derived from or created by the intervention of humans. However, like coaching, definitions of *culture* vary and may include diverse ideologies (Harrison, 1972), a coherent set of beliefs and basic assumptions (Schein, 1985), and collective programming of the human mind (Hofstede, 2005). A number of person-made, related and shared artifacts, behavioral patterns, values or other concepts, taken together, form the

culture as a whole. Overall, it is possible to say that culture (1) consists of various factors that are shared by a given group by acting as an interpretive frame of behavior; (2) is not inheritable or genetic, but learned; (3) all members of a particular group or society share it, but the expressions of culture-resultant behavior are modified by the individuals' personality. Hence, *culture* has a role as both an 'influence factor' for behavior as well as an 'interpretation factor' of behavior.

Cultural intelligence (CQ) is defined as an individual's capability to function, interact, and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings and with others from diverse backgrounds — a capability that resides within individuals (Ang, Van Dyne, Koh, & Templer, 2007). Further, cultural competence is defined as a set of aligned behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, organization, or among professionals and enables each to work effectively in cross-cultural situations —expanding the concept beyond individuals to include inter-personal spaces, group interactions, organizations, systems, communities, and even countries (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000; Johnson, Lenartowicz, & Apud, 2006). This later conceptualization aligns with our interests in better understanding a set of core coaching competencies with their origins in North America during the 1990s that are now being applied globally to as a foundation for the preparation of professional coaches, as well as, the accreditation of training and education providers, along with the certification of individual coaches.

Intercultural sensitivity expert Bennett (2004) notes that as people become more inter-culturally competent it seemed that there was a major change in the quality of their experience —the move from ethnocentrism (i.e., the experience of one's culture as the center of reality) to ethno-relativism (i.e., the experience of one's own beliefs and behaviors as just one view of reality among many viable possibilities). We adopt this orientation and conceive intercultural competence as the outcome of a continuous learning process —the more an individual engages in this learning process, the greater the cultural competence they might develop and exhibit. Subsequently, we are specifically interested in exploring the extent to that the

indicators that align with select ICF competencies reflect the intercultural sensitivity orientation expressed by Bennett. To this aim, while that are many framework for understanding various cultural orientations (e.g., Schmitz, 2006; Hammer, 2003), we employ Hofstede's framework to inform our content analysis of select ICF core competencies because it: (1) includes 5 cultural scales (compared to other models that include as few of 2 dimensions or over 10 and (2) has been one of the most widely used in nearly 600 studies, with over 200,000 individuals, for over three-decades (Taras, Kirkman, & Stell, 2010). See *Table 6-2* for descriptions.

Source	Definitions and Purposes
Kilburg (1996)	A helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement (p. 142).
Hall, Otazo, & Hollenbeck (1999)	A practical, goal-focused form of personal, one-on-one learning for busy executives and may be used to improve performance or executive behavior, enhancing a career or prevent derailment, and work through organizational issues or change initiatives (p. 40).
Sperry (2008)	A form of executive consultation in which a trained professional, mindful of organizational dynamics, functions as a facilitator who forms a collaborative relationship with an executive to improve his or her skills and effectiveness in communicating the corporate vision and goals, and to foster better team performance, organizational productivity, and professional–personal development (p. 36).
Passmore & Filler-Travis (2011)	A Socratic based dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (client) where the majority of interventions used by the facilitator are open questions which are aimed at stimulating self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant (p. 74).

Table 6-1 *Illustrative definitions of Executive Coaching (in chronological sequence)*

Dimension	Descriptions
Individualism	Degree to which people of a society understand themselves as individuals, as apart from their group; degree to which action is taken for the benefit of the individual or the group (pp. 74-78).
Power Distance	Degree of equality, or inequality between people that is acceptable, or excepted, in society; the degree to which inequality or distance between those in charge and the less powerful (subordinates) is accepted (pp. 45-46).
Uncertainty Avoidance	Degree to which people in a society feel uncomfortable in unexpected, surprising and unknown situations; the extent to which people prefer rules, regulations and controls or are more comfortable with unstructured, ambiguous or unpredictable situations (pp. 164-168).
Masculinity	Degree the society reinforces, or not, the traditional competitive masculine work role model; the degree to which we focus on goal achievement and work or quality of life and caring for others (pp. 116-120).
Time Orientation	Degree people attach importance to a future oriented way of thinking rather than to a short-term oriented one; the degree to which we embrace values oriented toward the future, such as perseverance and thrift, or values oriented toward the past and present, such as respect for tradition and fulfilling social obligations (pp. 208-210).

Source: Author's (2014) adaptation of concepts found in G. Hofstede (2005, 1980).

Table 6-2 *Hofsetde's (2005) Cultural Dimensions*

Hofstede (2005) further operationalized cultural dimensions by including indicators that help make distinctions across the sub-dimensions. (See *Table 6-3*).

Dimension	Related Cultural Continuum (Sub-dimensions)	
Individualism	Individualism—*Script*: *"looking out for #1; if you want something done right, do it yourself."*	Collectivism—*Script: "two heads are better than one; many hands make light work."*
	Sample Indicator: feedback is given directly to the individual; "I" focus (or "me"), driven by an internal motivational orientation.	Sample Indicator: feedback is given indirectly or through in-group member; "We" focus (or "team), driven to maximize welfare

		of group.
Power Distance	Hierarchical—*Script:* *"even better than respect is obedience; the highest duty is to respect authority."* Sample Indicator: manager makes decisions appropriate to his/her level; employee should rely on manager for direction; regard social order to be important in resolving conflict.	Participative—*Script: "tell people the 'what' and 'why', and let them surprise you with their ingenuity."* Sample Indicator: employees are expected to report progress to managers and suggest approaches to problem solving; use of power should be legitimate and negotiated.
Uncertainty Avoidance	Need for Certainty—*Script: "do it by the book (i.e., focus on 'proven approaches;' better safe than sorry."* Sample Indicator: stability is sought, valued and rewarded; what is "different" is valued as dangerous, or risky; need for precision and formality; expertise and technology-based solutions.	Tolerance of Ambiguity—*Script: "rules are meant to be broken; nothing ventured, nothing gained."* Sample Indicator: trying new approaches is valued and rewarded; tolerance for, or desire for exploration, creation and diversity; generalists and common sense focused; there should be no more rules than necessary.
Masculinity	Achievement/Masculinity—*Script: "nice people finish last; winning isn't everything, it's the only thing; being fast and being first matters."* Sample Indicator: performance and results are stressed; focus on challenge, earnings, recognition, and advancement.	Quality of Life/Femininity—*Script: "it is nice to be important, yet it is more important to be nice; all work and no play makes for a dull life."* Sample Indicator: solidarity and service are stressed; collaborative and open; management as intuitive and consensus seeking.
Time Orientation	Long-Term—*Script: "diligence is the basis of success and wealth, and thrift the source of riches."* Sample Indicator: success over a long time horizon is valued; time is fluid; respect for circumstances; deferred gratification of needs is accepted; synthetic thinking.	Short-Term—*Script: "time is money; keeping up with the 'Joneses' is the measure of success."* Sample Indicator: produce quick results are expected and valued; here-and-now focused; immediate gratification of needs is expected; analytic thinking.

Table 6-3 *Hofsetde's Cultural Sub-Dimensions*

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To sum up, whether described as a '*global mindset*' (Bird & Osland, 2004); '*global competence*' (Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006); '*global learning*' (Hovland, 2006; Musil, 2006); '*culture learning*' (Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2002); '*intercultural effectiveness*' (Vulpe, Kealey, Protheroe, & MacDonald, 2001); '*cultural intelligence*' (Earley & Ang, 2003; Peterson, 2004; Thomas & Inkson, 2004); '*global leadership competence*' (Jokinen, 2005); '*intercultural communication competence*' (Collier, 1989; Dinges, 1983; Dinges & Baldwin, 1996; Hammer, 1989; Kim, 1991; Spitzberg, 1989); or, of course, '*intercultural competence*' (Deardorff, 2005, 2006; Graf, 2004), many of the disciplinary roads lead to a similar place. There is clearly an "emerging consensus around what constitutes intercultural competence, which is most often viewed as a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts" (Bennett, 2008, p. 97).

6.5.3 Competency Modeling and Core Coaching Competencies

Given our interests in examining the level of cultural sensitivity of a select, sub-set of ICF core coaching competencies, we conclude with a short review of the competency modeling literature. Specifically, we provide descriptions of competency modeling and related approaches; as well as, briefly describe the current status of competency modeling in the professional coaching space.

To start, *competencies* include the collection of success factors (i.e., knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics) necessary for achieving important results in a specific job, work role in a particular organization, or within the broader context of professional practice spaces, such as executive coaching (Singh Chouhan & Srivastava, 2014). The competency construct dates back to McClelland (1978) advocating the use of skills sets related to performance based on criterion sampling, as an alternative approach to traditional intelligence testing.

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Competency modeling and its application to people development and management systems is a continuously evolving Human Resource Development and Organizational Effectiveness discipline. A competency models are the output from analyses intended to distinguish top performers from average performers; include descriptions of how required capabilities change or progress with one's level; are usually linked to objectives and important outcomes (both individual and organizational); may consider future job requirements directly or indirectly; aligned with HR systems; and is often more of an organizational change, as opposed to a simple data collection effort (Campion, Fink, & Ruggeberg, 2011). This conceptualization of competency modeling seems to imply the importance of a specific context in which they are applied. As such, it raises the question of the utility of generalize competency models, compared to context specific competency modeling —this seems to be an important line of inquiry given many of the existing competency frameworks used by professional coaching associations appear to be related to the former *versus* the later.

The content of a fully developed competency model indeed includes (Marrelli, 1998): (1) categories of competencies (e.g., *core, process,* and *types* such as intellectual, interpersonal, technical/functional, or strategic/cultural; and levels such as individual, group, or organizational), (2) a clear architecture (i.e., *target population/classification; labels* for each competency; *definitions* or *descriptors* for each; and (3) a list of criterion referenced behavioral indicators —*to be able to recognize the competency in action*. Thus, competency modeling can apply to a wide range of human systems and, as such, the validity and reliability of the selected method for competency modeling might vary with regard to the contextual demands of the situation. To our understanding, this suggests that the creators of various competency frameworks would have indeed a major influence on the model's level of cultural sensitivity.

6.5.4 Current Status of Competency Modeling in Professional Coaching

Maltbia et al (2010; 2011; 2012; 2013; 2014), note that while there are different competency frameworks advocated for coaching, the competency models and related credentialing processes heretofore used by the professional bodies (e.g., *International Coach Federation*, ICF; *European Mentoring and Coaching Counsel*, EMCC; *Worldwide Association of Business Coaches*, WABC; among others) do not explicitly cite any of the theories or related research, science, or other forms of evidence supporting these approaches in publically available documentation neither provide conceptual consideration and clarity on the meaning and implementation of cultural competence in coach education and training. Nor are the procedures employed in developing the resulting competency models made publically available on various websites where the frameworks are published.

