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The *ICPR* is an international publication with a focus on the theory, practice and research in the field of coaching psychology. Submission of academic articles, systematic reviews and other research reports which support evidence-based practice are welcomed. The *ICPR* may also publish conference reports and papers given at the British Psychological Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology (BPS SGCP) and Australian Psychological Society Interest Group in Coaching Psychology (APS IGCP) conferences, notices and items of news relevant to the International Coaching Psychology Community.

Case studies and book reviews will be considered. The *ICPR* is published by the BPS SGCP in association with the APS IGCP.

1. Circulation

The circulation of the *ICPR* is worldwide. It is available in hardcopy and PDF format. Papers are invited and encouraged from authors throughout the world. It is available free in paper and PDF format to members of the BPS SGCP, and free in PDF format to APS IGCP members as a part of their annual membership.

2. Length

Papers should normally be no more than 6000 words, although the Co-Editors retain discretion to publish papers beyond this length in cases where the clear and concise expression of the scientific content requires greater length.

3. Peer review

This publication operates a policy of anonymous peer review. Papers will initially be desk reviewed by the editorial team, to confirm they meet the scope and focus of the journal. At the sole discretion of the editor/s the paper will be sent to two independent reviewers, with the aim of a review within 21 days. The reviewers will not be aware of the identity of the review and any markings, references, etc., will be removed from the paper to ensure the anonymity of the author/s. Authors are asked to remove any information about the authors, including self-citations, acknowledgements, affiliations, etc., to ensure a blind review. These can be added following the review if the paper is accepted.

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The British Psychological Society
Special Group in Coaching Psychology



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Editorial

Jonathan Passmore

WHAT'S UNUSUAL about this issue is that due to Covid-19 we have needed to publish *ICPR* as a digital only issue. We had been discussing over the past year a move to transforming *ICPR* into a digital only publication, reflecting the changing nature of publishing, but also as a means to reduce the impact of print and distribution on the environment. With changes to the BPS shop and other changes to improve the accessibility of *ICPR* planned for 2021, we will retain this digital only format going forward.

Over the past year we have been gradually extending the BPS Special Group in Coaching Psychology partnerships, from Australia, to New Zealand, South Africa and a growing number of EU countries. Our efforts have made *ICPR* the widest read coaching peer review journal. We have plans to continue to grow *ICPR*'s reach and impact. To reflect these plans the BPS Special Group in Coaching Psychology, who fund the journal, have been reviewing the structure of the editorial structure to move towards a more international model.

A third change to note is the work being undertaken in the UK towards establishing coaching psychology as a separate division within the British Psychological Society. This was the initial vision when the Coaching Psychology Network was formed in 2003, which later became the SGCP. This journey has taken nearly 20 years, but significant progress over the past 24 months has transformed this hope into a roadmap towards chartership for coaching psychologists.

As mentioned in our last issue, a book of collected papers from *ICPR* will be published shortly entitled: *Coaching Researched*. This publication celebrates 15 years of the journal and its contribution towards placing research

and evidence-based practice at the heart of coaching. The royalties from the book will go to the BPS.

This brings us nicely to the current issue. We launched a call for papers in 2018 inviting researchers and practitioners to undertake systematic literature reviews (SLR), but in this case drawing from a wider pool than simply English language journals, recognising that both French, German and Spanish speaking academics have made significant contributions to research. We hope these papers bring together this work, making previously unread papers accessible to an English speaking audience.

In this Special Issue I am delighted to present five papers from an international field of highly respected coaching academics covering many of the core themes in coaching practice, supervision and team coaching. While for our normal issues we ask authors to limit their papers to 6000 words, in this issue we have provided authors more space to provide a comprehensive coverage of their areas.

The first paper by Camillo Pandolfi examines the literature on active ingredients within the coaching process. A topic which so far has been under-researched in coaching but draws on a wide literature in therapy. The second paper focuses on coaching supervision from an international team of Tatiana Bachkirova, Peter Jackson, Carsten Hennig and Michel Moral: 'Supervision in coaching: Systematic literature review'. The third paper focuses on an emerging topic; team coaching from Allison Traylor, Elliot Stahr and Eduardo Salas from Rice University, US. The fourth paper, 'Of SMART, GROW and goals gone wild – A systemic literature review on the relevance of goal activities in workplace

coaching' from a Germany team at University of Kassel, Alessa Muller and Silja Kotte. The final paper is from another German team, Carolin Graßmann and Carsten C. Schermuly 'Understanding what drives the coaching working alliance: A systematic literature review and meta-analytic examination'. The final two sections of this edition include the Chairs Reports and a series of book reviews of SLR titles.

We hope this issue will encourage more in-depth literature reviews as part of submissions for *ICPR*, but more widely encourage a more systemic process for other literature reviews within coaching.

Finally, as editor, I am keen to open up *ICPR* to all. If you are undertaking research into coaching, we would be interested in receiving a 5000 to 6000 word paper from you, sharing your research. Or if you are a practitioner, you can still contribute. You may for example like to submit a 500 to 600 word book review of a recently published book.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

Professor Jonathan Passmore

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Business School, University of Reading

Active ingredients in executive coaching: A systematic literature review

Camillo Pandolfi

This critical review has examined the evidence of active ingredients (antecedents, mediators and moderators) through which outcomes are produced in executive coaching (EC) engagements. Most literature suggests EC interventions are generally effective (e.g. Grover & Furnham, 2016). However, there is a paucity of rigorous research investigating how EC works (Bickerich et al., 2018). Various authors have called for research to fill this gap and to further EC as evidence-based practice (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). A systematic search was conducted to identify recent meta-analyses, reviews and articles through five databases, selecting peer-reviewed articles published globally between 2009 and June 2019. A stepwise analysis identified 46 active ingredients cited in 28 included articles. Evidence of EC active ingredients is still in its infancy and focused on coachees's and coaches' characteristics, and coaching relationship (respectively 32 per cent, 25 per cent and 20 per cent of citations). This confirms the key role of individual characteristics and importance of building a solid alliance. On the flipside, the coaching process (17 per cent citations) and contextual elements (seven per cent) remain largely unexplored areas. This review also shed some light on neglected aspects like the need for coaches to be competent in dealing effectively and ethically with all the stakeholders in the triangular EC relationship. Methodological limitations and research-gaps are discussed, and recommendations are made for research and practice.

Keywords: executive coaching; active ingredients; systematic literature review; coaching impact; coaching relationship; antecedents; mediators; moderators; leadership coaching.

EXECUTIVE COACHING (EC), as a one-to-one intervention in which an external professional coach supports an executive attaining specific developmental goals in an organisational context, emerged as a distinct consultative practice in the 1990s. By the early 2000s, EC had become one of the most commonly employed leadership development practices in workplaces (Burt & Talati, 2017). Whilst EC practice developed at pace, empirical research has only taken off in recent years (Grover & Furnham, 2016), with the publication of more rigorous studies, reviews and meta-analyses which showed high variability of results, as EC is an intervention tailored to coachees' and clients' objectives and circumstances. Moreover, most included studies are published Western countries, and there is insufficient harmonisation in measurement methods and a lack of repli-

cations. Overall, this literature supports the efficacy of EC with low to moderate effect sizes on various outcomes, including individual performance, skills, wellbeing, attitudes, self-efficacy, goal-attainment, engagement of supervised team, and others (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Burt & Talati, 2017). However, if it is safe to claim 'EC works' according to at least five recent meta-analyses including one of RCTs, to date, there is a paucity of rigorous research investigating the active ingredients and mechanisms, that is how it works (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018).

What is executive coaching

In the published literature, researchers have adopted various definitions of EC (Passmore & Lai, 2019; Grant, 2012). Here, EC is defined as 'a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial

authority and responsibility in an organisation and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioural 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 organisation within a formally defined coaching agreement' (Kilburg, 2000; cited in Passmore & Lai, 2019). It is important to remark that EC is a one-to-one intervention in which an external professional coach supports an executive attaining specific developmental goals, in an organisational context. In EC, there are three key stakeholders forming a triangular relationship: the executive (coachee), the coach, and the organisational stakeholders (e.g. line manager, HR, others). Typically, the EC is paid by the organisation and the coaching goals must link back to the organisational objectives (Ennis & Otto, 2015). This definition excludes manager/supervisor as coach, peer-coaching and team-coaching, as these relationships are qualitatively different from EC. Whilst the boundaries between coaching and other one-to-one interventions are blurred, in this article, as in most literature, coaching is conceptualised as distinct from counselling and psychotherapy, mentoring, training, and business consultancy.

Research question

What are the active ingredients (antecedents, mediators and moderators) through which change happens and outcomes are produced in EC engagements?

Relevance for practice

EC is a commonly used development practice that requires a significant investment: an executive coach costs on average \$398 per hour, added to the cost of highly paid executives' time (Sherpa coaching, 2019; Sonesh et al., 2015a). Therefore, an improved understanding of how EC works is crucial to tailor specific interventions and ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency. Understanding EC mechanisms and

processes would have numerous benefits: organisations could better select and match coaches and coachees; coaches could adapt their approach to specific circumstances and individuals, gaining more credibility through rigorous and evidence-based practice; coaching organisations could improve coaches' training and certifications (Grover & Furnham, 2016).

Relevance for research

This question addresses a gap in research, as various authors have highlighted the need to develop an understanding of antecedents, mechanisms and process factors that influence the outcomes (Bickerich et al., 2018; Grover & Furnham, 2016). Taken all together, reviews and meta-analyses suggest EC interventions are generally effective (Grover & Furnham, 2016). Therefore, research has shifted its attention towards how EC works, with a recent stream of systematic reviews including a broad base of qualitative and quantitative evidence. However, these reviews converge to the conclusion that research investigating active ingredients, moderators and mediators remains scant. For instance, a recent review listed 25 research gaps in this space (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018).

Literature search

In this critical review, a pragmatist worldview has been adopted, with a focus on what works in the real world, and how. A systematic search was conducted to identify recent meta-analyses, literature reviews and examples of studies to ground the investigation on consolidated academic knowledge.

1. The terms '(leadership or executive or work-place or workplace) and coaching' were searched through four databases (Business source complete, academic search complete, psycArticles, and psycINFO) selecting peer-reviewed articles published between 2009 and June 2019, tagged as 'meta-analysis', 'systematic review' or 'literature review'. This search yielded 18 records which were screened

- by reading the abstracts, retaining five articles (e.g. Grover & Furnham, 2016) and excluding 13 articles not addressing EC as defined here (e.g. team coaching).
2. Additional searches on Google Scholar were conducted with the terms ‘(executive coaching) and (systematic review)’ and ‘(executive coaching) and (meta-analysis)’ considering only the results returned in the first five pages. 15 additional articles were included (e.g. Bozer & Jones, 2018) and 85 were excluded (not matching the EC definition, not literature reviews, duplicates).
 3. A search of recent EC handbooks was conducted in Google Scholar to identify main theoretical accounts and additional references. Two literature review chapters were included: *The APA organizational psychology handbook*, included for its reference to theoretical frameworks (Peterson, 2010), and the most recent handbook (English et al., 2019), for an updated review.
 4. Six additional studies were included from citations of reviewed articles, including two published before 2009 added as exceptions, for their frameworks and research agendas, one review and three articles representatives of studies included in reviews.

Overall, 28 articles were included: 18 qualitative reviews, two qualitative studies, four quantitative studies, and four mixed-methods.

Method

Based on the analytical matrix, 240 (duplicated) citations of independent variables (IVs) were identified and 49 from moderator/mediator analyses (Table 1).

Results

Based on the analytical matrix, coachee’s variables were most frequently cited, followed by coach’s, and coach–coachee relationship. Process variables, organisational variables, and methodological effects were cited by fewer studies, suggesting these might be areas of research gaps (Table 2).

Coachee’s characteristics and behaviours

Motivation

The concept of motivation can be defined as a set of ‘psychological processes that cause the arousal, direction and persistence of behaviour’ (Ilgen & Klein, 1988; cited in Meyer et al., 2004). Motivation for coaching is the most frequently cited coachee’s factor: 10 studies reported it as an important factor generally influencing coaching outcomes, and four studies found it to be a significant moderator, with a moderate quality of evidence

Prisma – Literature search.

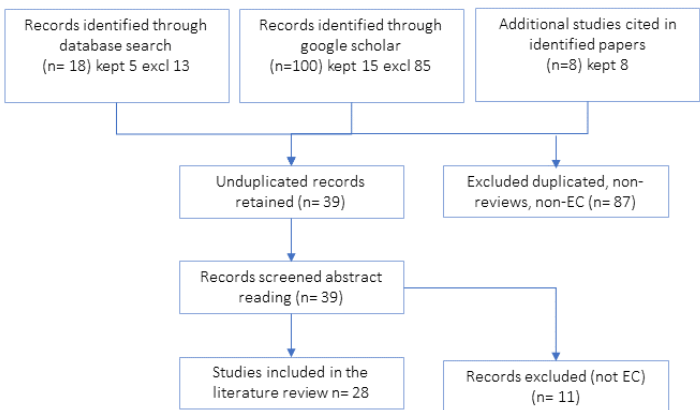


Table 1: Analytical method

Analytical steps	Outcomes
(1) Concepts and frameworks 28 studies were read and key concepts and frameworks noted.	As most authors categorised input and moderating variables as related to coach, coachee, client organisation, coach-coachee relationship, methodology, this framework was adopted in this review.
(2) Coding of variables In the second step, the articles were analysed and coded ¹ regarding 20 characteristics, including year of publication, methodology, research questions, key findings, quality of evidence and others.	46 active ingredients/moderators/mediators were identified and clustered at this step.
(3) Analysis of active ingredients An analytical matrix was built with 29 rows (studies and totals) and 144 columns (general factors, moderating/mediating variables, and totals), to identify all studies citing each variable, corresponding quality, and citation frequency (excel sheet, 4002 data points ²).	Based on the analytical matrix, 240 (duplicated) citations of independent variables (IVs) were identified and 49 from moderator/mediator analyses.

¹ The coding procedure and analysis were completed by the author of this article under the supervision of Dr David Morrison, Lecturer of Psychology Research and Practice at The Open University, UK.

² Excel files are available upon request.

Table 2: Number of citations of variables influencing EC.