The authors (Maltbia *et al.,* 2014), selected the ICF competency framework to conduct a multi-year, systematic approach, that in effect reverse engineered 10 of ICF's 11 core coaching competencies in order to ground each competency in a review of empirical, published research-based articles, as well as books authored by "key thinkers" that were selected through searches in major citation indices (see reference section to locate these foundational papers). The 11th ICF competency — "meeting ethnical guidelines and professional standards"—was excluded because it did not meet operational definitions of "competency through the authors' work:

- <u>There is both theoretical and empirical support (i.e., definitions, taxonomies, types, and levels) for what was labeled as *conversational, relational,* and *facilitative ICF competencies*</u> (i.e., ICF #5 – *active listening, #6 -questioning, #3 – trust & intimacy, #4 -presence, #7 –direct communication and #8 –creating awareness).* Each of these are considered competencies because at their core they are about capabilities of the coach. For this reason, we applied Hofstede's cultural

dimensions to this sub-set of competencies in our content analysis reported in the next section;

- For the competencies that were labeled as ICF "structural" competencies, there is support for inclusion in the education, training and credentialing of coaches (or ICF #2 – *coaching agreement, #10 –planning and goal setting, #9 –designing action & #11 –managing progress and accountability*). However, they describe the *coaching process* rather than coach capabilities—and thus are NOT included in our analysis; and

- There appears to be conceptual confusion within the professional coaching association space about what constitutes factors related: to mindset (i.e., ethics for example), vs. competencies (capabilities that reside in the coach) and process (work that occurs in partnership with the client yet is not necessary focused solely on the coaches' capabilities). To summarize, coaching competencies models are aggregates of capabilities —where competency is defined as *an underlying characteristic that is causally related to superior performance* (Spencer & Spencer, 1993, p. 9) that, when applied across the entire coaching process create synergy and add value to clients. En route to cultural competence is having a clear framework for understanding cultural dynamics —predictable patterns that emerge when members from two or more identity groups interact. Applied to coaching, cultural competence refers to the integration of key dimensions of the client's cultural identity into the theories, tools, and practices that guide one's coaching approach with the intent of providing clients of all socio-demographic backgrounds with relevant services focused on achieving their desired results (Maltbia & Prior, 2012; Maltbia, 2013).

6.6 Analysis

The findings presented in the following section are based on a content analysis conducted in four rounds, at two levels, amongst the paper's three authors (which worked as *independent coders*):

- In the first round, the three authors independently analyzed *definitions* of each of the six ICF coaching competencies to determine if there is likely an interaction with each of Hofstede's five cultural dimensions using the coding matrix in *Appendix A*.

- Second, the authors then compared ratings and came to agreement as to which coaching competencies are likely to be affected by which dimensions.

- In the third round, two of three authors independently analyzed *indicators* for each coaching competency to determine if there is likely an interaction with each of Hofstede's five cultural dimensions. They used a continuum to characterize the polar opposites of each of Hofstede's five cultural dimensions drawn from the *Culture in the Workplace Questionnaire's* (CWQ) technical manual to refine the analysis. A higher score would thus indicate a preference for the orientation on the left side of the continuum, and a lower score a preference for the orientation on the right side of the continuum. In each cell of the matrix, the raters noted observations to support their judgment (Miles & Huberman, 1994 pp. 239-286).

- In the fourth round, all three authors examined output from the third round to reach agreement about which coaching competencies and indicators are likely to be affected by which of Hofstede's dimensions, as further characterized using the *CWQ* continuum of polar opposites.

6.7 Findings

Findings are presented by displaying a cultural profile for each of the six ICF core coaching competencies selected for this content analysis based on our application of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Note, each ICF competency is aligned with a related competency cluster (see *Table 6-4*).

Cluster	ICF Competencies
Co-creating the Relationship	#3. Establishing Trust and Intimacy with the Client
	#4. Coaching Presence
Communicating Effectively	#5. Active Listening
	#6. Powerful Questioning
	#7. Direct Communication
Facilitating Learning and Results	#8. Creating Awareness

Table 6-4 *Competency Clusters for Select ICF Competencies*

6.7.1 Competency and Cultural Dimension Definitions: Level One and Two Analysis

Appendix A revealed the following results of *Rounds One* and *Two* of Analyses. Specifically, findings indicate unanimous agreement that:

- *Power distance* likely affects all six selected ICF competencies (i.e., each competency is sensitive to difference along the "hierarchical" to "participative" continuum);

- *Masculinity* likely affects five of the six selected ICF competencies (i.e., all competencies—with the exception of "trust and intimacy"— appear

sensitive to difference along the "achievement" to "quality of life" or "femininity" continuum);

- *Uncertainty avoidance* likely affects three of the six ICF competencies—"questioning," "direct communication" and "awareness" (i.e., these three competencies appear sensitive to difference along the "need for certainty" to "tolerance of ambiguity" continuum;

- *Individualism* likely affects two of six selected ICF competencies—"direct communication" and "awareness" (i.e., these two competencies appear sensitive to difference along the "individualism" to "collectivism" dimension); and

- *Time* likely affects two of six selected ICF competencies—"trust and intimacy" and "questioning" (i.e., these two competencies appear sensitive to difference along the "long term" to "short term" dimension).

When looking across rows in the Appendix A matrix, all three authors unanimously agreed that four of five Hofstede dimensions do likely affect three of the ICF competencies ("questioning," "direct communication, and "awareness). Inter-rater agreement ranged from moderate (or 66% agreement) to high (or 100% agreement) for the 30 cells in the coding matrix. We assumed our differences were due in part to lack of conceptual clarity of competency definitions and cultural dimensions of constructs. We expected higher levels of agreement during the next round because competency indicators would include specific behaviors.

6.7.2 Competency Indicators and Related Cultural Dimensions: Level Three and Four Analysis

Appendix B displays levels of agreement at the "cultural description" level for each competency, during our 1st inter-rater discussion (i.e., analysis level 2 – "dark green") and any modifications made during our 2nd inter-rater discussion (i.e.,

analysis level 4 – "light green"), in order to clearly document shifts in our thinking as we progressed through various levels of coding and analysis.

During our third and fourth rounds of analysis, we assessed, for each sub-competency indicator: (1) the likely influence of a cultural dimension on a given coaching competency using the summary definition; (2) whether that influence fell on the left or right sides of the cultural dimension's polar opposites continuum; or (3) whether that influence included dimensions on both sides of the continuum (middle); or (4) did not seem to apply at all (using a dash). The data in Appendix B show areas of absolute agreement (highlighted in green in each cell), as well as variance among raters. Discussions in these rounds enabled us to visually depict connections between selected cultural dimensions and competencies using the following decision rules:

- Limit the cultural composite for each competency to those cultural dimensions where there was unanimous agreement (i.e., highlighted in "dark" or "light" green at the top of the coding matrix for each competency);

- Determine the directionality for each cultural dimension linked to each related competency indicator); and

- Calculate the directionality of each cultural dimension for each competency based on the result of step 2. By so doing, we estimated a preference score for cultural dimensions for each competency—leaning to the left, right or middle of the continuum, by adapting the algorithm used to calculate CWQ results.[5]

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[5] For example, the "position" for the masculinity dimension for "trust and intimacy" is 20; i.e., 2 of the 5 indicators coded "middle" or 2 x 50 = 100; + 2 of the 5 indicators coded "right" or 3 x 0 = 0, 100/5 = 20, where "b" and "f" were coded "N/A" for this cultural dimension, so not included in the calculation. This is an expected result given that raters coded the directionality of this competency to the right at the description levels for both the competency and cultural dimension.

6.7.3 Cultural Composites on Each Competence Analyzed

ICF #3: Creating Trust and Intimacy. See *Figure 6-1*. This composite cultural profile indicates that three of five dimensions ("Power Distance," "Masculinity" and "Time") are activated by six indicators that make up this competency. The directionality of these three cultural factors suggests that coaches adhering to this competency when building and maintaining relationships with clients would have a tendency to:

a. Take a highly participative stance and treat the client as an equal (i.e., as reflected in the score of "0" based on all factors being coded to the right);

b. Place attention on the "client's" expressed needs and wants, compared to goal achievement (i.e., a score of 25 suggests a moderate orientation toward femininity, *versus* a score of 50 that suggests balanced interaction between relationship and achievement);

c. Focus on the present and move toward the future (score of 56 indicates present time orientation moving slightly in the direction in the future, given that 50 is the midpoint).
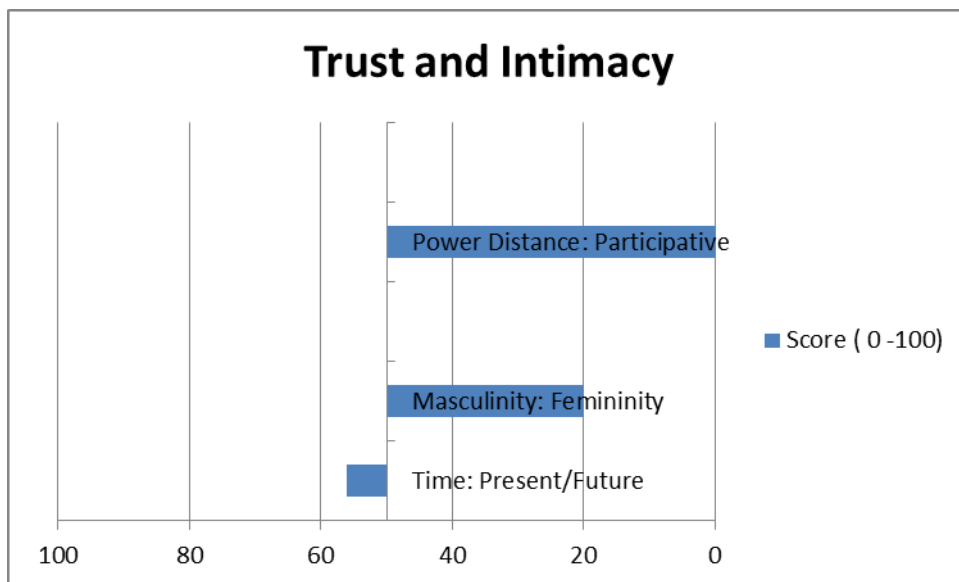

Figure 6-1 *Competency #3 and Activated Cultural Dimensions*

There was high consistency between the summary definition and supporting operational competency indicators for two of three cultural dimensions (i.e., "power distance" and "time"), and moderate consistency for "masculinity." The cultural profile raises questions as to how coaches might adjust their stance when interacting with clients with a different cultural orientation, along one or more of these dimensions.

For example, how might the coach need to flex the assumptions embedded in indicators for the competency of *trust and intimacy* with clients who hold *strong masculinity cultural assumptions,* where the basis for trust might emphasize task accomplishment *versus* the relationship (i.e., the coach demonstrating an ability to help the client achieve tactical goals *versus* personal connection)?

ICF #4: Coaching Presence. See *Figure 6-2*. This composite cultural profile indicates three of five dimensions ("Individualism," "Power Distance," and "Masculinity") are activated by seven indicators comprising coaching presence. The directionality of these three cultural dimensions suggests that coaches adhering to this competency, when co-creating relationships with clients, should:

  a. Be guided by coach's self-awareness and high predominant internal motivational processing (i.e., score of "90" indicates prominent individualistic orientation moving very slightly toward client's benefit, given that "50" is the midpoint);

  b. Interact with the client in moderately hierarchical ways (i.e., as reflected by score of "67" where "50" would show consideration for both direction and equality); and

  c. Place attention early in the interaction on the quality of relationship, rather than goal attainment (i.e., a score of "33" suggests moderate orientation toward femininity).

Figure 6-2 *ICF Competency #4 and Activated Cultural Dimensions*

There was low consistency between summary definition and supporting operational competency indicators for one of three cultural dimensions (i.e., "individualism") and consistency with "power distance" and "masculinity." Previous research on *presence* as a *relational competency* (Maltbia *et al.*, 2011) implies a capacity to access the client's complexity by being fully conscious in the moment of one's own reflexivity to multiple client dimensions. Bearing that in mind, how might the coach adjust to clients who hold strong collectivistic cultural assumptions, wherein the basis for presence might emphasize "being here for the benefit of the 'group' and not oneself as client"?