	Factors influencing EC outcomes		Med/mod		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Coachee	58	30%	18	37%	76	32%
Coach	52	27%	9	18%	61	25%
Coaching relationship	42	22%	6	12%	48	20%
Process	26	14%	11	22%	37	15%
Organisational	13	7%	3	6%	16	7%
Research design	–	0%	2	4%	2	1%
Total	191	100%	49	100%	240	100%

(3.5 on a scale 1–5). Motivation for coaching and motivation to transfer learnings to work are linked to commitment and are positively associated with outcomes (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). However, motivation is defined in various ways and is not always distinct from readiness to coaching, commitment, goal-oriented behaviour and receptivity (Bozer & Jones, 2018). One problem is the time of measurement, as motivation can be influenced by various factors and fluctuate over time. Further, much of the evidence relies on coachees' self-reports, which limit internal validity (e.g. social desirability bias). In a quantitative study (Sonesh et al., 2015b), motivation influenced goal attainment and insight in a sample of students, but not in a sample of executives, possibly due to low variability (e.g. sample of highly motivated executives). This has implications on the importance for coaches to assess and help regulating motivation, particularly in novice coachees, before, during and after coaching. Further research should seek to replicate the findings for executive samples, further explore the interdependencies between motivation and other related concepts in EC (e.g. commitment) and include repeated measurements at different times of the coaching process.

Self-efficacy (SE)

'Perceived self-efficacy refers to beliefs in one's capabilities to organise and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments' (Bandura, 1977; cited in Bong & Skaalvik, 2003). Seven of the included studies report SE as an important factor influencing EC outcome. Moreover, with four studies out of 12, SE is the most frequently investigated moderating variable. Overall, the quality of these studies is slightly higher than average (3.8), with four studies rated above 4.0. In some research, SE was conceptualised as a proximal individual outcome. These studies suggest coaching improves general or specific SE at least partially (Grover & Furnham, 2016; Page & de Haan, 2014). However, in most studies, SE has been

considered a predictor. For example, SE was one of the antecedents of EC outcomes cited by an extensive systematic review, noting that general SE might differ from SE for specific behaviours in its predicting power (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). In a large retrospective survey of coaching dyads, general SE measured by the standard GSE scale correlated with coaching effectiveness as rated by coachee (de Haan et al., 2016). These findings imply coaches should monitor and support building general and task-specific SE over time. In research, SE has been measured by different instruments and scales, usually relying on coachees' self-reports with various levels of validity and reliability (Bozer & Jones, 2018). Researchers should further build a theoretical and empirically validated model of dynamic interaction of SE with other relevant constructs of the coachee's motivational set-up.

Commitment

'Commitment is a force that binds an individual to a course of action that is of relevance to a particular target' (Meyer & Herscovitch, 2001; cited in Meyer et al., 2004). Six included studies support commitment to coaching and related constructs like taking responsibility, as important predictors of coaching outcomes. However, quality of this evidence is moderate (3.5), and there are not specific mediator or moderator analyses measuring this factor. Psychotherapy research highlights the importance for the coachees to take responsibility to do the developmental work (McKenna & Davis, 2009). In a qualitative study, responsibility for self-development was ranked by experts within the top coachee's factors (Rekalde et al., 2015). Based on quantitative evidence, Grover and Furnham (2016) report commitment, buy-in, effort and involvement as important related factors, although most of their included studies rely on self-reports. Research should further validate the role of commitment and explore how connected constructs (e.g. buy-in) differ from or interact with them in producing EC outcomes.

Practitioners and clients should seek to clarify and enhance the importance of taking responsibility and commitment with coachees.

Personality

Six studies include coachee's personality within the factors influencing coaching outcomes, and two studies investigated personality as a moderator. The average quality assessment of these studies is moderate (3.4). Based on psychotherapy research, where personality has been found to influence therapy approach success, McKenna and Davis (2009) argued coachee personality plays a significant role (e.g. what works best with introverts might be insight, with extroverts might be behavioural experiments). There is some evidence that openness, conscientiousness and extraversion are associated with positive EC outcomes (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018), and that personality might influence the relationship with the coach (de Haan et al., 2016). Whilst these studies suggest some relationship exists between personality and coaching success, they are not conclusive (Jones et al., 2014). Research on the influence of personality on EC outcomes is still scant. Further studies should investigate this relationship and the moderating effects on other factors (e.g. coaching techniques). Better understanding the relationship between personality and coaching success could help organisations identify combinations of coach-coachees personalities and of coaching techniques and coachees that are most likely to succeed in EC.

Feedback Receptivity (FR)

There are few studies that refer to FR as a general predictor of EC outcomes, or as a mediator and their assessed quality is low (3.2). In an early literature review, FR was one of three hypothesised concepts describing the coaching process, together with coach-coachee relationship and coaching approach, and was thought to impact learning and self-awareness outcomes (Joo, 2005). Some evidence shows feedback recep-

tivity moderates coaching outcomes and might depend on various factors, including source credibility, content, delivery context and modality (Bozer & Jones, 2018). Hence, coaches should regularly assess and foster FR during the process. Qualitative and observational research could help unpack the feedback process and the role of FR in EC. Experimental studies should investigate the effectiveness of various feedback contents and formats at different levels of FR.

Readiness

The concept of readiness to coaching (or to change) originates from the popular theory of behaviour-change stages (Prochaska & Di Clemente, 1983). Although this concept appears in coaching practitioner literature, only four studies here included refer to this concept, with a low quality of evidence (3.3). McKenna and Davis (2009) suggested extra-therapy client factors including readiness play the key role in EC. Readiness to change (and motivation) is supported by a logical argument, but only by limited evidence in some literature reviews (Cotterill & Passmore, 2019; Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011). Mixed-method research should further investigate which coaching approaches are more effective at various stages of change readiness.

Expectations

Four studies (average quality score 4.0) support coachee's expectations about EC outcomes to influence the actual results, similar to a placebo effect in psychotherapy (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; McKenna & Davis, 2009). On the other hand, having wrong expectations was considered by 20 per cent of coaches an important reason for unwanted side-effects, according to a recent mixed-method study (Schermyly & Graßmann, 2019). The implication for coaches and coachees is to mutually check and manage expectations before and during coaching.

Work level/coachee population

Four recent studies suggest work level (e.g. senior executives vs. mid-level managers) moderates or generally influences EC outcomes, with a good quality of evidence (4.1). A meta-analysis found that goal-oriented outcomes were more significantly improved in undergraduate students (effect-size $g=1.00$) than executive coachees ($g=0.10$). The authors argued outcomes might take longer to manifest with executives as they might present more challenging goals (Sonesh et al., 2015a). There could also be a confounding effect from the research design, as executive samples were from field research whilst student samples were from experiments. Taken together, these findings suggest experience and work-level might moderate between EC and outcomes, and senior EC might require more sophisticated or longer approaches. Research should continue to investigate this factor in different populations of coachees, ideally controlling for other variables like industry, size of organisation and socio-demographics.

Goal orientation (GA)

Three studies mention GA, with good quality of evidence (4.1). ‘Learning’ (vs. ‘performance’) GA mindset has been shown to link with stronger motivation and EC outcomes. However, there is a debate on whether goal orientation is a predictor or a proximal outcome of EC (Bozer & Jones, 2018). Other dispositional characteristics investigated include coping style and learning style, but evidence is mixed. Coaches should consider the coachee’s goal orientation to tailor goal setting, action planning, and motivational tactics.

Socio-Demographics

There is little support for coachee’s age, ethnicity and educational level presenting moderating effects on specific coaching outcomes, in some populations (e.g. young unemployed). Various studies failed to find significant moderating effects for age when controlling for other variables

(Grover & Furnham, 2016). Whilst single socio-demographic variables might not be particularly important, coaching practice should apply the principles of intersectionality, which are grounded in counselling and psychotherapy research (Berke et al., 2016). Qualitative EC research should explore this topic, as this seems a research gap.

Coach’s characteristics and behaviours

Expertise and skills

A total of 12 studies report the coach’s expertise and skills as an active ingredient. However, quality of evidence is low (3.1). Early literature reviews gave particular attention to the coach’s skills and experiences, but they are based on practitioner cases with little empirical evidence (Ely et al., 2010). Another review claimed expertise, age and background to be important factors but, again, without much supporting evidence (Sonesh et al., 2015b). A qualitative research with coaches suggested coaches’ communication skills and knowledge of human behaviour are key coach characteristics for coaching success (Rekalde et al., 2015), but the qualitative nature of the study and its population (i.e. all coaches from Spain) limit the generalisability. A survey with organisational clients (Management Association, 2008) found coaches’ business experience correlated with perceived coaching success, and that a questionable expertise was the second most frequent reason for coaching dropout (53 per cent). These findings are from simple cross-sectional correlations and can be affected by confounding variables, same-method bias and self-selection bias. It is plausible that expertise and coaching skills play a role in producing EC outcomes. For example, communication skills, particularly in managing performance expectations and providing quality feedback to the coachee, are active ingredients according to various authors (Blackman et al., 2016, Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011). Nevertheless, the available evidence is tentative and research should clarify what elements of expertise influence outcomes in specific

cases and how coaching expertise is understood by clients and coachees.

Background

Eight studies describe the influence of a coach's background, which could signal skills and expertise. The average quality of these studies is moderate (3.4). Theory-based competences including psychological knowledge, business acumen and coaching knowledge have been initially discussed in literature without empirical evidence (Peterson, 2010). Possibly in reaction to the 'wild west' of a deregulated coaching (Sonesh et al., 2015b), various authors argued that coaches should have a counselling-psychology background, for credibility (Grover & Furnham, 2016). Sonesh et al. (2015a) cited mixed results for the moderation effects of coach background in psychology, however the authors argued that a mix of both psychology and business background would be more effective. In fact, the adopted coaching approach (e.g. humanistic) is likely to depend on the coach background. For example, data from surveys has shown that coaches with specific background are associated with specific coaching goals (De Meuse et al., 2009), but there is not a clear link between background and different outcomes (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). There is a debate about trainings and qualifications needed by coaches, the importance of business acumen and understanding of the client organisation culture and ethics (Carey et al., 2011; Cotterill & Passmore, 2019). More research is needed to understand the influence of coaches' background on outcomes and the possible mediating effects of selected coaching approach and types of coaching goals.

Behaviours

More than half of included studies suggest various coaches' behaviours influence coaching outcomes. These studies together present a moderate level of quality (3.5). An extensive literature review listed various effective behaviours and attitudes, including positive mindset, authenticity, active listening,

empathy, reflective questioning, learning facilitation, agility, understanding context, interpreting results, clarifying ethical considerations of coaching professions (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). It is unclear what behaviours create which results. A quantitative study found behaviours aimed at building rapport and being authentic were associated with stronger working alliance, replicating previous findings and behaviour helping regulating motivation influenced information sharing – openness in a student sample, but not in an executive sample (Sonesh et al., 2015b). Research has not clearly separated important but general influencing behaviours from manualised coaching techniques. For example, a qualitative study identified various behaviours which could well be the visible aspects of standard techniques, like promoting critical reflection, uncovering hidden assumptions and beliefs, exploring options, etc. (Moons, 2016). On the other hand, eight studies included in this review refer to providing 'challenge' as a coaching technique rather than a behaviour. In summary, if it seems tautological that what coaches do influences EC outcomes, research has not clarified if any specific behaviour is critical for success, beyond manualised coaching techniques, over and above the coach-coachee relationship dynamics.

Coach-coachee relationship

Quality of relationship

A total of 15 studies mention the coaching relationship (or working alliance) as a primary factor, mediator or moderator of coaching outcomes. On average, the quality of evidence here assessed is low to moderate (3.4). Limited evidence supports that the working alliance (WA) is linked with coaching efficacy (Cotterill & Passmore, 2019). The coach-coachee relationship is often the central mediating construct of input-process-output conceptual frameworks proposed in EC literature and is inspired by psychotherapy research. According to McKenna and Davis (2009), WA is the

second most important factor (30 per cent of variance) in psychotherapy. Therapist and process make a difference, as most clients do better with therapy than without, and this difference is highly dependent on the relationship, which is a specialised and focused work-relationship, rather than just being good with people. The coaching relationship is thought to be composed of various components: Goals, tasks and affective bonding. These elements can change over time and are partially negotiated. Based on a correlation analysis, a study found a significant link between WA, goal attainment and coachee insight, although results with different samples were mixed (Sonesh et al., 2015b). A large survey found WA as rated by coachee was the strongest active ingredient correlated to perceived coaching effectiveness as rated by coachee ($r=0.56$) and as rated by coach ($r=0.23$). There was positive but moderate correlation between WA as rated by coachees and coaches ($r=0.22$), showing coachees and coaches can have different perceptions of the relationship. The authors concluded WA mediates 'all' the other active ingredients; for instance, self-efficacy is only active if the WA is strong (de Haan et al., 2016). On the other hand, the coaching relationship was found to be a protective factor against negative coaching effects (Schermyly & Graßmann, 2019). According to qualitative research, a good coaching relationship is built on confidentiality, trust, empathy, authenticity and respect (Rekalde et al., 2015). Further research should validate causality and mediating effects of WA on EC outcomes and explore factors which are conducive or detrimental to strong WA, ideally at different times (e.g. repeated measures). Moreover, the triangular relationship including the organisational client should be studied. Meanwhile, given the primary importance of the coaching relationship, coaches and coachees should focus on building and maintaining a solid work alliance based on trust.

Matching or attraction

The importance of a good match between coach and coachee emerges often from literature reviews (e.g. attraction, chemistry, bonding). However, whilst accepted psychological theories predict that individuals exhibit a tendency to be attracted by individuals perceived as similar, the empirical evidence for EC is mixed. Attraction is theoretically expected to influence trust and other elements of the coaching process, like effective communication and these variables are likely to interact (Bozer & Jones, 2018), but it is unclear which attributes and combinations increase attraction in ways which are productive in coaching. For example, limited and contrasted evidence suggests gender similarity might influence EC outcomes, mediating WA (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). On the other hand, one study found that difference rather than similarity in MBTI personality profiles between coaches and coachees was associated with greater coaching efficacy (de Haan et al., 2016). Another problem is attraction is conceptualised as antecedent and not as a mechanism or moderator. It is possible that attraction influences the relationship differently before, during and after coaching (e.g. a curvilinear relationship) (Bozer & Jones, 2018). Further quantitative research could investigate how socio-demographic and dispositional attributes interact with coaching mechanisms and outcomes, and test corrective measures that coaches can take to improve the relationship in cases of suboptimal similarity.

Trust

Consistent with common sense, evidence shows trust is important in the coaching relationship, although quality of studies is moderate, as it tends to rely on coaches' ratings. Trust is conceptualised as accepting vulnerability to others' actions based on psychological safety, assuming positive intentions and confidentiality. For example, the coachee must accept vulnerability to the coach and expose their weaknesses (Bozer

& Jones, 2018). Peterson (2010) argued that a WA based on trust and rapport is a necessary ingredient with a minimum needed threshold to avoid breaking the process. Contracting between coach and clients, aligning on methods, measurements and outcomes, as well as clarifying roles and managing expectations are conducive of positive relationships and outcomes (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). In general, it is likely that most behaviours which are positive for the relationship and the outcomes by both coaches and coachees are trust-building behaviours. As such, this area does not appear as a separate research gap.

Coaching approach

Methods and techniques

Eight studies included in this review refer to the coaching methods and approaches as important factors for EC outcomes. Most of these studies were early reviews including descriptive practitioner papers and non-peer reviewed articles, therefore they present a low quality of evidence on average (3.3). A literature review of articles describing coaching methods found various common elements for goal setting, problem solving and other mechanisms (Carey et al., 2011). For goal setting, various tools were described, including 360-feedback, interviews and coachee's reflections. Goal setting was typically described as co-created and based on the data gathered from feedback and exploration. For problem solving, mechanisms included action plans, reading, rehearsal, role play, dialogue, reframing, visualisation, homework, teaching new skills and others. A 'transformation' was thought to happen through shifts in thinking, self-awareness, re-evaluations, change of perception, experimenting with new behaviours, focus and commitment, and reflection on consequences of behaviours. Another review including retrospective studies proposed the hypothesis that EC is most effective when the coaching approach (e.g. psychodynamic, solution-based, GROW) fits the goal. Type of EC (remedial, developmental) and content (skill acquisition,

behaviour change, insight) were considered moderators, but there was no evidence to validate them (De Meuse et al., 2009). According to McKenna and Davis (2009), applied coaching theories and techniques might account for just 15 per cent of variance in coaching outcomes, whilst common factors account for most of the variance. Some researchers have argued that coaching techniques and models work by activating other ingredients and might play a bigger role than it is usually found in research, due to confounding effects and criterion validity issues with measurements of common factors (Peterson, 2010). For example, a coachee might be unable to distinguish a technique from a coach's characteristic. Another review found some evidence from RCTs that strength-based, solution-based and coaching with feedback are effective, or more effective than other interventions like training (Grant et al., 2010). However, only two included RCTs were in workplaces, and they addressed specific issues with consequent limited generalisability. Another comprehensive review including experimental evidence found that all tested models produced positive outcomes, but there was not any study comparing outcomes from different coaching approaches (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). This study also found some evidence suggesting the effective use of assessment tools, focus on strengths, developments and accordingly formulated action plans, coach's influencing tactics (coalition, persuasion), communication techniques (e.g. mimicking coachee's language) were positively associated with EC outcomes. In summary, practitioners have described multiple coaching methods and techniques that seemed to work in their own case studies, but the evidence they presented lacked validity and reliability, and most techniques appear as slight variations of general themes like feedback, goal setting, problem solving, action planning. Many research questions remain unanswered about what specific EC methods and techniques work, when and how. More sophisticated mixed-methods and longi-

tudinal studies should start to untangle the interdependencies between used techniques and common factor mechanisms, controlling for contextual, coach and coachee variables.

Feedback

Seven included studies indicate feedback is an important EC mechanism and present a moderate quality of evidence on average (3.7). Feedback is generally seen as beneficial by both coaches and coachees (Cotterill & Passmore, 2019). A meta-analysis of 360-feedback found an effect size ($g=0.15$ for team 360-feedback) comparable with effects from entire coaching programmes (e.g. change behaviour $g=0.19$ in Sonesh et al., 2015a) (Smither et al., 2005). This speaks for the fundamental contribution that feedback makes in EC, but the impact of feedback varies depending on the credibility of the source, the content, the delivery context, modality and the receptivity, among other factors. In their review, Bozer and Jones (2018) found coachees' feedback receptivity is a moderator. Feedback can also be counterproductive. Little or imprecise use of diagnostic tools by coaches was cited by 16 per cent of experts interviewed in a qualitative research as one reason of coaching negative side-effects. The anticipation of feedback, if seen as judgement, can trigger anxiety and ambivalent feelings, where the desire for valuable input from others conflicts with the need for psychological safety and preservation of the self-concept (Ryan et al., 2000). A meta-analysis found the use of 360-feedback was a significant moderator, with coaching using 360-feedback producing lower results than without (Jones et al., 2016). The authors suggested the counter-intuitive results for feedback might be due to the attention coachees might divert to the content of challenging feedback, or the irrelevance of some standard leadership feedback instruments when the goals are not leadership capabilities. However, this meta-analysis mostly included uncontrolled within-subject studies and likely suffered from confounding effects, as

studies with 360-feedback were with external coaches and studies without 360s were with internal coaches (Grover & Furnham, 2016). Qualitative research should unpack the feedback and its determinants from the other mechanisms, to better understand how and when to deliver the most useful feedback and how coachees can productively work with feedback whilst reducing the negative experiences associated with it.

Number of sessions

Research on the dosage of coaching is scant and shows mixed results. A meta-analysis did not find the number of sessions (below or above five) to be linked with results, suggesting short coaching might be effective, at least in some situations (Theeboom et al., 2013), but this finding might be a spurious correlation (e.g. short coaching associated with simple goals). However, the number of coaching sessions was found a significant, non-linear moderator in another meta-analysis (higher effects for one to four sessions and for seven to nine sessions). It is unclear if the curvilinear relationship is a confounding effect from goal difficulty, or different methods and samples utilised (Sonesh et al., 2015a). It seems wise for a coaching engagement to contract how the stakeholders will measure goal attainment and introduce some flexibility on the number of sessions.

Organisational culture and support

A total of 16 studies indicate client support, culture and expectations play a role in coaching outcomes, but there is limited empirical evidence on the impact of organisational variables and relevant social groups on EC outcomes, and the quality assessment of these studies on average is moderate (3.6). The organisational stakeholders play a primary role in EC. First, the organisation is often the client paying for the EC engagement, and has power and interests in steering the coaching goals towards the organisational objectives. Arguably, the organisational context also determines job demands and resources available to the

coachee (Sonesh et al., 2015b). For example, job demands and social support mediated stress reduction outcomes in a review of quantitative studies. The same review also found subordinates' perception of strategic alignment and supportive work culture mediated outcomes like subordinates' work engagement (Grover & Furnham, 2016). A qualitative review found that support to coachees from their supervisor was positively associated with EC outcomes. Integration of coaching into leadership programmes could signal that the organisation is supportive and committed to the coachee's development (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). Qualitative evidence also indicates supervisors' support is important to transfer learning from coaching into the workplaces (Bozer & Jones, 2018) and an organisational context ensuring confidentiality and commitment from management is an important factor, during and after coaching (Rekalde et al., 2015). Moreover, a review of unwanted side-effects in EC suggests the client organisation can get in the way of EC effectiveness (Schermuly & Graßmann, 2019). The primary reasons for coaching failures or unwanted negative effects include the organisation not allowing enough time, not allocating enough budget, and not providing opportunity for transfer of learning. Overall, given the characteristic triangular relationship in EC, between coach, coachee and organisational stakeholders, it is striking that research has not given much attention to organisational variables in EC. This is a high priority gap for research to close.

Research design

Research design was a moderator in a meta-analysis as within-subject designs produced higher significant effect sizes than between-subject designs (Theeboom et al., 2013). The authors' hypothesis was that in controlled studies, some biases and confounding effects would be neutralised (e.g. natural trend of maturation of capabilities). However, in another meta-analysis, within-subject effect sizes were numerically

higher but not significantly (Jones et al., 2016). Researchers and practitioners should strive to implement rigorous research designs and always clarify with their audience and clients the limitations of the recommended methods.

Discussion

The main limitations of this review derive from the research gaps and methodological weaknesses of the included studies, which are reflected in the quality assessment. Despite the limitations, this work consolidated findings from recent EC studies, developing a deeper knowledge of mechanisms, antecedents and moderators which was not evident in individual studies.

Quality assessment of the included studies

Both the quality and the quantity of evidence of EC has improved over the past years. Two decades ago, the first systematic review found only seven studies (Kampa-Kokesh & Anderson, 2001), whilst a recent review included 110 peer-reviewed articles (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). Unfortunately, much published EC research still lacks a solid theoretical background and presents significant methodological flaws and gaps, like small samples, uncontrolled, not random, retrospective self-evaluations studies (Sonesh et al., 2015). Most studies found in the databases search were published in the USA and the UK, there is insufficient harmonisation in measurement methods and a lack of replications in different organisational contexts. Finally, EC literature reviews and meta-analyses tend to be heavily screened. For example, a meta-analysis (Theeboom et al., 2013) included 18 evaluative studies but excluded 89 studies due to low internal or external validity. A recent meta-analysis considering only RCTs could include 11 out of 1195 screened studies (Burt & Talati, 2017).

Limitations in EC research

A variety of methodological issues emerged from the quality assessment of the included literature. This section focuses on validity

and generalisability threats frequently encountered in this review.

Lack of harmonisation

There is a huge variety of outcomes and independent variables being used in EC research. Often, the same concept is conceptualised and measured in different ways. Various authors have proposed conceptual frameworks to guide further research, but there is little consensus about which instruments, scales and qualitative procedures should be adopted.

Lack of validation and replications

Many EC moderators and mediators have only been found significant in one study, limiting the confidence in the generalisability. Moreover, numerous variables have not been found significant, possibly due to small sample sizes, which limited the statistical power of estimates, or results were inconclusive (e.g. coachee's age, gender, etc). To date, this is a wide gap in literature (Grover & Furnham, 2016). Although the provided information on the geographic and cultural context of the included studies is often incomplete, based on place of publication, most included studies are from the USA and the UK. This is problematic, as the consideration of cultural and contextual sensitivity of EC outcome research has been argued to be one of the existing gaps in literature (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018).

Lack of representation of triangular relationship

The triangular EC relationship raises ethical dilemmas linked to possible conflicts of interest and confidentiality issues, but these dynamics tend to be neglected in literature (Pliopas, A., 2017). Organisational stakeholders' variables (e.g. line manager, teams) and their interaction with coaching process and outcomes are largely ignored.

Self-reporting

Field EC research typically collects data from coachees or coaches, through self-reporting

(e.g. survey). These methods are prone to social desirability bias, pressure toward self-concept preservation and Hawthorne effect which limits internal validity (Bozer & Jones, 2018).

Retrospective measurements and lack of longitudinal studies

Collecting data retrospectively is often more convenient and economical than other methods but introduces numerous validity threats, as a result of memory decay or recall problems, and other biases. The cross-sectional correlation analysis which is typically applied to single surveys can compound the problem with common method bias.

Whilst coaching is a process expected to produce effects which hold or increase at later periods, time is rarely considered in EC literature. For example, self-efficacy is consistently mentioned as an important antecedent of coaching outcomes and tends to be evaluated at one point in time, or retrospectively (Bozer & Jones, 2018). Rigorous between-subject longitudinal studies and advanced statistical multi-variate analyses would help unpack some of the active ingredients and cause-effects relationships in EC, including important interactions.

Endogeneity

Spurious correlations or inconsistent specification of causality invalidate conclusions on cause-effect relationships. For example, self-efficacy was treated as an outcome variable in some studies, whereas in many others it was an antecedent input variable (Grover & Furnham, 2016). Other frequent causes of endogeneity in EC literature include comparison with unmatched control samples, simultaneity of observations and measurement errors.

Poor description of methodology

Much practitioner literature pays little attention to methodological details. For example, some qualitative reviews do not sufficiently describe the inclusion criteria and search

strategy, or the analytical methods. Most systematic reviews and meta-analyses do not discuss validity and reliability of the numerous instruments used in the included studies.

Lack of reflexivity

Qualitative EC research, including various systematic reviews, generally lacks reflexivity about authors' subjective choices and values. In some cases, limitations of methods are not discussed.

Specific limitations

The search strategy produced a corpus mainly composed of aggregated reviews (23 out of 28). This choice was made for efficiency, and to respect the word count. For example, one single review might include hundreds of studies (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). As such, much of the analysis was based on aggregate findings rather than the individual studies. This problem was somehow mitigated by the inclusion of five single studies, as representative of the typical research designs employed in EC literature. A related limitation is the frequency of citation of specific active ingredients and average quality scores, might include duplicates. For example, reviews might include overlapping data. Moreover, as quality scores tend to increase with time in the included studies, variables which were frequently cited (e.g. coachee's motivation) include more of the older studies, deflating the average quality score as a mathematical artefact. However, this did not change much the qualitative conclusions.

Conclusions

Applying a systematic search and original analysis, this review consolidated findings about 46 distinct active ingredients investigated in 28 peer-reviewed recent EC studies, building knowledge of antecedents, mechanisms and moderators which was not evident in the individual papers. EC evidence on mechanisms and ingredients is still in its infancy and relies on limited and often flawed research, lacking replications in different contexts and cultures. For example, based on the number of cases

(citations) in which a relationship was found between an ingredient and a coaching outcome, coachees's and coaches' characteristics and the coaching relationship emerge as the primary focus areas of existing research (respectively 32 per cent, 25 per cent and 20 per cent of citations), whilst the coaching process (17 per cent citations), contextual elements (seven per cent) and methodological artefacts (one per cent) remain largely unexplored. This critical review also presents limitations due to adopted inclusion criteria which prioritised aggregated reviews, somehow limiting the depth of analysis for specific mechanisms and ingredients. Hence, most claims are tentative and neglect important dynamic interactions. Despite the limitations, various implications for practice emerged, confirming the importance of focus on building a good work alliance, and the primary role of coachee's and coach's variables. This review also shed new light on neglected aspects. For instance, coaches should be competent in dealing with all the stakeholders in the triangular relationship and preventing coaching pitfalls or side-effects. Implications for research were discussed in detail, with focus on the importance of validating the initial findings, investigating dynamic variable interactions with rigorous quantitative designs. Ideally research should include controlled-studies, triangulation of self-reported data, sufficient sample sizes, longitudinal studies and crucially, more rigorous qualitative research. Finally, there is fragmentation in instruments, scales and qualitative procedures adopted. A collaborative project between coaching practitioners, academics and client organisations would be useful to integrate the best available evidence and theory, to harmonise concepts and operationalisation of key constructs and causal relationships.