ICF #5: Active Listening. See *Figure 6-3*. This composite cultural profile indicates three of five dimensions ("Power Distance," "Masculinity," and "Time") are activated by eight indicators comprising this competency. Directionality of these cultural dimensions suggests that coaches adhering to this competency, when striving to communicate effectively with clients, would likely:

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a. Be highly interactive in attending to client messages, striving to engage them as equal partners (reflected in score of "14");

b. Place emphasis on the meaning of what is, or is not, said by the client, compared to emphasizing goal attainment (i.e., score of "36" suggests moderate orientation toward femininity); and

c. Stay in the present moment attending to client's short term aims (i.e., score of "38" indicates short-term orientation vs long-term one).
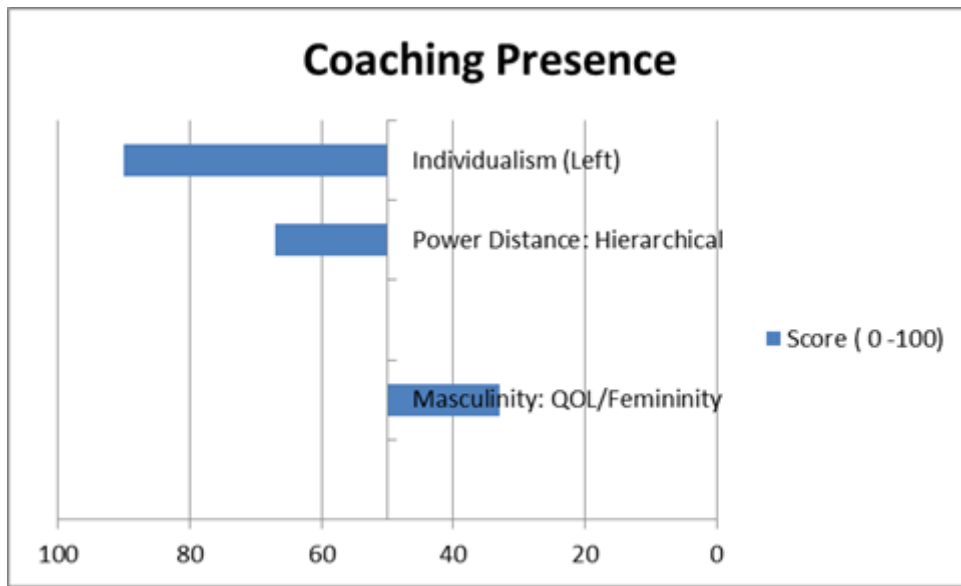

Figure 6-3 *ICF Competency #5 and Activated Cultural Dimensions*

There was high consistency between the summary definition and supporting operational competency indicators for one of the three cultural dimensions (i.e., "power distance"), with moderate consistency for "masculinity" and "time." Interactive listening, as a context-dependent competence in service of communicating effectively with clients (Maltbia *et al.*, 2010), raises questions as to how the coach might adjust his/her stance when attending to clients with a different cultural orientation along one or more of these dimensions. For instance, how might the coach modify his/her approach when hearing a client's concerns, whose *strong respect for authority* combined with *high task orientation* might mean the client wants the coach to give him/her directions on goals and task accomplishment *versus* expecting the client to determine direction himself with coach support?

ICF #6: Powerful Questioning. See *Figure 6-4*. The composite cultural profile for questioning indicates all five cultural dimensions are activated by four indicators comprising this competency. Directionality suggests that coaches enacting this competency, when communicating effectively with clients, would have a tendency to:

a. Focus on their inner awareness to inform questioning that helps understand clients, and their situation, for maximum benefit of clients and coaching relationships (i.e., score of "50" suggests balance between two extremes of individualism-collectivism continuum);

b. Be highly interactive with emphasis on inquiry (i.e., reflected in score of "0" based on all factors being coded to the right);

c. Display comfort in working with ambiguity, possibility thinking, and learning from/with the client (i.e., score of "25" shows moderate level of tolerance for ambiguity *versus* need for certainty);

d. Attend to both quality of space created through communication and goal attainment (i.e., score of "50" suggests balanced orientation between relational and accomplishment aspects of interaction); and

e. Inquiry into present, near term and long-term as basis for comprehensive communication (i.e., score "50" highlights the midpoint).
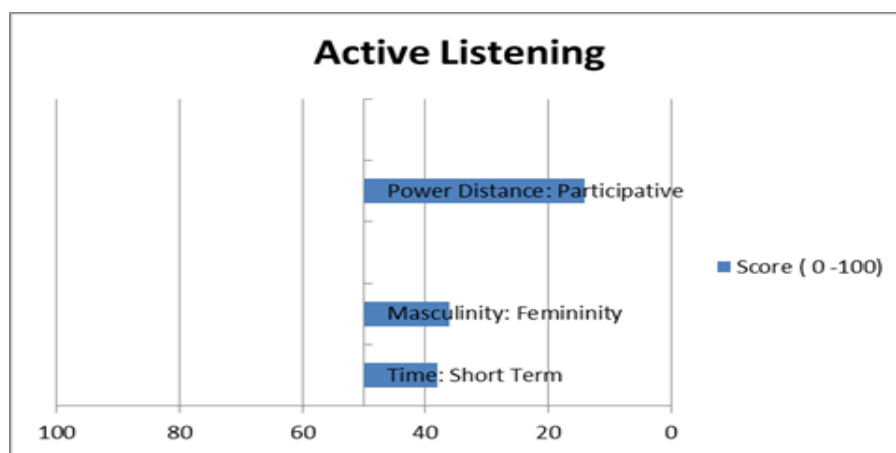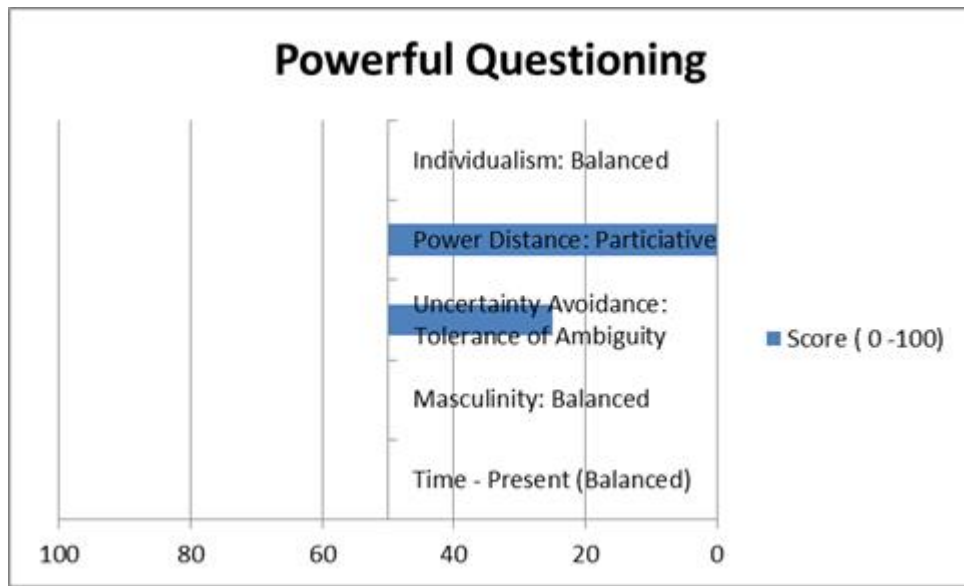
Figure 6-4 *ICF Competency #6 and Activated Cultural Dimensions*

There was high consistency between the summary definition and supporting operational competency indicators in four of five cultural dimensions and moderate consistency for "uncertainty avoidance." Considering this profile and research positioning questioning as a conversational competency, along with listening (Maltbia *et al.*, 2010), queries arise about how the coach might flex his/her communicative stance with clients who differ in cultural assumptions. For instance, how might the coach adapt when interacting with clients high in *"power distance"* and *"uncertainty avoidance"* who consider coaching useful when coaches provide "answers" and clear direction *versus* asking questions that may evoke the client's inner reflection and discovery?

ICF #7: Direct Communication. See *Figure 6-5*. Communication involves people expressing themselves, which in cultural terms can range from *direct communication* (i.e., preference for using precise, explicit language to state needs, or wants—which aligns with "low context," i.e., the meaning is in the "message"); to *indirect communication* (i.e., circular approach, emphasizing protection of public

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honor—aligns with "high context"—meaning resides "outside" of the verbal message and is linked to the situation, including prior experience or reputation). It seems important that the word "direct" characterizes preferred "communication" in defining this competency. The composite cultural profile indicates all five indicators comprising this competency are activated, i.e. above 80 and far to left of 50 (midpoint, indicating balanced cultural orientation). Collectively, direct communication is defined by strong individualistic behavioral patterns, high regard for authority, emphasis on predictability, and outcome-focus. Directionality suggests that coaches enacting this competency:

a. Use clear, concise and direct language when requesting and providing feedback;

b. "Reframe" the essence of what clients experience to broaden perspective;

c. Confidently state coaching objectives, session agenda, and/or intent of suggested approaches, with focus on client as individual (*versus* the group); and

d. Increase clarity by focusing on outcomes and success indicators.
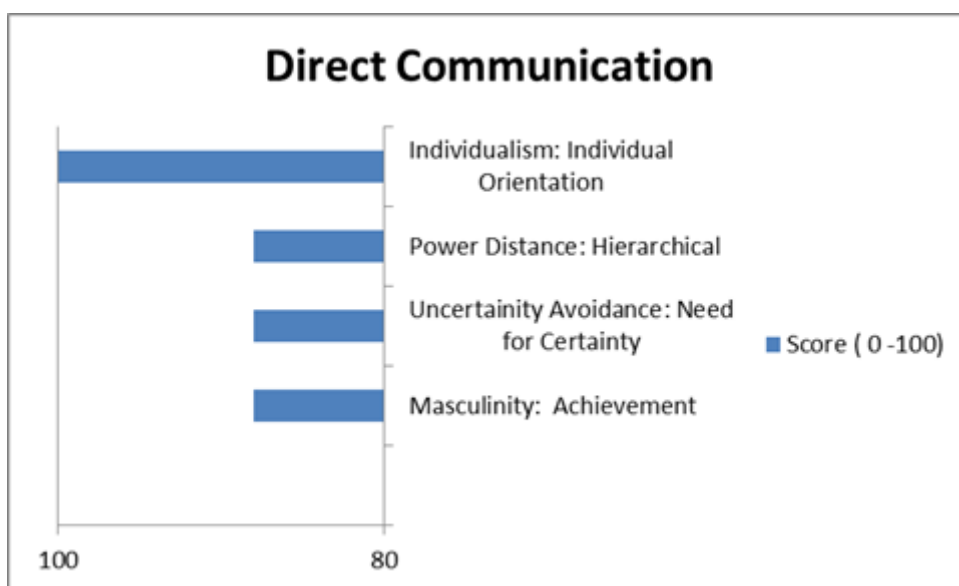
Figure 6-5 *ICF Competency #7 and Activated Cultural Dimensions*

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The profile's directionality implies that, if the coach establishes a personal connection, as reflected in the "right" orientation of the competency trust and intimacy, he/she will have effectively "earned-the-right" for direct communication. It is less clear how coaches might adapt when interacting with clients with strong preferences for indirect modes of communication—Should he/she use discretion in voicing goals *versus* stating them explicitly; or strive to understand self in context of others, tradition, and obligation? Indicators for this competency show alignment of only one ("e" –use of "metaphor" and "analogy") with indirect forms of communication.