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Notes

All articles are from independent review. Thanks to Dr Andromachi Athanasopoulou for providing a detailed reference list which was here used as additional sense check (Athanasopoulou, A. & Dopson, S. (2018)).

Summary table of literature review – Active ingredients influencing executive coaching outcomes.

Article	Methodology	Active ingredients that influence coaching outcomes
Kampa-Kokesh & Anderson (2001)	Qual review. k=7 empirical qual & quant, papers. Unspecified no. practitioner articles.	Tentative early evidence for: Coach: Communication style, background psychology. Coachee: Self-efficacy. Coaching relationship: Coaching relationship influence the EC outcomes. Coaching: Non-linear relationship between length of EC and outcomes like self-awareness.
Joo (2005)	Qual review. k=78 articles (incl. practitioners' papers and 11 academic qual and quant papers).	Framework proposal to stimulate research to test a series of propositions: Coach: Integrity, confidence, experience, and high developmental status influences process and outcomes. Background psychology (vs Consultancy) defines the adopted coaching approach (and so the process). Coachee: Personality (e.g. proactivity) influences Feedback Receptivity, which is considered an element of Motivation towards coaching. Learning Orientation has positive impact on feedback receptivity. Organisation: Support. coaching Approach (remedial vs developmental) Coaching relationship and coach-coachee matching. Coachee Feedback receptivity.
Management Association (2008)	Mixed. review & Surveys. k=2 surveys; USA (N= 854) and int.l sample (N= 148).	Coach: Background, business experience, degree in a related field, recommendations, and client results. Questionable coach expertise is N.2 cited reason to terminate coaching beforehand (53%). Coachee: Coaching with problem employees (1/3 of cases) not correlated with success (inefficacy). Coaching: Clarity of organisational goals in coaching is positively related to outcomes. Number of sessions: Longer coaching engagements moderately correlated with success ($r=0.17$ in US). Coaching relationship: Matching coach-coachee (personality/ experience) based on the presenting issue is seen as critical. Mismatch is N.1 reason to quit coaching beforehand (64%).
De Meuse et al. (2009)	Mixed. Meta-Analysis & Content Analysis. k=22 articles of which 6 in meta-analysis.	From qual review, the authors suggest hypotheses of mechanisms. Coachee: Motivation might be moderated by Type of EC (remedial vs developmental). Coach: Background is associated with specific coaching goals. Coaching: Type of EC, content, could be moderators. Coaching methodology is likely to have different efficacy in different situations, interacting with content area and specific goals.

Article	Methodology	Active Ingredients that influence coaching outcomes
McKenna & Davis (2009)	Qual Review. Unspecified no. of studies from Psychotherapy research.	Assuming psychotherapy and EC are similar, and generalising psychotherapy research finding to coaching, the authors claim four primary Active Ingredients "that account for most of the variance in psychotherapy outcomes": 1) Client factors (40%) 2) Coach-Coachee relationship (30%) 3) Placebo (15%) 4) Theory and technique (15%).
Ely et al. (2010)	Qual Review. k=49 articles (incl. 20 peer-reviewed) about LC /EC evaluations.	Coachee: Readiness, commitment, level of challenge. Coach: Background, competencies, expertise. Coaching relationship is a fundamental component. It includes: Rapport, collaboration in developing goals, commitment. Confidentiality is also considered critical. Organisation: Client expectations, organisational support, goals, climate.
Grant et al. (2010)	Qual Review.	Coach: Competencies, behaviours, skills and attributes that coachees find helpful (e.g. Empathy). Different skills are arguably required in different coaching engagements. Coachee: Personality, commitment, accountability and motivation. Coaching Techniques: limited evidence from RCTs indicate Strength-based, solution-based, CBT, coaching with feedback are effective or more effective than control cells (e.g. training). Coaching relationship includes various elements, like Collaboration and Friendliness.
Peterson (2010)	Qual Review.	Coach: Competencies (psychological knowledge, business acumen, coaching knowledge). Traits that are deemed important include self-confidence, positive energy, assertiveness, interpersonal sensitivity, openness, flexibility, goal orientation, partnering and influence, continuous learning and development, integrity. Background (e.g. organisational) and adopted philosophy (e.g. humanistic) influence choice of techniques (e.g. Feedback instrument). No evidence on relative contribution of these factors. Coachee: Motivation, self-efficacy, locus of control, proactivity and trait anxiety are thought to be important antecedents. Coachability is presented as a necessary condition. Insight (or self-awareness of development areas). Coaching relationship: Matching coach-coachee. Coaching: Tentative evidence of impact of techniques.

Article	Methodology	Active Ingredients that influence coaching outcomes
Passmore & Fillery-Travis (2011)	Qual Review.	COACH Characteristics investigated with surveys include Self-Awareness, Coaching Competences, Ethics, Interpersonal and Communication Skills. Behaviours which are deemed important include Challenge, Listening, Reflecting back and Checking back on understanding. COACHEE Readiness to change, and Motivation are supported by some evidence, and logical argument. Other traits such as Personality, Gender and Learning Style have been hypothesised. ORGANISATION: Supporting Networks and Climate. COACHING RELATIONSHIP is considered a critical factor.
Carey et al. (2011)	Qual Review. k=10 peer-reviewed papers (1996-2010)	COACH: Expertise, Knowledge and Understanding of the organisation, being Neutral and objective, Deciphers information, Systemic approach, Integrity, Character and Insight. COACHEE: Motivation, Openness, Potential for Development vs derailment, High Functioning individuals. ORGANISATION: goals and inputs into coaching. COACHING RELATIONSHIP: Relationship Building is a key frequently mentioned term; Trust, Chemistry, Confidentiality, Empathy, Support, Clear boundaries. COACHING: Problem and Goal Setting. Various Mechanisms are cited, including Reflection, Acting on Feedback, Alternative perspectives, Problem Solving skills, Communication skills.
De Haan & Nieß (2012)	Qual Case Study. N=2: 1 coachee (Psychology student) and 1 coach.	COACHING RELATIONSHIP is thought to be 'the best predictor of coaching outcome'. This case study explores the coaching process through 'Critical Moments' in which new realisations are made and important shifts might happen, driven by new insights, associated with positive change in the Relationship.
Wang (2013)	Qual Review. k=13.	COACH: Coaching skills and techniques. Characteristics (traits, behaviours, cognitions). COACHEE traits. COACHING RELATIONSHIP: Relationship based on Trust, Support, Collaboration. Ethics in coaching. COACHING: Coaching Cycle and Learning Process. Feedback and evaluation.
Theeboom et al. (2013)	Quant Meta-Analysis. k=18 studies.	RESEARCH DESIGN found as a significant moderator; within-subject designs produced higher ES. Possible confounding effects. COACHING: Number of Sessions was not linked with ES, with possible confounding effects. Tentative evidence that short coaching might be equally effective in some situations.

Article	Methodology	Active Ingredients that influence coaching outcomes
Bartlett et al. (2014)	Qual Review. N=54 peer-reviewed papers.	Ranking of active ingredients identified in literature: Coach: Providing clear mutual goals (30); Coach experience, and support (15); focused listening (14); provide feedback (13); enhancing coachee accountability (12); emotional control (5). Coaching relationship: Collaborative (21); trust (15). Coaching: Systematic process (15); discussions (13); action plan (10); assessments (10); intervention strategies (8); individually tailored process (7); solution-based process (7).
de Haan (2014)	Qual Review.	Coachee: Personality (one study found moderate effects for Conscientiousness, openness, emotional stability, and self efficacy). Matching coach-coachee: A study found greater difference in personality between coach and coachee (MBTI) correlated with better outcomes. Self-efficacy is seen as one of the primary predictors of success.
Rekalde et al. (2015)	Qual Review. N=34 experts (coaches, coachees, HRs).	The study listed and ranked 59 ingredients of EC. Very high impact factors and/or three most relevant factors in each category are: Coach characteristics and behaviours: Ability to generate trust; vocation; communication skills; commitment to clients; knowledge of human behaviour. Coachee characteristics and behaviours: Motivation; responsibility for self-development; commitment to process. Organisation: Confidentiality, support, and commitment from top management and line manager. Coaching relationship built on confidentiality, trust, empathy, authenticity, respect. Coaching: Feedback, focus on goal setting and attainment, and continued challenge.
Sonesh et al. (2015a)	Quant Meta-Analysis. N=24 studies.	Coaching relationship is key mechanism through which EC goals are achieved. Coachee Population (execs, non-execs, MBA students, coaches) was a moderator, with stronger outcomes for undergraduates, $g=1.00$, vs executives, $g=0.10$. Executives' outcomes might take longer to manifest. Possible confounding effects. Research design: Correlational design yielded higher ES than repeated (pre-post) measures. Coaching: Number of coaching Sessions was found a significant moderator but not linear. Possible confounding factor of goal difficulty and research method. Coach background has mixed impact, but the authors argue that a mix of psychology and other backgrounds might be more effective. Several possible moderators were not significant (e.g. coach expertise).

Article	Methodology	Active Ingredients that influence coaching outcomes
Sonesh et al. (2015b)	Mixed. Review & Surveys. Study 1: N=44 student coachees and N=55 student coaches Study 2: N=90 execs and N=17 coaches.	Hypotheses of active ingredients from literature review. Coach personality (Conscientiousness, openness, emotional stability), expertise (tenure, age, background psychology vs non-psychology), feedback to coachee, transformational leadership (e.g. explores values, shifts, beliefs), relational skills. Communication skills, ability to facilitate learning and results, focus and mindedness, mood (pleasant affection). Coachee: Self-efficacy, goal orientation, personality, motivation to transfer learning to work, learning agility, planning skills. Organisation: Context (job demands, support). The authors propose an Input-Process-Output model of EC. Coachee: different efficacy for executives versus students. Motivation influenced Goal Attainment and Insight but only for students, possibly for a low variability of IVs in the executive sample. Coach: Behaviour aimed at rapport building, and authentic coaching were associated with stronger working alliance, replicating previous findings as expected, but only in the student sample. Coach behaviour in regulating motivation influenced information sharing in the student sample. Coaching: Goal difficulty was uncorrelated with outcomes, which the authors interpret as a positive sign of the power of coaching, which might be effective in spite of the difficulty. Coaching relationship includes working alliance and information sharing. Working alliance (strength of partnership) is conceptualised as three components: Bond, Goals associated, and tasks required for these goals. Information sharing, trust (chemistry) and shared goals are also thought to play a key role in the relationship. Based on simple correlations, the authors focus on the importance of information sharing and working alliance on goal attainment and coachee insight, and that achieving insight might be a valid proximal goal for coachees as it correlates with goal attainment. None of the mediator and moderator hypotheses were supported in the executive sample.
Jones et al. (2016)	Quant Meta-Analysis. k=17 studies	Two significant moderators were found. Coaching: Feedback (without 360 feedback coaching yielded better results). It might be due to the attention coachees might divert to the content of challenging feedback, or the irrelevance of some standard leadership feedback instruments when the goals are not leadership capabilities. Coach: Type of coach (Internal coaches had better results). In both moderators the findings contradicted the hypotheses. Internal coaches might have advantage understanding the culture, which might facilitate goal setting and transfer. Research design: Within-subject vs between-subject did not yield significantly different effect sizes (numerically /directionally different).

Article	Methodology	Active Ingredients that influence coaching outcomes
Moons (2016)	Qual Review and Qualitative study (N=12 coaches and 5 coachees).	Several 'practices' are proposed to foster Transformation: Coach behaviours and practices: Work with presenting experience (cognitions and emotions), promote critical reflection (hidden assumptions, beliefs, and exploring options), engage in dialogue (powerful questions, using specific tools), holistic orientation (rational and emotional provocations), help coachee being aware of social context and influences. Coaching relationship: Establish authentic relations helped by feedback, acceptance, presence, no hierarchy, voluntary participation, shared goals, authenticity, contracting, listening.
Grover & Furnham (2016)	Qual Review. k=52 quant academic and practitioner articles.	Coach: Authentic leadership, facilitation behaviour, self-efficacy on facilitating learning, dominance. Partial support for background psychology, behaviours, credibility. Coachee: Motivation to transfer (effect on self-efficacy), buy-in commitment, goals and effort, involvement, level (executive vs middle manager), self-efficacy, developability, supervisor support. Partial support for demographics, goal orientation, role, personality, learning goal orientation, learning style. Coaching relationship: Similarity, gender similarity, goal-focused relationship, rapport, quality relationship, coach perception of working alliance, matching coach-coachee personality (partial support). Coaching: Number of sessions, range of techniques, strength-based coaching methodology (on transformational leadership), session focus, individual developmental plan. Specific mediators and moderators (at least 1 study): Coachee age (MOD), educational level (MOD), ethnicity (MOD), planning skills (MED). Organisation: Job demands (MED), social support (MED), Strategic alignment (MED). Coaching relationship: Working alliance (MED), information sharing (MED).
de Haan et al. (2016)	Mixed. Review and Survey. Survey N=3882 (1895 dyads) from 34 countries.	Coachee self-efficacy. Coach self-efficacy. Female coaches had a very small significant correlation with better outcomes. Coaching relationship strength (rated by coachee) is the strongest active ingredient correlated to outcomes. Low to moderate correlation between Working Alliance scores rated by coachees and those from the coaches.

Article	Methodology	Active Ingredients that influence coaching outcomes
Blackman et al. (2016)	Qual Review. k=111 published papers.	Coach characteristics and behaviours: Integrity, trustworthiness, confidentiality, support to coachee, empathy, non-judgmental, offering perspective, communication skills, managing performance expectations, quality feedback, credibility. Coachee motivation, which lead to effort and openness to change, and self-efficacy. Time constraints and extra-work commitments were found as barriers to full commitment to coaching. No evidence of different effectiveness with particular groups of coachees (e.g. younger, students). Organisation: Sharing responsibility for coaching goals and outcomes, aligned coaching goals to organisational goals, support to coachee, commitment to coaching from management, appreciative environment. Coaching relationship: Matching coach-coachee important but no insight about what characteristics make a good match. Coaching: Individualised /tailor-made coaching programmes.
Burt & Talati (2017)	Quant Meta-Analysis. k=11 RCTs (peer-reviewed and theses).	The authors tested three possible moderators but did not find statistically significant effects, possibly linked to the small number of studies included, small samples, and lack of variance in the data.
Athanasopoulou & Dopson (2018)	Qual Review. k=84 (from 110 peer-reviewed qual & quant studies).	Organisation Support, culture supporting development, Integration of coaching into leadership programmes, Company Size. Coachee characteristics (e.g. personality), emotional stability, self-efficacy, confidence, expectations, sensemaking, learning style, motivation pre-during-after, seniority. Coach background and behaviours: Positive mindset, authenticity, active listening, empathy, reflective questioning, learning facilitation, agility, understanding context, interpreting results, ethical considerations of coaching profession. Coaching: All tested models produced positive outcomes including with experimental evidence. Personality instruments, focus of intervention on strengths, coherent action plans, influence tactics from coach (coalition, persuasion), communication techniques, setting and vehicles. Coaching relationship: Matching coach-coachee, client's alignment, clarity of roles and expectation.