ICF #8: Creating Awareness. See *Figure 6-6.* The composite cultural profile indicates four of five dimensions (all except "Time") are activated by nine indicators comprising this competency. Directionality suggests that coaches, enacting this competency in service of facilitating learning and results with clients, would be inclined to:

a. Help clients discover interrelated factors that affect identity and related behavior (i.e., score of "33" reflects moderate collectivistic orientation);

b. Facilitate client learning through participative stance that treats client as equal (i.e., reflected in score of "21" on the right-side of power distance continuum);

c. Maintain balance between complexity/ambiguity and certainty-seeking while evaluating multiple sources of information (i.e., score of "56" shows slight orientation toward need for certainty); and

d. Balance attention between quality of learning space created with client and results fulfillment (i.e., score of "50" suggests balanced orientation between relational and achievement aspects of interaction).
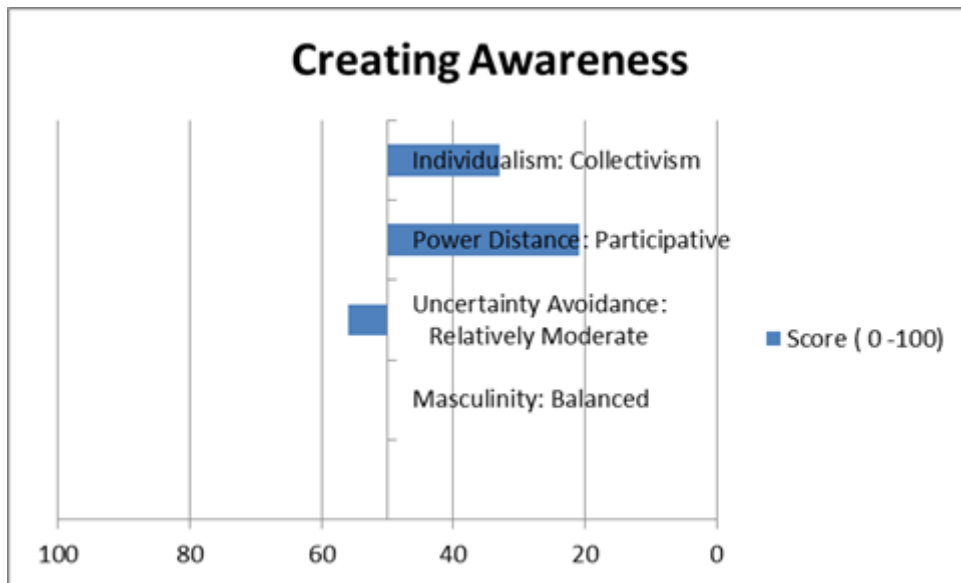
Figure 6-6 *ICF Competency #8 and Activated Cultural Dimensions*

There was moderate-high consistency between the summary definition and supporting operational competency indicators in one of five cultural dimensions (i.e., "uncertainty avoidance"); and lower consistency for other three cultural dimensions (i.e., "individualism," "power distance," and "masculinity"). How might this composite score affect adjustment of the coach's cultural orientation vis-à-vis this competency? For instance, how might limited self-social awareness influence the coach's scope of awareness or how he/she interprets what clients need or want to achieve agreed-upon results?

6.8 Conclusions

We conclude by summarizing observations and related implications. First, consistent with competency modeling research, our results show inter-rater reliability was highest where both competency definitions and cultural descriptions

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were conceptually clear—implying that a framework for *understanding cultural dynamics is foundational* for developing coach cultural competence. Adapting coaching competency models (and related credentialing processes) for increased cultural sensitivity requires *meeting rigorous psychometric properties of validity* (i.e., construct, discriminant, and criterion-related) *and reliability*—both contribute conceptual clarity and utility (i.e., credibility).

Figure 6-7—the composite cultural profile of six ICF competencies included in this analysis—is an artifact of collective cultural assumptions embedded in the ICF competency model. *Table 6-5* lists specific competencies that influenced overall directionality of each cultural sub-dimension. Our analysis shows that directionality shifts depending on behavioral indicators associated with each competency—suggesting the application of cultural competence in coaching is both dynamic and complex. Membership in multiple identity groups means several layers of mental programming, and correspondingly different levels of culture (e.g., national, regional, ethnic and/or religious, gender, generational, social class, profession), are activated simultaneously.
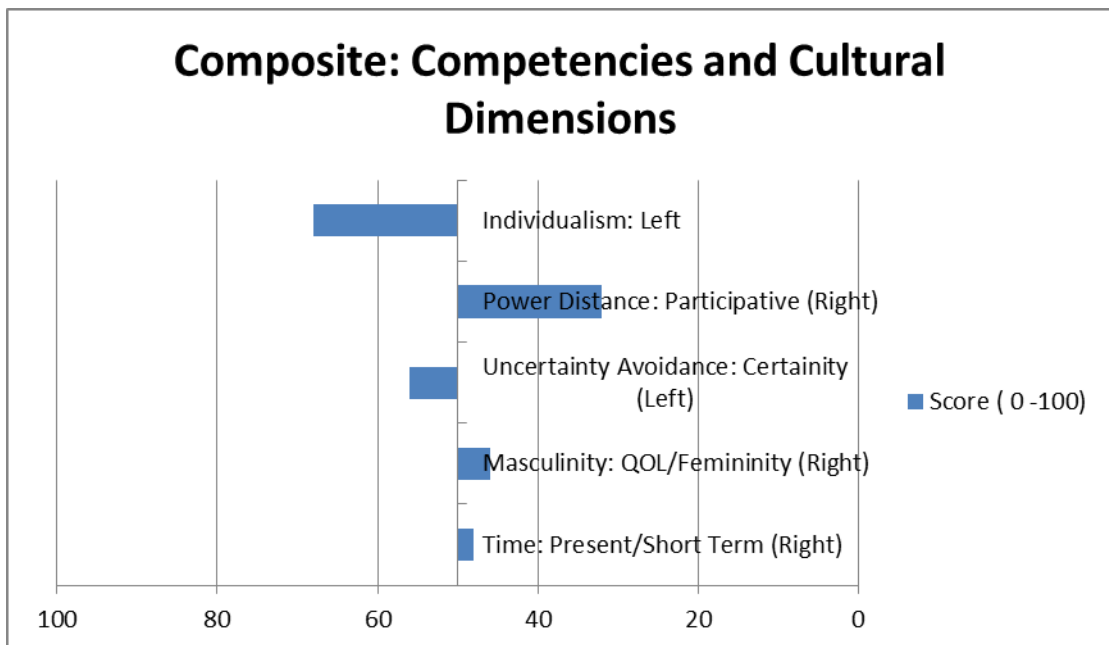
Figure 6-7 *Composite Profile: ICF Competencies & Hofstede's Five Cultural Dimensions*

Sub-Dimension	ICF Competencies
Moderate Preference for Individualism	*Coaching Presence, Questioning, Communication & Creating Awareness*
Moderate Participative Orientation	*Trust & Intimacy, Coaching Presence, Listening, Powerful Questioning, Communication, Creating Awareness*
Low Need for Certainty	*Powerful Questioning, Direct Commun Creating Awareness*
Low Femininity Orientation	*Trust & Intimacy, Coaching Presence, Listening, Powerful Questioning, Communication, Creating Awareness*
Low Short-Term Preference	*Trust & Intimacy, Active Listening, Questioning*

Table 6-5 *Cultural Dimension and ICF Competencies*

6.9 Implications and Recommendations

Based on our contend analysis and the results emerged, we contend that:

a) Coaches should complete the CWQ (or related measure) to increase awareness of cultural programming and consider implications for applying ICF competencies to explicitly attend to cultural dynamics during coaching engagements;

b) The ICF should commission research with a global sample to better understand interplay between modes of cultural programming and coaching competencies; and

c) Researchers could: (1) replicate this study and (2) conduct additional studies (using CWQ and interview data) with global samples of matched-coach-client-pairs to extend preliminary findings.

Finally, while this study's cultural profiles could be further replicated, Hofstede's cultural dimensions are likely to be highly embedded in both definitions and indicators of the six ICF competencies —which raises questions about whether cultural competence should be separately added or embedded into existing competencies. We explicitly recommend:

- Embedding cultural competence in existing competencies given: (a) cultural assumptions already appear in existing models; (b) doing so could enhance cultural sensitivity by making existing competencies less ethnocentrically grounded and more ethno-relatively oriented; (c) this approach requires reexamining competencies and ensuring related indicators reflect the full range of each cultural dimension;

- Identifying clear foundational capabilities needed to develop cultural competence and disseminating guidelines to coach training/education providers to: (a) assess cultural self-awareness and capability; (b) establish cultural knowledge base; (c) build skills to communicate, listen and coach cross-culturally.

Aware of that intercultural competency development is a nonlinear process that involves triggering within individuals cognitive elements (i.e., intellectual awareness and knowledge); affective elements (i.e., emotional awareness and affective growth); and last, behavioral components (i.e., skill building and behavior change) (Bird et al., 2004, 2010; Caligiuri & Tarique, 2009; Lloyd & Härtel, 2010; Oddou & Mendenhall, 2013; Pless, Maak, & Stahl, 2011), in order to develop intercultural competency when coaching, changes at the cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels must be consciously experienced. We know that this requires

cultural courage, since doing so activates "cultural guards," who have created, and/or benefit from, existing competency model and credentialing systems. Yet — given the relevance of developing coach cultural competence for today's global diversity— we contend it is less a question of "if," but rather "when and how."

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6.11 Appendix A.

ICF Core Coaching Competency Definitions and Definitions of Hofstede's 5 Cultural Dimensions Coding Matrix

The results from our first round of coding are presented in the table below. During this first round of coding, the 3 authors independently compared the definition of each of the 6 selected ICF core competencies identified for this analysis, with the definitions of each of Hofstede's 5 cultural dimensions. For the six competencies, each author: (1) reviewed the content from the two sources to first determine if there was a degree of alignment between the competency definition and each cultural dimension and (2) recorded their "judgment" in a matrix similar to the table below, then emailed the completed matrix to each other. Then they engaged in an inter-rater reliability discussion to determine the level of agreement resulting from dependently coding the two constructs at the definitional level of analysis. The result below show the level of agreement ranged from 66 percent (or 2 of 3) to 100 percent (or 3 of 3).

Hofstede's 5 cultural dimension are positioned along a continuum with the label of for each dimension on the left of the scale (or 100) and its opposite on the right end of the scale (or 0); with 50 representing the middle of the continuum. For example 100 on the Individualism scale would suggest a high preference for that orientation and a low preference for its opposite collectivism; whereas 50 on that same continuum would suggest a moderate preference for both.

ICF Core Competencies & Hofstede's 5 Cultural Dimensions Matrix	Individualism (Individualism – Left | 100 vs. Collectivism – Right |0)	Power Distance (Hierarchical – Left | 100 vs. Participative – Right | 0)	Uncertainty Avoidance (i.e., Need for Certainty – Left | 100 vs. Tolerance of Ambiguity – Right |0)	Masculinity (i.e., Achievement or Masculinity – Left | 100 vs. Quality of Life or Femininity – Right | 0)	Time Orientation (i.e., Long Term – Left | 100 vs. Short Term – Right | 0)
ICF #3 **Trust & Intimacy**	66	100	66	66	100
ICF #4 **Coaching Presence**	66	100	66	100	66
ICF #5 **Active Listening**	66	100	66	100	66
ICF #6 **Powerful Questioning**	66	100	100	100	100
ICF #7 **Direct Communication**	100	100	100	100	--
ICF #8 **Creating Awareness**	100	100	100	100	--

6.12 Appendix B.

ICF Core Coaching Competencies and Hofstede's 5 Cultural Dimensions Coding Matrix

The results from two additional rounds of coding and analysis are presented on the following pages. Here 2 of the 3 authors used the coding matrix on the following pages to independently document their assessment of levels of alignment between indicators for each ICF competency and each of Hofstede's 5 cultural dimensions. For this round of coding, each rater used the indicators provided for the 2 sub-dimensions related to Hofstede's 5 cultural dimensions (found in the technical manual for a measure of Hofstede's cultural dimensions), resulting in a more refined level of coding and analysis. In each cell of the matrix, the raters noted their observations to support the judgment made during this round of independent coding.

The results from their independent coding were combined into a single matrix to inform the 2nd inter-rater reliability discussion. This discussion was facilitated by the 3rd author, the most experienced researcher of the three to help guide the interpretation of results emerging from this 2nd round of analysis work. During this conversion, areas of absolute agreement where discussed and confirmed first. Note each rater's results were color coded and the initial level of agreement at the "description" level is indicated by the "dark green shading," yet adjustments to the level of agreement that resulted from the facilitated discussion is indicated by the "lighter green shading." Realizing a higher level of conceptual clarity at the description level for each dimension and related coaching competency provided a stronger foundation for reaching informed agreement at the indicator level of each ICF competency.

The data in the following tables reflect: (a) the level of agreement between the 2 raters during this analysis task and (b) the level of agreement resulting from the facilitated inter-rater reliability discussion, including interpretative input from the

senior researcher. The table for each of the select ICF competencies also "highlight" interpretative data used for select cultural dimensions more strongly "activated" by various indicators related to each of the ICF competencies included in this analysis. These data matrixes informed the analysis presented in the "finding" section of the paper.

KEY:

*Mosteo: **Red**

*Maltbia: **Blue**

Areas of Agreement: **GREEN**

CODING MATRIX

ICF Core Competencies & Hofstede's 5 Cultural Dimensions Matrix	Individualism (Individualism – Left | 100 vs. Collectivism – Right |0) (66% agreement 1st round)	Power Distance (Hierarchical – Left | 100 vs. Participative – Right | 0) 100% Inter-rater Reliability (1st round) High consistency between Definitional Level (1st unit of analysis) and Operational Level of Description (Indicators): PARTICIPATIVE ORIENTATION PRIVILEGED	Uncertainty Avoidance (i.e., Need for Certainty – Left | 100 vs. Tolerance of Ambiguity – Right |0) (66% agreement 1st round)	Masculinity (i.e., Achievement or Masculinity – Left | 100 vs. Quality of Life or Femininity – Right | 0) 66% (1st round) / 100% Inter-rater Reliability (2nd round) Moderate Consistency between Definitional Level (1st unit of analysis) and Operational Level of Description (Indicators: FEMININITY ORIENTATION PRIVILEGED	Time Orientation (i.e., Long Term – Left | 100 vs. Short Term – Right | 0) 100% Inter-rater Reliability (1st round) High consistency between Definitional Level (1st unit of analysis) and Operational Level of Description (indicators): LONG-SHORT TERM ORIENTATION BALANCED
ICF #3 **Trust & Intimacy** Ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust	RIGHT	RIGHT	Middle to Left Middle	RIGHT	MIDDLE
a. Shows genuine concern for the client's welfare and future	Right --	RIGHT	Left Middle to Right	RIGHT	MIDDLE-LEFT

b. Continuously demonstrates personal integrity, honesty and sincerity	Left --	**RIGHT**	Left --	--	**MIDDLE**
c. Establishes clear agreements and keeps promises	Left --	**RIGHT**	Left --	**MIDDLE**	**MIDDLE**
d. Demonstrates respect for client's perceptions, learning style, personal being	Right Left	**RIGHT**	Right --	**RIGHT**	--
e. Provides ongoing support for and champions new behaviors and actions, including those involving risk taking and fear of failure	Right --	**RIGHT**	**RIGHT**	**MIDDLE**	**MIDDLE**
f. *Asks permission* to coach client in sensitive, new areas	**RIGHT**	**RIGHT**	**RIGHT**	**RIGHT**	--

6.13 Appendix C.

ICF Core Coaching Competencies and Hofstede's 5 Cultural Dimensions Coding –

Composite Matrix

ICF Core Competencies & Hofstede's 5 Cultural Dimensions Matrix	Individualism (Individualism – Left | 100 vs. Collectivism – Right |0)	Power Distance (Hierarchical – Left | 100 vs. Participative – Right | 0)	Uncertainty Avoidance (i.e., Need for Certainty – Left | 100 vs. Tolerance of Ambiguity (TOA) – Right |0)	Masculinity (i.e., Achievement or Masculinity – Left | 100 vs. Quality of Life or Femininity – Right | 0)	Time Orientation (i.e., Long Term – Left | 100 vs. Short Term – Right | 0)
ICF #3 **Trust & Intimacy** Ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust	RIGHT	RIGHT	Middle to Left Middle	RIGHT	MIDDLE
Sub-dimension Data/Scaling	--	0 (Very High Participative)	--	20 (Moderate QOL)	56 (Present/Future)
ICF #4 **Coaching Presence** Ability to be fully conscious and create spontaneous relationship with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible and confident	MIDDLE	RIGHT	Middle to Right Middle	RIGHT	Middle to Right Middle
Sub-dimension Data/Scaling	90 (High Individualism)	67 (Moderate Hierarchical)	--	33 (Moderate QOL)	--

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ICF #5 **Active Listening** Ability to focus completely on what the client is saying and is not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the client's desires, and to support client self-expression	MIDDLE	RIGHT	Right Middle-Right	RIGHT	MIDDLE
Sub-dimension Data/Scaling	--	14 (High Participative)	--	36 (Moderate QOL)	38 (Short Term)
ICF #6 **Powerful Questioning** Ability to ask questions that reveal the information needed for maximum benefit to the coaching relationship and the client	MIDDLE	RIGHT	MIDDLE	MIDDLE	MIDDLE
Sub-dimension Data/Scaling	50 (Ind./Collect.)	0 (Very High Participative)	25 (Moderate TOA)	50 (Achievement/QOL)	50 (Past/Present/F)
ICF #7 **Direct Communication** Ability to communicate effectively during coaching sessions, and to use language that has the greatest positive impact on the client	LEFT	LEFT	LEFT	LEFT	--
Sub-dimension Data/Scaling	100 (Very High Ind.)	88 (Highly Hierarchical)	88 (High Need 4 Certainty)	88 (High Need Ach.)	--
ICF #8 **Creating Awareness** Ability to integrate and accurately evaluate multiple sources of	MIDDLE	RIGHT	MIDDLE	LEFT	--

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information, and to make interpretations that help the client to gain aware-ness and thereby achieve agreed-upon results					
Sub-dimension Data/Scaling	33 (Moderate Coll.)	21 (Moderate Participative)	56 (Need 4 Certainty)	50 (Achievement/QOL)	--
Subtotal/Number of Activations	273/4	190/6	169/3	277/6	144/3
Composite Score/Directionality	68 (Mod. Individualism)	32 (Moderate Participative)	56 (Need 4 Certainty)	46 (Bal./QOL)	48 (Present/ST)

Chapter 7: Overall Discussion, Future Research, Implications, and Conclusion

7.1 Overall discussion

7.1.1 Overarching Research Questions Revisited

Because the major general objective of this doctoral thesis (and the three studies which it encompasses) is to shed light −and therefore inspire, future research and rigorous practice into coaching and its effectiveness, this section comprises a general discussion of the investigation exposed, by linking the studies together in order to understand how the specific findings of each one contributed to our general exploration of coaching effectiveness on adult development processes from the diverse angles reached throughout. The studies offered were related to three overarching research questions:

1. *Which are the crucial components that might moderate coachee's value perception of an executive coaching process beyond their coaching agendas? (What)*

2. *Which is the impact of coaching under a specific theoretical framework and what might be the moderators of the coaching process outcomes? (How)*

3. *What are the key core coaching competencies and how might culture be embedded in the most widely-used set of coaching competencies? (Who)*

Coaching others for their intentional −and thus sustained, development is radically different than coaching others strictly for the organization's benefit. The latter is an instrumental perspective in approaching others. The distinction between more instrumental approaches and more psychosocial and developmental functions of a relationship have been quite extensively discussed (Kram, 1985; 1996), offering that psychosocial functions of helping relationships enhance an individual's sense of competence, identity, and effectiveness in their professional role. Our three studies are built upon an overall developmental umbrella −yet under distinctive

approaches or models, always seeking to inspire stronger performance by focusing on the coachee's strengths, aspirations, and meaningful personal development, as we contend all coaching processes should be raised on regardless of the theoretical and methodological approach used.

Theoretically, the overall results of this thesis connect to a growing literature that examines processes involved in positive emotion, cognitive openness, regulatory focus, inspiring visioning, self-awareness development and cross-cultural metacognition. However, the present investigation aims to make a novel contribution by explicitly focusing on the particular elements that build the socio-emotional (and thus, cultural) interaction between coach-coachee, which constitutes an essential aspect to all coaching types and methodologies and that we refer to as the *quality of the connection* evolved, exploring further as to be the most important factor when it comes to coaching effectiveness. We approach to it through a threefold perspective, as an attempt to be examined through different yet intrinsically dependent dimensions.

The first research question is connected to executive coaching effectiveness from the angle of its direct recipient: the *coachee* (in this case through a consistent sample of 197 Spanish bank branches executives). The results of this first study (Chapter 4) suggest that executive's value perception of a coaching process effectiveness under eclectic developmental approaches –all of them strength and visioning-based, orienting individuals to primarily focus on things they do well and inspire, is contingent on a set of at least four moderators that lies in both coach's and coachee's side. Those insights uncover a thought-provoking road to research beyond the mere coaching agendas sphere sharped by literature. Specifically, with regard to coachee's side, our analysis connect to the individual's *coachability*, or similarly, the executive's deep intent on wanting to change and develop as evidenced by two of the factors consistently emerged: *executive's self-awareness* deployment and *executive's adherence* to be coached and to reflect upon the overall process. Notwithstanding, that 'deep intent' may not be in the person's

consciousness or even within the scope of his or her self-awareness at the beginning of the process, and thus it will require bringing the executive into the coaching process alongside the presence of a high quality relational space, marked by *trust, transparency, presence* and coach's *availability* showed beyond the sessions happening (as the active ingredients combined on what has consistently been agreed upon coders to be referred as '*reliableness*').

Albeit this is a preliminary qualitative approach, four main contributions are consistently driven from our exploratory content analysis concerning the factors in which executive's perceptions of high coaching value might be contingent on:

(1) Coach's dimensions (i.e., *trust, transparency, presence, availability throughout the whole process –beyond mere sessions,* and *meaningful guidance*) and coachee's dimensions (i.e., *self-awareness* and *adherence* to the process) are key factors that seem to consistently work as strong moderators on *high value perception*;

(2) The level of connection generated between coach-coachee, yet primarily stimulated by the coach (evidenced on the '*reliableness*' construct), emerges as a consistent moderator on executives' consideration of their *process usefulness*;

(3) *Coachee's level of self-awareness* deployed throughout the process and their *willingness* and *commitment* to spend time and to reflect upon (i.e., what was encompassed under the construct of *adherence*) emerge also as of vital importance. Subsequently, these factors may: (a) shed light on what other coachee-dependent dimensions might influence executive perception of coaching value, and (b) provide a sharper view and understanding of the role of *motivation, coachability* and *reflectivity* on coachee.