Article	Methodology	Active Ingredients that influence coaching outcomes
Bozer & Jones (2018)	Qual Review. k=117 empirical studies (peer- reviewed and grey literature).	Coachee: Self-efficacy, motivation, goal orientation. Feedback receptivity, acceptance and response are also deemed important, but evidence is scant and mixed. Relationship: Trust (accepting vulnerability to others' actions based on psychological safety, assuming positive intentions, confidentiality). For attraction (similarity) and matching the empirical evidence is mixed. Coaching: Feedback intervention (possible confounding effects of feedback as not separable from overall coaching effectiveness). Organisation: Supervisory support (inconsistent findings). Qualitative evidence indicates supervisor's support is important to transfer learning into work practice.
Schermuly & Graßmann (2019)	Qual Review. k=9 studies qual & quant.	The authors explore the possible unintended negative consequences of EC (e.g. deteriorated performance, mental health issues, and others) and identify several moderators. Organisation: Not enough time, not enough budget, organisation did not provide opportunity to transfer learning. Coachee: Little awareness of their problems, wrong expectations, mental health, unclear goals. Coach had no supervision. Coaching little or imprecise diagnostic was used. Coaching relationship: A strong relationship reduces the frequency of negative effects from coaching.
Cotterill & Passmore (2019)	Qual Review.	Coach Background: A debate exists about the training and qualifications needed by coaches, and the role of business acumen, and other competencies, ethics, and coach supervision. Coaching behaviours like listening, challenging, reflecting back information, checking for understanding, recognising and managing critical moments. Self-awareness, coaching technical competence, and understanding of the working alliance. Personality has been explored but evidence is limited. Coaching: Feedback is seen as beneficial. Coachee: Motivation, readiness, responsibility, coping style, supporting networks. Coaching relationship is an important moderating factor but only few studies address this variable.

Supervision in coaching: Systematic literature review

Tatiana Bachkirova, Peter Jackson, Carsten Hennig & Michel Moral

Coaching supervision as a field of knowledge is at an early stage of development, even in comparison to the discipline of coaching. To support and stimulate further progress of the field, this fully inclusive literature review aims to create a comprehensive map of the themes and directions in contemporary publications on coaching supervision. Through the synthesis of findings in 68 selected sources we identified four main themes: clarifying the concept of coaching supervision; the state of theoretical development demonstrated in the literature; the value attributed to supervision and the nature of the current use of the supervision in the field. Based on our analysis we generate potential directions for further research, conceptualisation and theory building.

Keywords: coaching supervision; systemic literature review; cochrane review

Coaching supervision: An introduction

THE FIELD of coaching supervision has shifted unrecognisably even in the last five years. Supervision is now an established practice supported by most of the recognised professional bodies and served by a growing cohort of practitioners with specialised training. Organisations often demand that the coaches they contract to should be in supervision. As a result, the whole coaching industry is rapidly changing its attitude to supervision. The most noticeable and welcome change that has happened in the last decade is the significant growth of the coaching discipline (Bachkirova, 2017; Grant, 2017). This growth, by extension, is reflected in the growth of literature and research on coaching supervision. It could be said that coaching supervision is now emerging as a discipline in its own right. As we will demonstrate, however, there is a shortage in the literature of publications that provide robust conceptual foundations for the various strands of this developing field with a clear commitment to an academically rigorous, fully referenced and evidence-based approach.

It is important to recognise that the existing literature on supervision in counselling and psychotherapy, although useful in some regard, is not fully applicable to the developing discipline of coaching supervision. This limitation stems from the differences between coaching and psychotherapy practices in the first place (Bachkirova & Baker, 2018; Crowe, 2017). During the last decade coaching modalities have extended from an individual to individual relationship to a relationship with groups, teams, and even 'teams of teams' or organisations. The focus on the client, typical in psychotherapy, is argued to be insufficient without consideration of the systems and subsystems around them (Gray, 2007, 2017). As coaching becomes more systemic, the nature of supervision for such coaching needs to be explored in its own right. Many difficult questions that are asked in relation to coaching (e.g. 'who is the client when multiple stakeholders are involved?') become all the more pertinent when brought to supervision. As coaches adjust their practice according to the needs of organisations, so supervisors have to adapt their approaches,

too. One potential issue with the literature on coaching supervision in this regard is that published sources are responding to the needs of the industry more slowly than the industry itself is developing. In this situation the professional bodies have taken the initiative in defining the nature of coach supervision, its purpose and what its functions should be. They often do this, however, without any evidence of a substantial conceptual underpinning that would normally be a feature of the peer-reviewed literature.

The current situation, in summary, indicates that researchers and academics need to respond faster to the needs of a growing industry. One way to promote and shape research and conceptual work is through comprehensive literature reviews. This work allows a broader view on the published sources and offers an analysis of gaps with appropriate recommendations. However, the only literature review on coaching supervision that has been published so far is Moyes (2009). Although Moyes raises a number of important concerns in terms of conceptualising coaching supervision, the situation has changed significantly in recent years and there is a need for a more inclusive up-to-date systematic literature review.

This, then, is the motivation for this review. Its aim is to support and stimulate further development of the field and to create a comprehensive map of the themes and tendencies in all relevant publications on coaching supervision. More specifically the research questions are as follows:

1. To examine and explicate themes/constructs emerging from publications on coaching supervision;
2. To identify concepts, questions and research methodologies that are important for the development of knowledge on coaching supervision.

We made the following decisions in terms of providing a working definition for key concepts. The complexity of this task in relation to coaching supervision was such that

it became one of the themes of this review itself. To define coaching for the purpose of having clear inclusion criteria (to exclude, for example, sport coaching) we adopted a definition from the *Complete Handbook of Coaching* as an established text in coaching education, namely:

Coaching is a human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and use of appropriate strategies, tools and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the client and potential for other stakeholders.

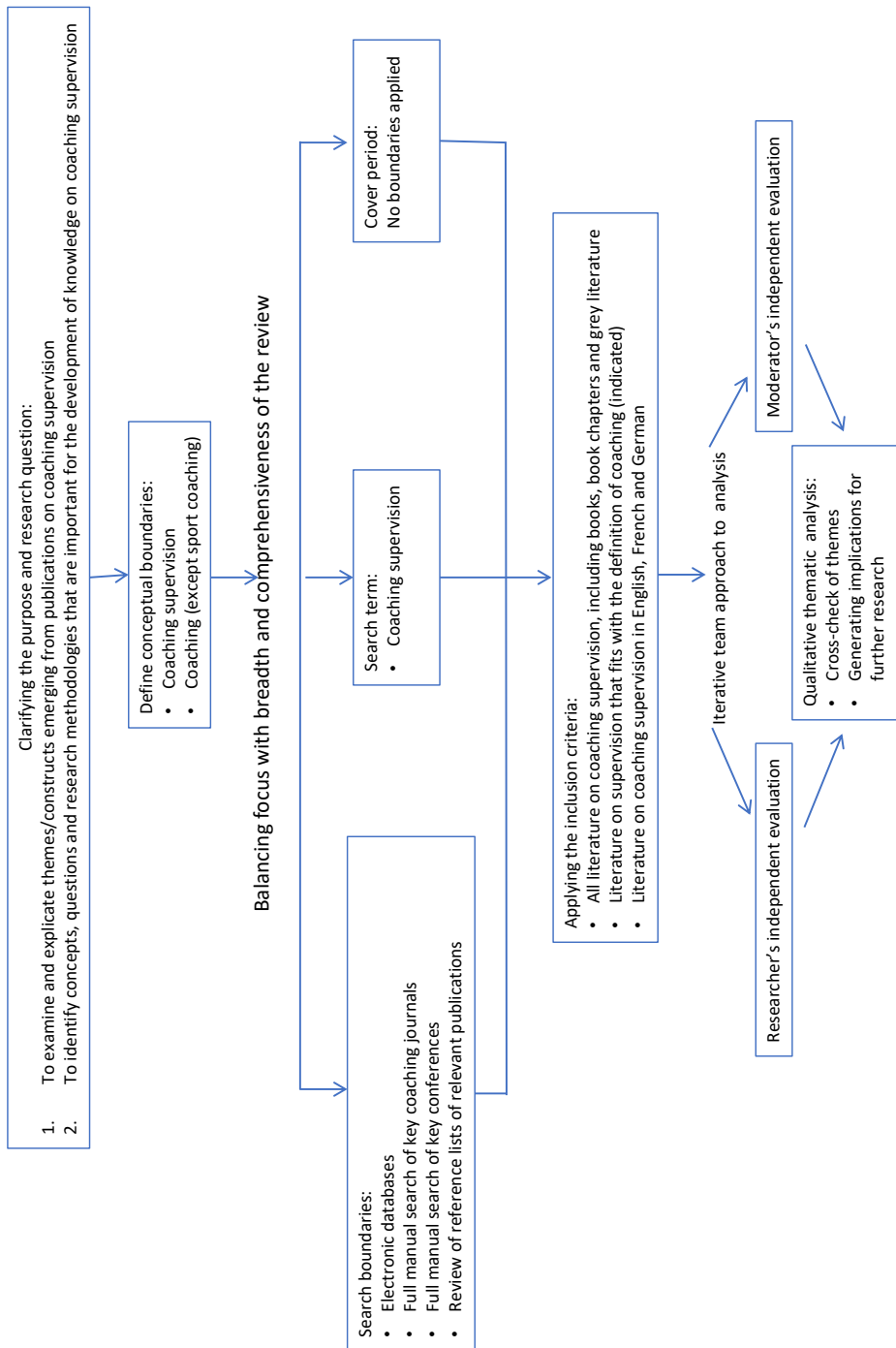
(Bachkirova, Cox & Clutterbuck, 2010, p.1)

In the remainder of this paper, we describe first our methodological approach to this review including our search strategy, inclusion criteria, dataset and our approach to the analysis of emergent themes. Then we describe and discuss four main themes/constructs. Finally, on the basis of these discussions, we generate potential directions for further research, conceptualisation and theory building.

Methods of review

The most appropriate approach for conducting a systematic literature review is to some extent dependent on the state of knowledge in the field under consideration. In this respect, among the types of review described by The Cochrane foundation, qualitative review was considered most appropriate. Qualitative reviews are those 'that aim to synthesise qualitative evidence to address questions on aspects of interventions other than effectiveness' (About Cochrane Reviews, n.d.). In general, a systematic literature review (SLR) aims to identify, critically evaluate and integrate data from relevant publications in order to address the research question. Trying to locate more specific guidelines for addressing our research question we considered three different approaches to literature review: Knowledge-building

Figure 1:



and theory-generating qualitative systematic review (Finfgeld-Connett & Johnson, 2013), meta-aggregation (Hannes & Lockwood, 2011) and scoping study (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Each of these approaches has at least one element that is relevant and useful to our review question. The following is a description of the method that we created by adapting such elements from each approach.

The purpose of knowledge building from Finfgeld-Connett and Johnson (2013) was seen as most suitable, but the step of theory-building requires expansive search, establishing interconnections between concepts and is, therefore, premature for the state of knowledge on coaching supervision. The meta-aggregation approach (Hannes & Lockwood, 2011) similarly has the aim of the synthesis of knowledge using an exhaustive search which is suitable for our task, but it ends with the production of the synthesised statements that inform decision-making at a clinical or policy level. This was deemed excessive for our research questions and could only lead to specific recommendations for further research. Consequently, we followed a combined method that was also enhanced by ideas from scoping studies (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005) which include: a) clarifying the purpose and research question; b) balancing focus with breadth and comprehensiveness of the review; c) using an iterative team approach to selecting and evaluating studies; d) extracting data for qualitative thematic analysis and e) reporting results with the implications for further research (see Figure 1).

Literature search

The literature search for this topic had two major challenges. The first is related to the immaturity of coaching supervision as a field of knowledge. The second is concerned with the main driving force of publications, insofar as the majority of the work in this field is done by practitioners rather than academics and researchers. The implication of the first challenge was that returns from electronic databases on 'coaching supervi-

sion' were very limited. Even with the addition of full manual searches of key coaching journals, full manual searches of key conferences and following the reference lists of relevant publications, it could fairly be said that in terms of the published literature this field is under-developed. Considering this, we might be open to critique of not expanding the search term. We would argue that our tightly scoped search strategy was justified because of the potential issue of multiple conceptualisations of the term of coaching, and consequently, supervision of coaches, in different and largely unrelated fields. For example, including supervision of sport coaching would be misleading as sport coaching is a different industry with different criteria of quality of practice and different approach to CPD of practitioners.

The implication of the second challenge (the predominance of literature driven by practitioner interests), is the fact that practitioners are not inclined to struggle through the labour-intensive process of publishing in peer-refereed journals. Hence the majority of our returns were books, book chapters, conference presentations, reports produced by professional bodies and other commercial organisations – a category of literature that is classified as grey (Adams et al., 2017). Although this literature serves the world of practice it has limitations in demonstrating rigour and therefore required an extra effort in terms of establishing eligibility. It is important to say, at the same time, that the field is rapidly developing and we identified a significant number of publications in progress or under discussion between colleagues that appear important. This search has been done between June 2019 and January 2020.

Inclusion criteria

Inclusion in the literature review was based on three main criteria: (1) all literature, including books, book chapters and grey literature that indicates coaching supervision in the titles and/or abstract of the publication; (2) the literature on coaching supervi-

sion that fits with the definition of coaching that we described in the Introduction to this paper; (3) the literature on coaching supervision in English, French and German as the most representative in terms of discussing coaching supervision at this stage.