(4) Consistent active ingredients to coaching value perception are likely to be common to all approaches when those are vision– and strength–based, as lie into transversal elements like the *quality of the connection perceived*, the *executive's*

'inside-outside context' as their *adherence to the process*, and the specific *coach characteristics* revealed.

From these study exploratory contributions, we are in a situation where we have consistent indicators for the importance of certain common factors in executive coaching value perception, in particular with regard to the coaching relationship as seen by the client. Further research should be focused on determining the accurate differences in the potential moderator value of each of these 'active ingredients' within a high quality relational space, in order to infer which might contribute most significantly to an overall great perception of value when *coaching process* and *outcome* assessed.

Going a step further and taping into the second study insights (Chapter 5), we rigorously explored and analyzed how and to which extend the relational energy deployed through the coaching interaction in terms of the '*emotional saliency*' shaped by the coach, perceived and co-constructed by the coachee –as another pervasive dimension of the coaching connection architecture, plays a fundamental role on the process effectiveness, as it has been shown to significantly moderate the impact of coaching processes on several variables of a consistent sample of 76 executive MBA coachee's emotional-cognitive processing (i.e., increased *vision comprehensiveness, clarity, awareness* and *strength,* higher *goal-directed energy* with regard to its *pathways thinking* dimension, and expanded *resilience*). Through these results, we reinforce the quality of the connection (i.e., *shared vision*, *shared compassion*, *overall positive mood)* being encompassed by the construct of emotional attunement (or saliency) as one of the strong active ingredients in (1) predicting impact of executive coaching, (2) concurrently playing a significant moderating role on creating the empowering space that allows executive's *coachability* to increase, (3) leveraging recipient's emotional energy which expands cognitive resources.

Considering the integrated, multilevel theoretical model of coaching used in Study 2, *Intentional Change Theory*, *ICT* (Boyatzis, 2008; Boyatzis, Smith, & Beverage,

2013) (Chapter 5), through this investigation we are besides empirically contributing to gain a solid base on coaching from a multifaceted complex umbrella (i.e., behavioral, cognitive-emotional, psycho-neurobiological, person-centered and systemic) offering support on the consideration of coaching as an integrative strength-based process to effectively approach adult development regardless specific methods. Indeed, a number of approaches to coaching are adopting this broad framework, including Fredrickson's flourishing (Fredrickson, 2009), Higgins' promotion versus prevention (Higgins, 1997), Deci & Ryan's self-determination theory (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Still, as it has been shown in Chapter 5, ICT distinguishes between coaching toward Positive Emotional Attractor (PEA) versus Negative Emotional Attractor (NEA) and albeit it overlaps with other theories on several points, it diverges in that it places a clear emphasis on psycho-physiological processes associated with parasympathetic (PNS) and sympathetic (SNS) autonomic responses through visioning (i.e., see Jack *et al.*, 2013; Passarelli, 2015). We have shown how and to what extent is the effect of the relational space created, when meaningful and emotionally salient for its recipient, and when highly composed of those attractors –working as both booster and moderator factors.

Finally, inspired by our concern on better understanding the coaching connection generated between coach-coachee, and the central role of the coach on being able to create a fostering coaching space and to lead those high quality engaging dialogs, the third study presented (Chapter 6), answers our third research question by tapping directly into the "who" dimension (coaches' characteristics and competencies). This article analyzed how culture biases might be embedded in the most widely-used set of coaching competencies (the ones proposed as core by the ICF's competency model), motivated by (1) our understanding of each human interaction as a cultural depiction that comprises blended social, cognitive and emotional elements, and (2) the realization of that coaching competency models do not usually present a clear research-based architecture. This study enabled us to investigate the cultural structure rooted in the ICF competency model, in particular

to evaluate its six core coaching competencies (*Trust and intimacy; Presence; Active Listening; Powerful Questioning; Direct Communication; Creating awareness*) building upon the multi-year systematic literature review done by Maltbia and colleagues (2014) by which 10 of the 11 ICF's competencies were critically reviewed and grounded.

7.1.2 Theoretical Contributions and Implications

Coaching denotes commitment to change, which consists of (at least) a compelling reason, commitment to taking responsibility, and readiness to change. Both Kegan (2000) and Maslow (1999) remind us that development, change and personal growth need energy and have powerful countervailing forces as they can bring feelings of inadequacy, fear and failure. Feeling safe minimizes protective behaviors like defensiveness, denial, resistance; individuals can thus be open, honest, and show their vulnerabilities. Conjointly from the two first studies insights (*Studies 1 & 2*, Chapters 4 & 5), we have been able to provide empirical evidence regarding the impact of coaching refocused toward vision, strength-based approaches from a twofold yet complementary perspective: *factors (moderators) in what perception of executives coaching value is contingent on*, and *effects of coaching on executive's emotional-cognitive processing (as well as its moderator factors)*. Accordingly, both studies, through different yet consistent samples, confirm a similar tenet – *which a high quality connection between coach and coachee plays a unique moderator role in both coaching outcome effectiveness and high value perception, regardless the specific technique used, when coaching vision, strength-based*. This denotes a step further on gaining consistency on high-quality, resonant relationships research, as the core from which desired, sustained change revolves.

Furthermore, from these two different approaches (qualitative *versus* quantitative), two central dimensions emerged concerning the coachee's side: *self-awareness* (i.e., deployed) and *self-efficacy* (i.e., as a trait), as crucial moderators in the perception of *high value* and the *process outcome*, respectively. It seems robust, as self-awareness is the core piece of any developmental process (Boyatzis et al., 2013; Goleman, 1998; Hall, 2004), and self-efficacy beliefs seem to establish the critical bases for implementation of behavioral changes (i.e., see Bandura, 1997, 2001; Smither & Relly, 2001; Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998).

Summing up, both studies provide specific support and advance research on previous related work on *coaching relationship, coaches' competencies* (Boyatzis, 2002; Guillesten & Palmer, 2007; Hall, Otazo, & Hollenbeck, 1999; Jones and Spooner, 2006; Kemp, 2008; Maltbia *et al.*, 2014; Stern, 2004; Wasylyshyn, 2003; Whitworth, Kimsey-House, & Sandahl, 2007) and *coachee's characteristics* (Baron & Morin, 2009; De Haan, 2008; De Haan, Duckworth, Birch & Jones, 2013; Stewart, Palmer, Wilkin, & Kerrin, 2008). Yet, an empirical further advance is reported on that a *high perception of value* and a *high perception of quality* are likely to be driven by specific elements which directly connect to the relational space, built by:

- The level of 'meaningful guidance' and 'reliableness' exposed by the coach;

- The level of 'coachability-reflectivity' primarily manifested by the client and further stimulated by the coach;

- The predominantly stimulation of 'positive emotional attractors' (PEA), ideal-self evocation, and the emotional attunement coach-coachee attained (as a subjective sense of being in synchrony one with another);

Additionally, a consistent bond is revealed among the competencies analyzed and some of the constructs emerged in the previous two studies with regard to the coaching connection, what might signal some kind of construct validity among the overall three studies.

When insights combined, we are a step closer to what are the specific ways to efficiently conduct coaching, and to the specific consequences on doing it.

Still, understanding the coaching relational space requires also incorporating concrete cultural dynamics, which involves a thoroughness analysis of sensitive cultural nuances. As a pioneering step on this direction, we aimed to provide a foundational cultural analysis for developing coach intercultural competence, as other crucial angle to be examined when exploring the quality of the relationship enabled by the coach.

As a result of this third approach, it has been provided an evidence-based detailed cultural composite profile of the 6 core coaching competencies mapped by the Hofstede's cultural orientations that might help coaches increase their self-awareness and cultural intelligence –as a first step to their metacognition deployment. From this study insights, we contend that increasing cultural sensitivity in any coaching competency model requires meeting rigorous psychometric properties of validity and reliability in its constitution –both contributing to conceptual clarity and utility (i.e., *credibility*), as a preliminary step on building coaching competency models upon a cultural sensitive research-based architecture. To our knowledge, this qualitative research constitutes an innovative approach on deconstructing such widely used coaching competency model, by being linked to intercultural metacognition enhancement.

Concretely, with regard to the complexity of coaching processes built across cultures (as any particular coaching dyad might be), we displayed that diverse cultural dimensions are activated when analyzing the selected 6 core coaching competencies proposed by ICF's in its worldwide used model for training coaches. Indeed, through a moderate to high inter-rater agreement among 3 independent coders, the analysis done reveals that the directionality of the 5 cultural orientations used (Hofstede's) shift depending on behavioral indicators associated with each competence, suggesting that the application of cultural competence in coaching is both dynamic and complex. Observing the cultural profiles composite linked to

each of the 6 core competencies analyzed, we have been able to exhibit that when coaches: co-creating the relationship through the enactment of the competencies of (1) *trust and intimacy* and (2) *coaching presence*; striving to communicate effectively through the enactment of competencies as (3) *active listening*, (4) *powerful questioning*, and (5) *direct communication*; and facilitating learning and results by endorsing the competence of (6) *creating awareness*, they are adhering to a specific cultural depiction of the competencies, and thus, we contend that (a) coaches should maintain an open and self-aware stance to their competencies deployment when adhering to the precise behavioral indicators defined by the model; (b) they should complete the *Culture in the Workplace Questionnaire* (CWQ) or related measures to increase awareness of their cultural programming and consider implications for applying ICF competencies to explicitly attend to cultural dynamics in their coaching engagements; (c) these competencies definition and indicators must be critically revisited by its creators in order to consider a more culturally sensitive architecture of its core structure; (d) and overall, coaching training curricula still need to address cross-cultural aspects intensively. This paper reached to establish preliminary robust ground for further research on understanding interplay between modes of cultural programming and coaching competencies.

Overall, the results of this thesis contribute to the literature on Executive Coaching Processes and Outcomes, as well as Executive Coaching Competencies. By an extension, it also contributes to Human Resources, Business Management, and Managerial and Educational Psychology in various ways. On the one hand, it advances on the better understanding of the key active ingredients of executive coaching relationships effectiveness, which involve not only the coach as the 'booster' of the process but also the coachee as the 'co-constructor' of it, and even most importantly, their 'co-built' space. By using the three justified angles, we have provided an appropriate inductive-deductive operationalization of executive coaching perceived value, coaching impact, and coaching competencies.

Largely, we contend that through the overall investigation we have not only contributed to shed light on the largest gap that is evident in the existing literature, which concerns to the coaching impact (*how;* Segers et all., 2011) mainly influenced by the coach professionalism (*who*), the coachee's characteristics (*what*) and the space created in-between them (*where all dimensions interplay*); we are also adding consistent value to the field by analyzing potential moderators that might concurrently affect those dimensions –through an emotional, cognitive, and cultural perspective, and which have still been scarcely considered in the literature.

Table 7-1 presents a visual overview of the main research questions and main theoretical, empirical and practical contributions obtained through each of the studies that this doctoral thesis comprises. We consider that these are relevant findings that may indeed guide an empirical evidence-based development of the profession as well as the choices that are made in the definition of competency models, as in the recruitment, development, deployment, and matching of executive coaches. In our view, this means we need to define and model –from empirical investigation encompassing cognitive-emotion research and cross-cultural perspectives, the coaching relationship alongside coaching approaches, skills, and techniques, as has been done so extensively up to now.