The first criterion suggests that we included the literature on coaching supervision that considered coaching delivered outside of organisational or workplace context. Although the majority of the academic literature tends to focus on coaching in this context, grey literature on coaching supervision tends not to exclude support for coaching provided in other contexts, such as family, community, health, education, etc and is therefore included. However, literature associated with sport coaching has been excluded as explained in the previous section.

In relation to grey literature we followed the recommendations for inclusion by Adams et al. (2017) and included sources characterised by significant retrievability and credibility. This decision was based on the aim of increasing the relevance and impact of the review for both scholars and practitioners and also helps to increase our understanding of coaching supervision as a complex and emergent practice. Furthermore, in a field that is so much in need of conceptual understanding, it would be unwise to exclude contributions that represent reasonable attempts to do just that. However, articles in coaching magazines were not generally included as such rationale is not usually provided. In addition, any grey literature included should be retrievable and thus open to being followed up by interested users.

No exclusion has been made on the basis of the date of publication. This was particularly important for articles in the peer-refereed journals, as some early publications offer otherwise rare examples of empirical studies. At the same time, white papers and guidelines developed by professional bodies were restricted to the most recent versions in preference to earlier iterations of these through time. The only exception to this rule is the report published by CIPD

(2006) because of its historical significance and its importance for comparison in terms of the use of coaching supervision.

All types of study were included in the analysis: conceptual papers, qualitative and quantitative studies. This decision was based not only on scarcity of empirical studies but also following Nolan and Garavan (2016) and Denyer and Tranfield (2009), who recommend drawing these sources together and according to whom a synthesis of findings should achieve what may not be identifiable in each individual source. Conceptual work, in this case, can play an important role of connectivity and integration.

Data set

The initial formal search procedure identified 699 records. 631 items were excluded by reference to the abstract under the following conditions:

- Where the use of the two terms was coincidental (e.g. a study comparing the impact of coaching, instruction and clinical supervision);
- Where the reference to supervision related to the managerial function, or the uptake/use of supervision was incidental in a study focusing on coaching itself;
- Where the use of the term coaching was in a clinical context and therefore supervision was understood to have been supervision of specialists in that discipline rather than coaching specialists;
- Duplicates;
- Secondary reports and reviews of primary materials;
- News reports;
- Editorials outlining the contents of journals.

This left 68 items from the primary search, consisting of:

- 4 book chapters;
- 1 conference paper;
- 1 monograph;
- 20 short articles in periodicals;
- 42 peer reviewed papers.

Following Finfgeld-Connett and Johnson's (2013) recommendation of iterative data analysis, additional sources arising from analysis of the initial selection were added as the analysis progressed. Manual searches of key coaching journals (*International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring; Coaching: An international journal of theory, research and practice; International Coaching Psychology Review*) and research-oriented conferences also generated a further 46 relevant items. This also produced more materials in French and German that were not identified in the database search. The additional items consisted of:

- 16 additional peer reviewed papers;
- 11 additional monographs;
- 8 additional collections (from which relevant chapters have been drawn);
- 9 additional 'grey' items (policy reports, white papers, etc).

The functionality of a tool such RevMan as recommended by the *Cochrane Handbook* (Higgins et al., 2019) was considered to be over-specified for the current task, and a customised shared repository was developed using the Airtable platform (www.airtable.com).

Initial reading of items was distributed around the review team. With the aim described in the previous section, coding for constructs was not undertaken. Rather, we sought only to identify the type of literature, theme and purpose, methodology and contribution to knowledge. A descriptive assessment of quality was also captured. From the extracted descriptions of theme and purpose, the team separately, and then collaboratively agreed the thematic headings in which the remainder of this review is organised.

Primary authors were nominated for each theme, who made an independent judgment of which papers to include in the discussion. In addition, the initial readers of each paper also selected those they considered relevant to be included for each theme. Subsequently, each drafted section was cross reviewed by the whole team in order to

ensure that all necessary material had been included (within the constraints of brevity). This method meant that all papers had been assessed in their own right, integrated into the analytical narrative, and cross-checked by several members of the team.

Finfgeld-Connett and Johnson (2013) identify the main threats to the validity of a review such as the current one as being either too broad, or too narrow a literature base. The extent of the literature sourced in this case has allowed both a comprehensive scope and collaborative analysis to be achieved. We note one important caveat in this respect, however, there is an extensive literature on both supervision and systemic perspectives written in German. The explicit conceptualisation of 'coaching supervision' is almost entirely absent in the German literature. Due to the developmental history of the concepts of supervision and coaching, supervision tends to be discussed more generically as part of the helping professions. Consequently, some literature on supervision in German was excluded.

Results and discussion

In this section we describe and discuss four themes/constructs identified from the synthesis of the literature, which are:

1. Clarifying the concept of coaching supervision
2. Theoretical development demonstrated in the literature
3. The value of supervision
4. The use of the supervision.

1. Clarifying the concept of supervision

Defining coaching supervision

The task of clarifying the concept of supervision is undertaken in different ways in the literature. Peer-reviewed papers, where supervision is explicitly defined, typically cite from well-known existing sources (e.g. Hawkins & Smith, 2013; Hay, 2007). Books on coaching supervision rarely treat definition as problematic. Some books do not offer a working definition of their own (e.g. de Haan, 2012; Murdoch & Arnold, 2013; Turner & Palmer,

2019). In other books definition is offered in a style of ‘coaching supervision is...’ with different degrees of justification for the definition provided (Cochrane & Newton, 2018; Hawkins & Smith, 2013; Hay, 2007). A further category includes books that acknowledge the issue of defining this practice, but resolve it in one of two different ways. Clutterbuck et al. (2016), for example, combine a number of definitions in one, while Bachkirova et al. (2010) introduce a range of definitions as examples, suggesting that the reader should make up their own mind, using examples for some boundary and scope. There is also grey literature that includes documentation of various professional bodies who take the initiative to offer their own definition of coaching supervision and in some case attaching competences frameworks (e.g. EMCC).

Before giving more specific examples of definitions, we would like to highlight that the approach to defining coaching supervision is not as simple as it might appear to be. The same problem was identified in relation to coaching itself where Bachkirova and Kauffman (2009) argued that the problem defining coaching is not just semantic but goes much deeper and is potentially impossible to solve. Although Moyes (2009) uses the lack of agreement in defining coaching supervision as a ‘game-breaker’ for the field – the absence of a clearer understanding of the boundaries makes the practice difficult to defend – the reason for this situation may also need to be made clear. Developing a good definition requires the use of two criteria: universality and uniqueness (Bachkirova and Kauffman, 2009). The first criterion implies that all approaches to coaching supervision should share the common features inherent in the definition; the second implies that no other practices would fit within it. Existing definitions of coaching supervision do not seem to satisfy these criteria.

At the current time, approaches to define coaching supervision seem to follow two strategies. The first one is to give a substantial number of details to include participants, purpose, process and beneficiaries of this

practice evidently trying to satisfy the criteria of uniqueness. For example:

The process by which a coach/mentor/consultant with the help of the supervisor, who is not working directly with the client, can attend to understanding better both the client system and themselves as part of the client-coach/mentor system, and transform their work. (Hawkins & Smith, 2013, p.147)

The main driver here is to differentiate coaching supervision from counselling supervision. However, the number of details included makes it difficult to satisfy the criteria of universality. For example, not all coaching supervisors approve of the ambition to transform someone else’s work and their purpose might be more modest than that specified. Similarly, Hodge (2013) is even more precise in defining what are the key functions and expected outcomes of supervision, creating more of an elaborate description rather than definition:

A co-created learning relationship that supports the supervisee in his or her development, both personally and professionally and seeks to support him or her in providing best practice to his or her client. Through the process of reflecting on his or her work in supervision, the supervisee can review and develop his or her practice and re-energise themselves. It offers a forum to attend to his or her emotional and professional wellbeing and growth. Through the relationship and dialog in this alliance, coaches can receive feedback, broaden their perspectives, generate new ideas and maintain standards of effective practice. (Hodge, 2016, p.89)

Definitions from professional bodies tend to fall in the same category. For example, the following is offered as a definition of coaching supervision by the Association for Coaching:

Coaching supervision is a formal and protected time for facilitating in-depth reflec-

tion for coaches to discuss their work with someone who is experienced as a coach. Supervision offers a confidential framework within a collaborative working relationship in which the practice, tasks, process and challenges of the coaching work can be explored. The primary functions of coaching supervision are to support, develop and ensure ethical and best practice of coaches in service of their coaching clients (individuals and organisations) and their professional associations. Supervision is not a 'policing' role, but rather a trusting and collegial professional relationship. (Association for Coaching, 2019, p.3)

A second strategy in defining coaching supervision is to focus on the most essential elements of the practice and to be as concise as possible. This approach more easily satisfies the criterion of universality, but struggles to meet the criterion of uniqueness, as many other supervisory practices would share the same elements. For example:

Supervision is a forum where supervisees review and reflect on their work in order to do it better. (Carroll, 2007, p.433)

Coaching supervision is for helping coaches to see more than they can currently see in their work. (Bachkirova, 2008, p.16)

With regard to these difficulties, it is important to recognise that no attempt so far has been made to arrive at a definition of coaching supervision empirically. This is a fruitful area for development and the needs for further research. At the same time the situation is not as dire as Moyes (2009) implied, because the current work in this field indicates that the conceptualisation of coaching supervision is subject to current and ongoing inquiry. According to the wisdom that 'proper enquiry doesn't start with the definition, you end up with it', the emerging discipline of coaching supervision at least has its priorities right.

Main functions of supervision

A dominant theme in the conceptualisation of coaching supervision is the articulation of its main functions. These usually include:

- Developing the competence and capability of the coach/mentor.
- Providing a supportive space for the coach/mentor to process the experiences they have had when working with clients.
- Encouraging professional practice related to quality, standards and ethics.

The terminology used to describe these general functions vary slightly through the literature:

Support: This function is referred to as Restorative (Proctor, 1986), Supportive (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Kadushin 1992, Hay 2007) or Resourcing (Hawkins & Smith, 2013). Support is not seen as in-depth psychotherapeutic intervention, but a way to help the coach ensure self-care when the relationship with the client has been unsatisfactory or distressing.

Development: This function is referred to as Formative (Proctor, 1986), Educative (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012) or Developmental (Kadushin, 1992; Hawkins & Smith, 2013). It covers several aspects of professional development: reflecting on the coach's work and helping the coach to comply with indicators of the professional bodies' competency frameworks. This also considers how the coach might develop, for instance from individual coaching to team coaching.

Professional assurance: This function is referred to as Normative (Proctor, 1986), Managerial (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012), Administrative (Kadushin, 1992) or Qualitative (Hawkins & Smith, 2013). It covers resolution of difficulties that the coach encounters in their practice and conformity to the standards and rules of the profession, especially compliance with codes of ethics.

In addition to these three functional areas it is possible to identify another one that is often recognised as an essential element of supervisory work:

Reflective dialogue and In-depth reflection:

This is indicated in the recent surveys about supervision (MacAnally et al., 2019; Moral et al., 2018). It also appears in the 2019 EMCC Supervision Competence Framework under the heading of the competence ‘facilitates development’ (see EMCC Supervision Guidelines).

To give this function a more legitimate status, Moral and Angel (2019) propose splitting the normative/qualitative function into two functions: resolution and elevation. If the first implies analysis and solving problems encountered during coaching practice, the second is about co-reflecting on deeper influences in coaching practice. It could be said that the first function is quite practical and covers technical difficulties and compliance to standards and codes of ethics. It aims at quality and professionalism. The second function of ‘elevation’ relies on in-depth reflection and discussion of meaning, values and vision. Such in-depth reflection is clearly appreciated by coaches in their supervision.

Evidently, as for definitions of coaching supervision, the conceptualisation of its main functions is a work in progress. It requires further conceptual work that connects these functions to wider theoretical psychological, sociological and educational propositions in order to map the important constructs and relationships between them. Further empirical studies could then investigate the extent and validity of such a theoretical framework.

2. Theoretical developments demonstrated in the literature

In a young practice-based discipline, it is unsurprising that empirical and theoretical literature is heavily outweighed by practice-based and/or practitioner-oriented literature. This literature focuses on how respective authors believe the discipline is best practiced. In this section however we focus on the literature that reports or develops more formal theory, or, given the somewhat embryonic stage of development in this area, how the literature in effect implies theoretical constructs. That said,

the concept of theory is somewhat elastic, and some definition is required.

At one end of a horizontal continuum, we can think of strict predictive theory which describes the world in terms of exactly the conditions under which one event will follow another. Such a theory may also be more or less rich in explanation. It will stand until such time as contradictory evidence is demonstrated (cf. Popper, 1959). It is a purely logical test that they are either current, or they have been falsified. Such theories are (probably) unattainable in a complex social context. Along the continuum, we may find the range of psychological theories which describe the relationship of one event following another as being generally true rather than infallibly true. Here, the assessment is statistical rather than logical. Further along again, we may find shared, but generally untested, sets of beliefs about interactions and causality. These claims tend to be maintained through discourse and are near neighbours to theories-in-use (Argyris & Schön, 1974) which can be thought of as habits of mind that may be supported by a practitioner’s personal experience.

If theories describe the functioning of the world, models are an attempt to represent part of that functioning in a way that is meaningful. Classically, molecular theory is represented by models consisting of table tennis balls and connecting sticks. It helps us understand and extrapolate, but it is not as close to what we believe to be ‘accurate’ as formal theory. Models are intended to be more useful than accurate. Our practices may be more influenced by models than they are by theories as their metaphorical quality helps to make them more accessible and memorable. We can think of models as representing the whole continuum of different types of theory and as potentially collecting together understandings of different theories.

‘Tools’ and ‘processes’ reflect theories and/or models (in the broad sense outlined above) and represent their practical implementation. This may be a very intentional translation of a theoretical stance, or it may be that such theory has not been articulated

in any more formal way than its incorporation into a tool or process. In brief, tools and processes are things practitioners do, models guide action and theories attempt to describe the logic of the world in which these actions take place.

Finally, approaches (or in psychotherapy what are often labelled modalities) are collections of tools, models and theories that articulate or reflect, to a greater or lesser extent, an underlying theoretical or philosophical outlook.

In this section, we take theories and more strongly theoretical models as our focal point. Doing so, in itself indicates the paucity of such theories.

Overview

Strongly theoretical work in the area of coaching supervision is piecemeal. Practices and practice models are presented which could be interpreted to reflect existing theories of change and human development. In some cases, these are explicitly articulated (e.g. Congram, 2011; Cooke, 2011; Hay, 2007; Sandler, 2011). These contributions are reviewed only briefly here as the essential nature of these theories is largely unchanged by their application to coaching supervision.

Theoretical frameworks are also implied in the conceptualisation of empirical studies. They are more likely to be articulated explicitly where such studies take a hypothetico-deductive approach. For example, Moral (2015) hypothesised that, 'the ego defences of supervisors or candidates to become supervisors are more oriented towards mature defences than the general population and the population of coaches', thus implying a causal theoretical framework. However, the bulk of quantitative studies to date have been descriptive; they have addressed uptake of supervision, frequency, feelings about being supervised and potential outcomes (some of these are discussed in the subsequent sections of this paper). A number of qualitative studies take an exploratory approach in which *a priori* speculation about specific relationships

between constructs does not play a part. Consequently, although a number of them raise interesting and useful observations, which may themselves constitute interesting elements of a theoretical framework, theorising tends to be very localised to the phenomenon under study. Sheppards' (2017) study for example implies that a wider theory of supervision should include attitudinal aspects of the supervisee which facilitate change through the supervision process. These attitudinal variables are not, however, positioned within an existing or new theoretical framework. An exception to the expectation that there is no *a priori* theorising in the qualitative literature is the use of conceptual encounter as this methodology presupposes a starting conceptual model which is then refined through the process of consultation with participants with recognised expertise (see Bachkirova et al., 2020). Although there is a growing strand of coaching research using Conceptual Encounter some of which have direct relevance to practitioner development and therefore the supervisor's work (for example, Bachkirova, 2015), we found none that explored supervision theory explicitly.

As discussed in the previous section, there are also theoretical claims implicit in definitions of coaching supervision. For example, Hawkins et al. (2019, p.5) state that supervision, 'provides a disciplined space in which the supervisee can reflect on particular work and client situations and relationships and on the reactivity and patterns they evoke in the mind.' It is implicit in this statement that the absence of disciplined space or the process of reflection would undermine the achievement of the supervision aim. The theoretical content in these examples is incidental to the discussion from which they are drawn and they are therefore discussed as an aspect of the substantive contribution to other sections of this review (clarifying the concept of supervision, the value of coaching supervision, the use of supervision).

Finally, there are attempts to theorise the process of coaching supervision and

how it achieves its outcomes. These are rare, indeed Gray (2017) contends that, because of the diversity of practices and contexts, ‘as yet... there is no specific theoretical model for effective coaching supervision’.

Theoretical perspectives from psychotherapy and other disciplines

Congram (2011) identifies ‘three main components of Gestalt in the context of coaching supervision’. These consist of, ‘dialogic process, phenomenological method and attending to the holistic field’ (p.122). Congram’s chapter expands on these components and explores the impact of practices emerging from them. The underlying theory of Gestalt is not analysed specifically in relation to the aims of coaching supervision.

In the same collection, Cooke (2011) does outline the fundamental theoretical elements of Carl Rogers’ person-centred approach: the actualising tendency, the distress caused by the development of an inauthentic self-concept and the methods that facilitate therapeutic change. Cooke highlights the alignment of these principles with the developmental and resourcing functions of supervision (using Hawkins & Smith’s, 2013, categories). However, the qualitative function is problematic from a person-centred stance as it lays responsibility and power at the feet of the supervisor (p.135). In common with problems reported elsewhere in applying psychotherapeutic theory to coaching, Cooke notes that the supervisee does not necessarily need to be experiencing incongruence in their self-concept to benefit from reflection in supervision.

As a theory of interaction, transactional analysis can be most clearly used as an orientation to the developmental function (Hay, 2011, here using Proctor’s categories). The relevance of transactional analysis for coaches is spelled out by Hay (2007) with particular attention given to ego states, games, strokes and the underpinning role of transference. Levin’s theory of child development is also adapted by Hay to the supervision interac-

tion. The theory is illustrated in relation to supervision scenarios.

Sandler (2011) explains and illustrates how psychodynamic concepts can be seen to emerge in supervision. Reflecting the history of psychotherapy, at least some of these concepts are present to a greater or lesser extent in the background theory of most if not all psychotherapeutically informed approaches to coaching supervision. Transference (and countertransference), parallel process and defences are given particular attention. Crowe et al. (2011) further examine the potential for parallel processes occurring in coaching mental health workers as a contributor to coaching for mental health workers, especially where the intention of coaching is transformational. Although Crowe et al. attend to supervision explicitly only insofar as they take clinical supervision as a the model on which the use of parallel process in coaching can be based, their description of coaching for mental health work overlaps considerably with definitions and conceptualisations of coaching supervision, particularly the developmental/formative function. Hardin and Gehlert (2019) hypothesise that the use of self is beneficial in coaching (on the basis of existing findings in the coaching field) and (on the basis of experiences in psychotherapy) that it can be developed in supervision through the process of developing reflexivity and role modelling of the supervisor.

Relational dynamics specific to coaching supervision

Cohen (2015) has demonstrated that feelings of shame may prevent coaches from bringing relevant material to supervision. However, de Haan (2017) speculates that voluntarism may underpin greater levels of trust in coaching supervision than in supervision of comparable helping professions. Generally, de Haan (2017) found that women, older and more experienced coaches and those that took more supervision were more satisfied with the relationship and outcomes of their supervision. Levels of trust were lower with group supervision. These findings support de Haan’s

(2012, p.6) characterisation of supervision as 'the regular provision of a safe and confidential space where the coach or consultant is helped to reflect on his professional practice'. De Haan's emphasis on the relational aspects are founded on 'everything that is known about the effectiveness of helping relationships, working alliances and parallel processes' (p.10) and is therefore very much in line with psychodynamic theory.

McAnally et al.'s (2019) global survey asked participants what was 'most helpful' in their supervisors' behaviours, suggesting therefore some potential for a predictive effect. These were: listening well; asking powerful questions; creating the opportunity to reflect on coaching practice; gaining specific techniques and tools; making specific improvement suggestions; recognising own current strengths and gaining confidence.

Estevan-Ubeda (2017) suggests that power plays an important role in the coach supervision relationship and warrants closer attention by supervisors and as part of their development.

Groups and supervision

While there is a long tradition of theorisation about groups, group dynamics and group therapy interventions in other disciplines, theorisation in coaching supervision is scant.

Throughout general texts, reviews and surveys, group supervision is mentioned as an alternative format. In a study of a single supervision group, Butwell (2006) found that some participants were wary of self-disclosure, though there were reported benefits to sharing experience and problems. Lucas and Whitaker (2014) exploring their own practice conceptualised co-facilitated groupwork occurring at three levels simultaneously: managing the task; managing the tensions in the relationship between facilitators; and the sense of an emergent partnership with the group that results from the two other layers working well. In a grounded theory study of peer group supervision, Homer (2017) identified strengths in the

social aspects of the group, particularly the impact of taking multiple positions in the group: supervisor, supervisor and observer (similar responses were found by Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009).

In a largely practice-oriented chapter, Hawkins and Smith (2013) review group supervision processes and methods. They note that groups may be convenient, cost and time effective, though there may be challenges of group dynamics. They pay particular attention to the group climate and a sensitivity to group 'games' (the occurrence of which is evidenced in Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009, p.155). They also comment (p.208) that, 'in group supervision it feels as though we have opened up the internal minds and have created an external representation of the different views.'

While the responsibility of the group supervisor to hold responsibility for group process is widely acknowledged (e.g. Hawkins & Smith, 2013; Pinder, 2011), Moral and Lamy (2016) suggest a relationship between the effectiveness of group supervision to elements of collective intelligence, such as the distribution of turn taking and social sensitivity (Woolley et al., 2010). This concept may connect more easily with Turner et al.'s (2017) proposition to use critical action learning as the primary model for group supervision in place of psychotherapeutic models.

Frameworks and meta-models

Tkatch and Di Girolamo (2017) report on 'meta-models describe the interactions between the different elements within a supervisory relationship'. Such models offer an interpretive perspective rather than predictive theory.

Hawkins (2011) describes his own previous work on supervision (and therefore including the seven-eyed model) as reflecting 'four pillars': informed by a systemic perspective; in service of all parts of the system learning and developing; attending to the client in relation to the their systemic context; including the coach and the supervisor as part of the field that is being reflected upon (p.167). Hawkins

cites Capra's (1996) definition of systems as 'an integrated whole whose essential properties arise from relationships between its parts'. Elsewhere, Hawkins and Schwenk (2011, p.28) note that the central seven-eyed model of their approach, 'points out the way in which the systemic context of the coachee can be mirrored in the supervisory relationship' and that it 'integrates insights and aspects of intersubjective psychotherapy ... focusing on the interrelationship between the internal and relational life of individuals.' Hawkins and Smith (2013) extend these conceptual positions into specific practices and methods for supervision. The seven-eyed model is characterised theoretically by the occurrence and re-occurrence of parallel process in all the explicit and implicit relationships making up the supervisor/coach/client network.

Reflecting on the outcomes of a grounded theory study based on interviews with three supervisors and three supervisees, Passmore and McGoldrick (2009) conceptualise the social process of supervision in three stages: context (needs and expectations of the coach); process (behaviours and experience) and outcomes (in terms of learning and change). Gray (2017) builds on this central core, recognising its systemic implications, adding the organisational needs, benefits and expectations. Carroll (2006) argues that, compared to counselling, the client organisation becomes a significant stakeholder in executive coaching and its supervision. He therefore suggests consideration of the relationship between the client organisation and the coaching organisation in assessing the complete field of the coaching intervention.

Models of coach development and supervisor development

Hawkins and Smith (2013) cite Stoltenburg and Delworth's stage model of practitioner development and apply it to supervisor attitudes and behaviours. Hence,

The supervisor of Level 2 trainees needs to be less structured and didactic than with Level 1 trainees, but a good deal of

emotional support is necessary as the trainees may oscillate between excitement and depressive feelings of not being able to cope, or perhaps even of being in the wrong job. (Hawkins & Smith, 2013, p.180)

Hawkins and Smith argue that the model can guide the supervisor to appropriate interventions in relation to the supervisee's current stage and in relation to their forward development (assuming that the model describes a desirable progression). Again, following Stoltenburg and Delworth, they argue that supervisors need to be at a higher level of development in their own practice and that they experience a separate but parallel development in their supervision practice.

Cavanagh et al. (2016) similarly argue that the functions ('key processes') of supervision permutate with the different needs of the supervisee relative to their stage of practice development (novice, practitioner, expert). The key processes are developing capabilities, enhancing quality performance, and exploring paradigms. A third dimension is added to reflect the possibility of looking at the system at three levels (individual, interpersonal, systemic). The resulting 3x3x3 cuboid space suggests nine activities with layers of deepening focus.

Further theoretical development in coaching supervision

This review of the current state of theorisation suggests a number of areas where further work would be of benefit to the discipline.

With respect to the application of the logic of psychotherapeutic modalities to coaching supervision, we may note that:

- Different modalities have certain features in common and these features (such as the function of positive regard, empathy, transference, 'games') may have come to be understood as fundamental in coaching supervision on the basis of history and experiential rather than empirical evidence;

- The distinct features of different modalities may align to different parts (functions, roles) of the supervision process;
- It seems that the adherence to a psychotherapeutic modality could be used to justify *per se* a supervisory approach.

It would be useful, therefore, to establish through future research, the mapping of different strategies to the different needs of supervisees and the desired outcomes of supervision. At the current stage of development, this would suggest exploratory qualitative research.

There seems to be a consensus amongst coaches responding to surveys of some specific relational antecedents of effective supervision. More overt work on developing and testing more generalisable frameworks would be valuable, both for practitioners and for the training and education of supervisors.

Similarly, in the area of group supervision, practice seems to have followed some principles from theory outside of coaching supervision which may not have been explicitly operationalised or fully articulated in the translation to the coaching supervision domain. It would seem that the concept of collective intelligence may provide useful insights into group work. Systems theories are also articulated at a very coarse level in application to coaching supervision (Lawrence, 2019) and a more extensive translation to the domain would be warranted. Also implicit in this development would be more explicit and extensive incorporation of complexity theories. We are aware from professional and academic networks that some further work may be in progress in these areas.

The development of the coaching practitioner is a significant outcome of coaching supervision and is currently specified largely by competency frameworks (which are typically not evidence-based) and practice-based models. A more robust concept of professional development would require more explicit definition of the nature and outcome of supervision.

Taking these points together, we conclude

both that specific theoretical work could be given more emphasis, but also that empirical work across the range of research themes could pay more attention to the theoretical landscape and its development.

3. The value of coaching supervision

Many authors have attributed benefits to coaching supervision in books, reports and other grey literature (e.g. Hawkins & Schwenk, 2006; Hawkins et al., 2019). These benefits vary from those that are reasonably simple, localised or operational, like ‘working through a client challenge’ or ‘learn[ing] from my supervisor’s experience’ (McAnally et al., 2019, p.12), to quite substantial benefits such as ‘enabling organisations to monitor coaching, develop coaching capabilities and increase coaching’s organisational impact’ (Hawkins & Schwenk, 2006 p.18). This range of benefits may be explained by the general lack of empirical evidence about the value of coaching supervision. However, a number of peer-reviewed publications (13) have formed a theme that provides substance to the debates about the value of coaching supervision. The theme is formed by empirical papers in peer-refereed journals describing projects based on theoretically grounded empirical enquiry and include explicit conceptual analysis of data.

It is important to note that this construct has been named as the ‘value’ of supervision rather than ‘effectiveness’ or ‘impact’ at this stage of available evidence. There are various reasons for this, but it is primarily because the conceptualisation of effectiveness of supervision is still a work in progress. Furthermore, the majority of papers addressing these topics directly are based on qualitative studies (8). Five papers use approaches that quantify data in their methodology. One of these describes a randomised control trial design (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2018) which hypothesised the value of supervision as a mitigating factor for negative effects of coaching. Four other quantitative research publications are surveys.

All of these studies describe the value of

supervision from the perspective of coaches rather than other stakeholders. This is apparently in contrast to the views of coaching supervision advocates. Carroll summarised in an unpublished paper (2008) the views of a group of well-known thinkers and authors in the coaching field on the benefits that a number of stakeholders of coaching may gather from supervision. These stakeholders fall into six groups:

1. The coach (the supervisee);
2. The client/coachee (the individuals receiving coaching);
3. The coaching organisation (which sells coaching provision and employs coaches);
4. The organisation (whose individuals are receiving coaching and who pay for it, ROI);
5. The Coaching Profession (professional bodies to which coaches belong, ongoing training, developing standards, ethical practice, etc);
6. The wider system (quality of coaching, quality control issues, use of talent and potential).