Study	Main research question	Main theoretical and empirical contributions	Main practical contributions
Study 1 – *An Integrative Framework on Executive Coaching Perceived Value from the Coachee's Side* - **The What** -	What are the crucial factors that might be moderating executive's value perception of an executive coaching process? To what extend those moderators might depend on coach's or coachee's side?	This study revisits the paucity of studies on executives' perception of coaching value and provides an empirical evidence based model-framework of constructs which work as moderators when the overall value of a coaching process is assessed by its direct recipients –*Bank Branches Executives*, regardless of the coaching approached used by the coaches (all vision, strength-based). Coaching value perception is contingent on a set of at least 4 moderators which not only lies in the coach's but also in the coachee's characteristics. By providing this model we contribute to determining predictive value of the active ingredients on coaching effectiveness and help to better understand and shape how to foster coachee's adherence to the process.	The identification of those 4 moderator factors connect to pioneering insights with regard to the space created by the coach as well as the coachee's readiness to be coached, as leveraging possibilities on the coachee must be coupled with nuanced coaching wisdom and abilities such as knowing when and what change a client is ready for (*coach's meaningful guidance*), plus the responsibility deployed through the process by coachee (*self-awareness of strengths and limitations* and *adherence to reflect within and among sessions*). As part of the first construct moderator (*reliableness*) four main dimensions emerged as boosters of the coaching relationship from the perspective of the coaching recipient: *trust, transparency, presence,* and *availability,* primarily enabled by the coach.
Study 2 – *Understanding Cognitive-Emotional Processing through a Coaching Process: the Influence of Coaching on Vision, Goal-directed Energy and Resilience* - **The How** -	To what extend an ICT-based coaching process might affect coachee's cognitive and motivational resources? Are there moderators on the ICT-based coaching impact?	This study enriches the evidence-based theorizing on coaching process and outcomes with a focus on a specific theoretical developmental umbrella, Intentional Change Theory-Coaching based. Insights on coaching impact regarding coachee's emotional-cognitive processing and key moderators on the process are rigorously analyzed. We contribute to theorizing on high quality coaching relationships creation through the exploration of significant factors (*shared vision, shared compassion, overall positive mood*) by which those are shaped. Also, the growth-oriented role that the quality of the connection (perceived as *emotionally salient* by the coachee) plays in preparing individuals emotionally and cognitively for development and change is specifically explored.	The evidence reported through this study helps enlighten how coaches should frame coaching processes by shaping spaces and conversations which increase cognitive and motivational resources in the coachee. While helping coaches understand and manage the embodied coaching experience through the primarily stimulation of *positive emotional attractors* and *ideal-self* evocation, this research contributes to inform of best practices to be incorporated in coaches training with regard to coaching engagement, where a meaningful salient space through emotional attunement emerges as both booster and moderator.

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Study 3 – ***Coaching for Cultural Sensitivity: Content Analysis applying Hofstede's Framework to a Select Set of the International Coach Federation (ICF) Core Competencies*** - ***The Who -***	Which is the level of cultural sensitivity embedded in ICF's competency model? How could be improved the cultural sensitivity of both competencies definition/indicators, and practice?	This study identifies certain degree of cultural bias embedded in the 6 core coaching competencies encompassed by the most widely-used coaching competency model (ICF's). The identification done and the formulation of subsequent implications connect to a double theoretical need: (1) To build conceptual clarity in both competencies definition and indicators with regard to cultural competence in coaches education, training, and credentialing; and (2) to open up an evidence based inquiry road on coaching competency modeling built on a research-based competencies architecture.	The critical content analysis done through this study provides an evidence-based detailed cultural composite profile of the 6 core coaching competencies. By doing so, we help to acknowledge cultural biases in the model construction, while also facilitating to increase conceptual clarity regarding cultural coaching competence as a first step on building self-aware executive coaches who might need to operate across cultural boundaries -a key requirement in current global educational and workspaces. This study also constitutes a preliminary step on developing metacognition on cultural intelligence.

Table 7-1 *Synopsis of the Three Empirical Studies and Results*

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7.1.3 Limitations

Though the key above-mentioned findings and contributions presented through this mixed-method investigation seem fairly robust, our study is still bounded by some limitations and restrictions that, in turn, indicate potential fruitful avenues for research. There will not be re-listed those limitations already discussed separately in each study, but will be instead briefly examined the most significant ones throughout the whole investigation developed. Most of those already sharped limitations indeed might affect the majority of coaching research studies, since the fact remains that, in this emerging profession of executive coaching, researchers have not been yet able to achieve the "gold standard" of for instance therapy outcome research, namely, randomized controlled trials with qualified professionals and independent outcome criteria (e.g., see Wampold, 2001).

We realize that with regard to the executive perception on the coaching value (*Study 1*, Chapter 4) we could only undertake a qualitative exploration of this relatively uncharted territory, so our answers will have to be preliminary and tentative. We do believe, however, that this is important ground for broader research programs. After all, the whole coaching journey is undertaken for the benefit of the recipient (and it subsequently benefits to the organization in which he/she develops), so it is certainly worthwhile to understand their perspectives as deeply as possible. Yet, we know that outlook is completely different depending on whether we are in the client's or the coach's position, that is, whether we are the learner or the facilitator of learning. Thus, diving into the coachee perspective as direct recipient of the process, we tried to meticulously attain an *inter-coder reliability* as to the extent to which two coders independently classified the interviews material in the same way as peer researchers. This has been indeed introduced as a measure for improving the approach's reliability (Cavanagh, 1997).

Association measures could be additionally used in a further study. Those could help to replicate and enhance the constructs discussed. Still, from a more theoretical perspective, this methodological approach was able to explore the importance of the client perception regarding the dynamics of the co-created relationship with the coach, and the importance of the commitment to what could be referred as to *reflexivity* in coaching (e.g., the ability to experience and reflect on one's own inner world at points of heightened emotion or significance). A further exploration through a narrative investigation on the client's critical moments of reflection would be furthermore from this point recommended.

With regard to the quantitative research presented (*Study 2*, Chapter 5), despite the benefits of the design used (pattern matching *nonequivalent dependent variables design* –NEDV) we have not been able to suggest objective criteria for outcome, such as the assessment by independent outsiders on a well-validated instrument, so that we have run the risk of "common-methods" or "same-source" bias on some of our variables, as well as those linked to the use of self-report measures. Ely, Boyce, Zaccaro, Hernez-Broome, and Whyman (2010), in their overview study of coaching outcome research designs, also warn about common-methods bias. From this point, we would suggest a further study which includes a control group (albeit we indeed devised two specific strategies to satisfy the desired counterfactual role), a particular exploration of the coaching dyads formed –including factors like age, genre and culture of both coach-coachee, as well as a longitudinal perspective which includes alternative measurement instruments such as expert evaluations, coding of learning plans and post-facto critical incident interviews.

Finally, the cultural profiles examination addressed on the ICF's core coaching competencies (*Study 3*, Chapter 6) could be further replicated and corroborated using other comprehensive cultural models like Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner's value orientations (1997), Schwartz's hierarchy value types (1992, 1994) – among others, also by conducting additional studies with global samples of matched-coach-client-pairs to better understand interplay modes of cultural

programming and coaching competencies, as an extension of our preliminary findings. Still, the critical content analysis developed was conducted in four thorough rounds using three independent coders who analyzed both the definitional and the operationalized level at each of the competencies through its sub-competency behavioral indicators. The fact that inter-rater agreement ranged from moderate (or 66% agreement) to high (100% agreement) for all the cells included in the competencies coding matrix (as seen in *Appendices A, B, C*; pages 183-191) complies a strong point with regard to the reliability of the conclusions and implications hereby drawn.

Finally, as an extension of the overall investigation and taking into account its revisited limitations, it would be imperative a further exploration from both narratives analysis and experimental approaches on the core nature of the coaching relationship, by examining additional key active ingredients (moderators) which might contribute to the creation of a safe, intimate and trusting connection, which requires, according to our research, not only a sense of attunement with client, but also with own self (i.e., interpersonal metacognition), and that joins directly to emotional, social, and cultural intelligence spheres.

7.2 Practical Implications

Clearly, there are various practical implications driven from this thesis. We contend that at least four main streams need to be revisited and integrated in the practice of executive coaching, considering the intricacy interplay of the spheres which has been explored throughout the present investigation:

1. **Implementing specific key backbones from positive psychology**

Executives develop in the direction of their dreams, not in the direction of their deficits, yet many coaching interactions intended to promote a leader's

development fail to leverage the benefits of the individual's personal vision. Coaching engagements and developmental conversations are often approached as a logical, linear progression through steps to identify a performance problem and address it. But human development is not linear; it is dynamic. And it is not logical; it is emotional. Thus, despite good intentions, many efforts to help actually hinder and leave a client feeling stuck, unmotivated, or helpless. Our findings support a pioneering research road on positive coaching approaches to helping others to learn or change by incorporating critical elements from the interplay coach-coachee. Indeed, the clearest overall message emanating from this research is that the coaching relationship has the most powerful link to coaching outcome (executive's change and development) and value perception. Since development unfolds over the course of a leader's career, often requiring months or even years to master various leadership capabilities, coaches must attend to clients' emotions in order to optimize their openness to and motivation for change, given that meaningful emotional commitment is required to sustain client's strivings over an extended period of time. Hence, by focusing on key dimensions of the coaching relational foundation, we have provided evidence on how specifically positive psychology can offer coaching delimited scope of practice with interactions that indeed work, overall providing detailed, consistent factors on the coaching process construction as to be a high quality connection space.

2.   Streamlining inspiring and engaging coaching conversations

We contend that more significant than the specific coaching model or philosophy used, it is the quality of the space created through ubiquitous –*common*– factors that stimulate coachee's level of 'coachability' and 'reflectivity' as well as the emotional engagement with his/her developmental process. A high quality conversation guides to a high quality connection; it is flexible, strong, and resilient, allowing the transfer of vital nutrients. Individuals involved are likely to feel positive arousal, a heightened sense of positive energy, confident regard, mutuality and safety. The factors and linked moderators analyzed through our studies might

be enacted in every particular coaching conversation and will enlighten coaches on shaping inspiring dialogue that involve and foster meaningful lifelong growth and change. At a physiological level, that bond could be envisioned as a form of unconscious resonance of neural engrams between two people, coach-executive.

3.   Developing self-awareness and cultural metacognition as coaches

From a cultural sensitive perspective, we have shown the need to not only look at coaches' underlying cultural values and orientations that predispose them to particular learning styles and subsequent diverse ways on framing coaching spaces and conversations, but also the need to look at subtle cultural nuances that might be embedded in coaching competency models they adhere to. This joins to the development of self-aware cultural intelligence capabilities as a need to function and manage effectively in culturally diverse settings –as executive coaches constantly do. In order to develop intercultural competency when coaching, changes at the cognitive, affective, and behavioral levels must be consciously experienced. We know that this requires cultural courage, since doing so activates '*cultural guards*', who have created, and/or benefit from, existing competency model and credentialing systems. Thus, our piece of research should be also considered and incorporated when designing coaching competency models architecture in order to assure that coaching practices are deployed as an individualized and significant enriching process. For doing that, the inherent emotional-cognitive-cultural processing loop evolved through this particular human interaction must be reconsidered and critically integrated.

4.   Offering innovative coaching practices to be integrated in managerial education programs

As an overall output of the investigation conducted as part of the project of the Spanish Ministry of Science and Education (MICINN), the studies presented in this doctoral thesis also contribute to its global umbrella related to the development of social and emotional intelligence in adult education as part of a lifelong learning

journey. We have seen that executive coaching plays a unique role in developmental processes as part of our *Leadership Assessment and Development Course* (LEAD), which includes executive coaching as a cornerstone. Several studies have confirmed that emotional and social competencies are developed as a byproduct of the program and the coaching processes which it comprises (Batista-Foguet, Boyatzis, Emmerling, Serlavós, & Canboy, 2013; Batista-Foguet, Boyatzis, Guillén Ramo, & Serlavós, 2008; Bonesso, Gerli, & Pizzi, 2015; Boyatzis, Batista-Foguet, Fernández-i-Marín, Truninger, 2015; Mosteo, Batista-Foguet, Mckeever, & Serlavos, 2015). Our research contributes to educational literature – specifically to higher education and management development – by providing pioneering insights on the effective combination of learning methods that can be adopted into programs that transfer technical knowledge and skills to promote behavioral competencies, as demonstrated through the implementation of executive coaching as a whole-person developmental approach.

7.3 Avenues for Future Research

Albeit significant growth in both research and practice, as it has been illustrated executive coaching investigation is certainly in an embryonic stage; it requires further rigorous studies approached from different angles, in order to be better understood and practiced in our evolving global village.

The three research studies presented on this thesis help to provide insight into the complex and multidimensional processes of boosting adult development from three differentiate yet connected coaching key dimensions (i.e., perception of coaching value; coaching impact, outcomes and moderators; and core coaching competencies from a cultural standpoint). Through our overall investigation, we have observed that as coaching is a process that develops over time –an interaction between parties who continuously influence each other as time progresses, this process clearly

requires research designs that will capture data at several points in time (i.e., before, during and at different points after the coaching process occurs). Ideally, sustainability of coaching outcomes should be assessed at later intervals such as 3 or 6 months, 1 year, and 2 years. At the later intervals there is also an opportunity to capture and assess additional impacts. We consider that when measuring the impact of coaching on specific processes (cognitive, emotional; among others), research would be benefited by assessing not only baseline measures of performance and competencies before the coaching process begins, but also expectations, credentials, background information and curricula of both coaches and coachees, as well as – when possible – a wider range of organizational context characteristics that may influence the impact of coaching. Indeed, data collected at multiple intervals would let assess progress in the development of coachees within the diverse stages of coaching processes in order to be able to track evolving relationships with coaches and other stakeholders over time (and that would help to assess the real impact of coaching against the baseline measures).

From our perspective, designs should be also adopted that enable data to be collected from multiple sources and not only being appraised using self-report measures. For instance, the use of 360 degree feedback, which requests evaluations from multiple stakeholders, would be strongly recommended not only to contrast perceptions but to confirm patterns of actual change in the individual and in the potential changes in the interaction between coachees and their colleagues, and as a consequence in the organization.

Besides, and moved by our deep interest in the exploration of core elements on the relationship foundation, we contend that rather than putting so much energy into delineating the conceptual distinctions of coaching and other types of developmental relationships, it might result further critical to focus on the constellations and patterns of coaching behaviors co-occur and which are typically more helpful and stimulating to clients. Given that executive coaches and coaching clients perform very different roles during the coaching –clients concentrate on

themselves and their issues or queries, and coaches are focused on the other and on being helpful with those issues and queries– more research into the experience of critical moments of coaching conversations is needed, both with coaches and with clients, and even most urgently by bringing together clients and their coaches in the same paradigm (e.g., a deep exploration of dyads).

Hence, we agree on that collecting multi-time, multi-source, multi-level data (Ely *et al.*, 2010) would be of great benefit for the scientific advance of this field, but obviously that requires close collaboration between researchers and organizations in order to being able to develop more meta-analysis, large-scale, and multi-site studies. Certainly, interdisciplinary, multimember research teams would be one possible answer to this challenge, and collaborative international research would indeed enrich and help to identify cross-cultural differences in the definition of coaching, coaching styles and desired outcomes.

For us, there is a concept that begins to urge to be explored in detail – connected to our third study (Chapter 3), which is meta-cognition research on cultural intelligence (Thomas, 2008; Thomas *et al.*, 2008). It suggests promising developments for coaching research, particularly for defining culturally sensitive competencies and measures for shaping meaningful conversations beyond cultural nuances. With this regard, verbal protocols may be one of the only ways of capturing reasoning and meta-cognition in coaches. Additionally, analysis of cross-cultural coach/coachee pairs versus matched cultural pairs, as well as matched gender coach/coachee pairs versus cross gender pairs could provide insights on this regard.

Likewise, considering that coaches practicing today cannot yet use theoretically coherent approaches and scientifically validated techniques and measures, we posit that further research on the '*de-construction*' and (the critical) '*reconstruction*' of coaching competency modeling architecture is required. This thesis makes a humble contribution to research toward this direction, though it should be noticed that we also include a considerable number of suggestions for follow-up or

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continuous research which shows that the lifelong learning processing is also valid for both researchers and executive coaches.

Another of the major challenges of executive coaching research that we have come across with is controlling for the numerous factors that can influence the process, and hence, it emerges a need for laboratory research employing experimental designs to study the effect of different coaching styles, coaching competencies and interaction patterns by examining and measuring individual and aggregate data, likely to eventually determine that diverse interventions, approaches, models and protocols do not appear to make any significant difference in effectiveness, and that the only aspects that accurately dominate the overall effect are 'common' to all approaches, as ubiquitous elements like *context* (what happens outside the coaching relationship), *emotional processing* attained through the connection (quality of the relationship regardless of the model) or coaches *emotional and social intelligence* (like empathy, understanding, respect, warmth, authenticity, among others) and *cultural metacognition* (awareness of their own and others' cultural assumptions).

These types of investigation become even more relevant when the notion of workplace, often thought of as a place where the power of reason and logic reign supreme, has begun to be challenged. Changes brought on by globalization, technology, changing organizational structures, and demographic shifts have made modern organizations increasingly complex and interconnected. Indeed, workplace is being progressively perceived as a dynamic environment in which the forces of culture, reason, and emotion weave a complex tapestry. We consistently agree on that, as the business world becomes more interconnected, emotional and social intelligence will likely play an important role as people from diverse backgrounds and cultures collaborate to reach business goals (Batista *et al.*, 2008; Emmerling, 2008; Sy & Coté, 2003). Thus, besides individual and team outcomes, it would be also significant to identify the contribution of executive coaching as a systemic approach on the overall business culture.

A recent study conducted by the Boston Consulting Group in collaboration with the European Association of Personnel Management (EAPM) surveyed 1355 executives from 27 countries in Europe. This study identified the current trends in human resource management as consisting of: *managing talent, managing demographics, becoming a lifelong learning organization, managing work–life balance, and managing change* and *cultural transformation*. Coaching is expected to play a key role within these trends by offering distinct advantages to both the individual and the organization, since it becomes (1) an important tool for diagnosing and developing competencies, and for developing individual learning and change; (2) a key leadership style for managers to practice context adapted leadership; (3) a means of supporting and retaining the increasingly scarce numbers of high-performing expert managers by guiding them through tough decisions, helping them to maintain healthy and efficient work patterns as well as assisting them to deal with increasingly demanding clients and employees; (4) crucial in assisting in the customization of human resource management to engage talented employees, by monitoring individual employee work-life solutions; (5) and a new way of support and vocational guidance throughout life over innovative managerial education programs.

Hence, as it has been referred by different scholars (i.e., Poelmans & Stepanova, 2008), coaching represents a new paradigm in management based on individualization, maximization, learning and support whose prevalence is expected to increase significantly over the coming years in order to meet the increasing demand for employee lifelong learning and development. In order to make sense of this rapidly expanding phenomenon, we contend that it will be indispensable to look to complementary theoretical perspectives and intricately intertwined concepts to provide a solid foundation for coaching research, leadership advance, and innovative teaching

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7.4 Concluding Thoughts

Helping is a fundamental human activity that exists in different forms across all human cultures (Egan, 2009). '*Executive coaching*' has emerged as a new type of formalized helping relationship in which skilled professionals assist clients in making desired life changes. We contend that a slight, but important modification in the way we coach can yield dramatically improved results. Hence, we ask: are we certainly able to boost adult development through evidence based practices of executive coaching? How can we guarantee that executive coaching conversations are being deployed in research-based, yet meaningful context-adapted ways? What solid factors in the relationship coach – coachee have the strongest positive effect on learning and development in the coaching process? Then, how should we train international executive coaches to develop their professionalism in building high quality connections in global business? In what specific ways must be integrated the manifested elements that executives perceive as valuable, in order to make coaching processes meaningful to its direct recipients –the executives, and thus the organization in which those enact their roles? Still, by what means can we best make our adult development programs, pedagogic efforts, and learning environments responsive and stimulant to multiple cultures by including a coaching based culture, and how does an up-and-coming coaching culture look like. As coaches, we need to recognize, respect, and act toward clients who are different in core values. Thus, in what manner can we design a coaching culture that is impactful, sustainable and aligned with its individuals' lifelong learning goals? Further thought-provoking questions could be still raised. Indeed, we have many more.

Our intellectual integrity rests on our willingness to put our methods, practices, and theories to a test. Do they work? In this sense, research should focus on what produces effective coaching, not merely normative or descriptive approaches to what some do. Indeed, coaching is still a practice in search of a backbone, two backbones actually: a scientific, evidence-based backbone and a theoretical

backbone. Yet, the effort of the investigation developed through this thesis studies taps into those directions, responding to strong calls to explore how the '*magic*' of coaching works, what coaches actually do and could do better, and how their recipients perceive processes and indeed respond.

We have learnt that meaningful change and adult development appears to require a deep, holistic approach to coaching others. Hence, aware of how both global business environments and the internationalization of education have positioned management education as a comprehensive scene, this project, from its different angles, specifically reinforces the idea of lifelong learning practices through encouraging high quality relationships as those specific deployed through coaching. On the one hand, our work is expected to add critical value to academic and coach preparation programs, credentialing associations and practitioners, as well as international managerial education applying coaching to innovative programs. On the other hand, by thoroughly looking at the coaching relationship piece from a composite of diverse angles –as suggested by the *coaching cube*, we expect to provide provocative yet robust insights into the extensive human resources arena, organizational development, executive coaches and executives concerned with maximizing their own potential as leaders of organizations, those intrinsically interested in others' development. Last but not least, this investigation will result stimulating to faculty who teach leadership courses and academics doing research on interconnected arenas; MBA and graduate students in the fields of OB, HR, OD, and entrepreneurship will also find insights to build and reflect upon.

Indeed, for us, one strong sign of maturation in the field will be the development and adoption of common educational standards and competencies in university level education for coaching. Our contention is that important yet rigorous insights might have been distilled from our work in this direction. Our hope is that these contributions will be stimulating in prompting new coaching studies among researchers and graduate students, either by direct adoption or by inspiring new research ideas. Our belief is that solid research is the key to advancing coaching as

an evidence-based discipline, which can pave the way toward a future as a powerful force for positive individual and organizational change.

As a final point, the completion of this doctoral thesis is also a piece of a personal lifelong learning journey: learning about the common challenges in conducting research, especially in a field which is still in its infancy in many aspects; the critical reflections on the conceptualization and operationalization of constructs, those deductively integrated and inductively emerged; the decisions with regard to the quantitative and/or qualitative methods that could be best chosen concerning the particular objectives of each study; those measurement instruments selected and the critical ineludible look at its previous processes of validation, as well as their potential impact on the quality of each research study depicted, and the validity and reliability of the conclusions raised. But also, the practice of common sense and the remarkable, inspiring conversations with supervisors and colleagues.

All in all, this is a journey which has only started.

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