The discrepancy between this list and reviewed studies suggests the need for research that considers multiple stakeholder perspectives in evaluating the value of supervision. It is recognised, at the same time, that the complexity that researchers face in implementing such a design in the real-life context is extremely challenging.

Experimental design studies

As Graßmann and Schermuly's (2018) research is the only RCT design (in this case – a randomised control field experiment) amongst existing publications, it is worth describing in more detail. Graßmann and Schermuly (2018) with other colleagues conducted a series of studies on the negative effect of coaching. In this study novice coaches – students of a university in Germany – experienced some negative effects of coaching, even when coaching was seen as successful by their 'clients' – other students. The examples of negative effect for coaches

included, for example, 'feeling too much responsibility for a client' or 'feeling emotionally exhausted'. These effects were stronger in coaches with high levels of neuroticism and even stronger if these coaches belonged to a 'control group' – without supervision provided (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2018). This may indicate a preventative/mitigating function of coaching supervision for novice coaches and the authors connect this with the restorative/resourcing function of supervision and vulnerability of particular type of coaches (Hawkins & Smith, 2013; Proctor, 1987). At the same time, the authors present their conclusion in only tentative terms, considering the limitations of the study. They do not suggest supervision as a panacea for negative effects because the use of supervision did not completely prevent negative effects for coaches and clients in the first place (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2018). It can be said, however, that this is an initial and tentative evidence of the benefit from the restorative function of supervision.

Surveys

Findings from the peer-refereed surveys on the value of supervision (de Haan, 2017; Grant, 2012; Jepson, 2016; Müller et al., 2020) suggest a number of other benefits as perceived by coaches in relation to their practice. Two of these studies that aimed at a wider spectrum of potential benefits, indicate a particular emphasis on the developmental function of supervision (Grant, 2012; Jepson, 2016), for example, 'the development of insights and new perspectives' (Grant, 2012, p.21) or explicitly, to 'Ensure continual growth and development of my practice' (Jepson, 2016, p.137). Both of these studies also indicate a value associated with the normative function, for example 'helping maintain the delivery of a good quality coaching particularly in dealing with difficult cases' (Grant, 2012, p.21).

Two other surveys (de Haan, 2017; Müller et al., 2020) indicate more nuanced findings about the value of supervision. For example, de Haan (2017) concludes that

coach supervisees are significantly 'safer, more satisfied and more trusting' in comparison to existing data on users of supervision in counselling and psychotherapy. Differences in age and experience of participating coaches suggests that older and more experienced coaches, and those who took more supervision, have higher levels of trust and safety. A recent study by Müller et al. (2020) found that coaches have higher satisfaction with their job and leisure time and less work-related mental strain (compared to German population norm scores). It is notable that coaching supervision had a significant buffer effect on coaches' job satisfaction when they experienced a high amount of work-related mental strain.

Qualitative studies

The quality of papers describing research conducted within the interpretative paradigm and using qualitative methodologies, varied in terms of demonstrated rigour. Two of them did not indicate an applied methodological approach at all (Armstrong & Geddes, 2009; Butwell, 2006). Six other used a grounded theory approach (Homer, 2017; Lawrence & White, 2014; Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009), Action Research (Hodge, 2016), IPA (McGivern, 2009) or ethnography (Robson, 2016).

Considering the small number of these studies and the fact that identifying the value of supervision was not their main focus, in this analysis we summarise their findings on this topic without differentiation by contexts, for example, qualified supervisor-led or peer-supervision. Such an overarching perspective on the findings shows that the value of supervision is in the reflective space provided (e.g. Armstrong & Geddes, 2009) to present and explore cases (e.g. Butwell, 2006) with an opportunity to be challenged and to validate one's practice (e.g. Lawrence & White, 2014). The value was also being seen in promoting continuing learning (e.g. McGivern, 2009) and development of reflexivity (e.g. Hodge, 2016). It could be added though that when

group supervision was the focus of the study, additional benefits were identified such as learning in many roles (e.g. Homer, 2017) and being part of the community that enables learning and support (e.g. Robson, 2016).

The analysis of this construct strongly suggests the need for further empirical data on the value of coaching supervision. It could be said that the progress in this regard is impeded by the lack of theories and conceptual work that could generate further hypotheses for quantitative studies. Without them the field relies on surveys rather than more sophisticated designs. It is also possible to speculate that qualitative studies are too slow so far to produce in-depth observations and propositions that would be useful to explore in larger studies.

4. The use of supervision

Even though the 'scope of research on coaching supervision is still rather limited' (Tkach & DiGirolamo, 2017), recognition of supervision's importance and its increasing uptake have been consistently identified across the coaching field (de Haan 2017; Hawkins & Turner 2017; McAnally et al., 2019; Moral & Lamy 2018). At the same time, doubts about the validity of this interpretation of growth have been also voiced (Robson, 2016). It is possible that some of the studies/reports may be over-reporting due to the fact that participating coaches might often be members of professional bodies who are invested in promoting supervision and its desirability in practice and professional development (Hawkins et al. 2019). Considering these caveats, the existing state of the use of coaching supervision warrants investigation.

As noted, the literature on coaching supervision suggests that its use in coaching is justified and that there are specific features of this use that deserve attention. To explore these features, we take a closer look at what approaches to supervision are widely accepted including national differences in the concept and use of coaching supervi-

sion; the degree of uptake and frequency amongst practitioners; possible variations of the modalities of supervision with potential issues in their use.

A few studies have tried to compare the level of development of coaching supervision worldwide (McAnally et al., 2019; Moral & Lamy, 2018). They suggest the existence of a predominant approach accepted nearly everywhere, which is basically characterised by its qualitative, developmental, and resourcing functions (Hawkins et al., 2019), and typically propagates the seven-eyed-model (Kotte, 2017). Moral and Lamy (2018) have called this approach the 'modèle Britannique'. Trying to look at the big picture, however, considerable national differences seem to emerge. Despite wide acceptance of the modèle Britannique, there still exist some differing views on the precise definitions of coaching versus supervision (Moral & Lamy, 2018), and consequently, on coaching supervision itself (Kotte 2017; Schreyögg, 2011). In addition, Carrol (2006) claims that existing models of supervision are only in part sufficient for the demands of coaching supervision.

While there is a diverse field of publications on coaching supervision in English (Moral & Lamy, 2018), the literature in French is focused on a much smaller number of contributors (Moral & Lamy, 2016; 2018). In Germany, in contrast, supervision traditionally did not discriminate between the helping professions (Kotte, 2017; Schreyögg, 2011), even though the supervision of coaches has a long tradition in the German-speaking countries. As early as 1998 Petzold advocated the supervision of coaches as 'meta-consulting' (Schreyögg, 2011), and as a central element of coach-training (Freitag-Becker et al. 2017; Hassler 2011) coaching supervision has long been having a strong importance for the German certifying bodies (Kotte, 2017). Despite its general presence, coaching supervision as a term in itself has been emerging only very recently in Germany (Kotte, 2017).

In terms of the uptake of coaching

supervision by coaches, different surveys indicate between approximately 50 to 80 per cent of coaches reporting their use of coaching supervision (Grant, 2012; Hawkins et al., 2019; Jepson, 2016; Salter, 2008). These figures, however, have to be seen with a degree of caution as what they actually mean varies considerably. Very few studies, for example, explore the views of coaches who do not use supervision with an indication of their reasons, as has been done in an early study by Salter (2008). Many surveys do not attempt to make a differentiation in the usage of supervision between regular users and those who use coaching supervision only during their formal training. In terms of the frequency of usage, while the vast majority of coaches seems to be more or less in agreement on it being somewhere between a fortnight and bi-monthly (Grant, 2012), this decision is reported to often be adjusted 'as needed' (Grant, 2012).

Surveys on the use of coaching supervision do not often differentiate the use of different modalities, such as one-to-one or group or peer-supervision. Those which do make this differentiation clear, however, indicate a growing popularity of peer-supervision with coaches reporting it as satisfactory, available and cheap (e.g. Robson 2016). Some of them indicate that this modality is preferred by many coaches over both formalised and informal supervision arrangements (Grant, 2012). Others attribute the popularity of peer supervision to the difficulty of finding a suitable supervisor, possibly due to lack of trust (de Haan, 2017), and the cost of supervision (Grant, 2012). In one survey over a third of a sample of coaches participating thought that supervision should be free (Hawkins et al., 2019). Others expressed the hope that institutions will offer more opportunity for coaching supervision (de Haan, 2017). The discussions of making coaching supervision mandatory continue with a predominant view that this could be counterproductive (de Haan, 2017; Salter, 2008).

Some literature describing the use of supervision reports not only potential benefits

but also potential issues. The benefits of coaching supervision in the one-to-one modality, generally in line with the *modèle Britannique*, are well and widely accepted (Jepson, 2016). In contrast, there is some debate about the benefits of supervision in the group-setting. On the one hand, there are reports by internal coaches that group supervision supports the development of a ‘community of practice’ (Robson, 2016)

and benefits from the unique group-setting. Other coaches see benefits of both modalities as more or less comparable (de Haan, 2017). However, participants in Grant’s (2012) study reported supervision in a group as challenging. In spite of such concerns, de Haan and Birch (2011) conclude that existing drawbacks may well be outweighed by the potential benefits of coaching supervision in groups.

Table 1: Summary of potential research questions and suggested research methodologies.

Research question	Research methodology
<i>Clarifying the concept of coaching supervision</i>	
What are essential elements of supervision process that can allow defining this practice on basis of empirical investigation?	Q sort methodology
How the functions of coaching supervision are connected to wider theoretical psychological sociological and educational perspectives?	Conceptual investigation and mapping
How supervisors adjust their style when working with diverse groups of coaches?	Qualitative study
<i>The state of theoretical development demonstrated in the literature</i>	
How do supervisors conceptualise what they do?	Qualitative study
What is the relationship between different functions/process elements of supervision?	Qualitative study
What are the characteristics of bonding in coaching supervision?	Qualitative study
<i>The value attributed to supervision</i>	
What process elements of coaching supervision are associated with higher value of coaching supervision for coaches and other stakeholders?	Experimental design
What is the comparative value of receiving supervision in different modalities?	Qualitative study
What is the relative influence of receiving coaching supervision on the long-term development of the coach?	Diary study
What effect does supervision have on the development of emotional patterns and attitudes of coaches both professionally and personally?	Qualitative study

Table 1 continued: Summary of potential research questions and suggested research methodologies.

<i>The nature of the current use of the supervision in the field</i>	
What models/instruments of supervision are considered as useful by the supervisors and what do they see as missing for the quality of their practice?	Qualitative study
In what way the differences in delivery of coaching supervision in different cultural contexts are manifested?	Qualitative study/ survey
What are the reasons for not undertaking coaching supervision?	Qualitative study/ survey
What are the challenges that coaching supervisors face?	Qualitative study/ survey

In addition to challenging experiences reported by coaches, the literature indicates that coaching supervisors also wrestle with various challenges. Some of these challenges are highly characteristic when considered in the light of the three functions of coaching supervision. They include questions of how to choose appropriate approaches and processes during supervision (Moral & Lamy, 2016), how to skilfully work with dilemmas (Moral & Lamy, 2017), how to work with low levels of trust (Hawkins et al., 2019) and with self-deception of coaches (Bachkirova, 2015).

Conclusion

In this paper we set out to support and stimulate further development of knowledge on coaching supervision by working on two goals. First, to examine critically and explicate themes/constructs emerging from publications on coaching supervision and second, to identify concepts, questions and research methodologies that are important for the development of knowledge on coaching supervision. Our SLR identified 68 studies that matched our inclusion criteria with an overarching aim to be as inclusive as possible at this early stage of development of coaching supervision discipline. Our review focused on four themes or constructs that emerged in the process of rigorous analysis. It is important to

say that considering a comparatively limited number of approved sources, these themes are inter-related and in some of sub-themes draw from the same publications.

Across all four themes many authors indicated a clear lack of empirical studies (Kotte, 2017; Möller, 2016; Robson, 2016; Tkach & DiGirolamo, 2017). Others identify the current status quo of coaching supervision research as mostly sketchy (Moral & Lamy, 2018; Tkach & DiGirolamo, 2017), unevenly distributed (Kotte, 2017; Moral & Lamy, 2018), and insufficiently integrated with each other (Möller, 2016). Overall, there is an agreement on the need for more research on coaching supervision. To guide this future research, we have formulated a series of directions for scholars grouped within four themes of our review. Based on the knowledge gap identified in our analysis we have also suggested particular research methodologies currently utilised in coaching research. In Table 1 we summarise our recommendations for further research.

The suggestions for possible directions in this table imply a wide spectrum of future research paths. It is important to acknowledge however that although there is a desire for more, and especially larger quantitative studies, the scale of resource-investment required for such studies is often prohibitive (Tkach & DiGirolamo, 2017). We also

believe that investments on such a scale should follow and build on a body of elaborate qualitative research that is also limited at this stage. Such research can generate hypotheses for further investigation at a larger scale. Therefore, we support qualitative approaches that are currently applied by researchers as well as quantitative. With the number of studies growing we would advocate integration and creative synthesis of such studies, thus enhancing our in depth understanding of supervision practice. Mixed method studies would also be a methodology of choice for coaching supervision, but it is recognised that such studies may be hindered by the same organisational difficulties as large quantitative projects.

Although supervision of coaches differs from supervision in other helping professions, for research purposes this field may benefit from an understanding of and borrowing from approaches and research ideas that were generated in disciplines such as psychotherapy, training evaluation and professional development. We particularly advocate more attention to the contexts of studies and diversity of coaches as researchers may have treated coaches as more homogeneous a group than they actually are, potentially blurring important differentiations (Grant, 2012). Further down the line, it would be important to take into account the interests of other stakeholders in coaching supervision, in addition to coaches.

We acknowledge that our inclusion criteria were quite generous and other systematic reviews may decide to be stricter

in terms of the quality of publications. However, we justify our decision because the intention of this review, as the first of this nature, was to stimulate the field at the state when research is scarce. We also note that we have produced a small number of quite broad themes and further reviews may follow a different approach. In this study, however, the broad scope of these themes reflects the state of the discipline. Although this also limited the range of theories and research to which the findings could be applied, we have nevertheless confirmed a general pattern in the development of what is a very new discipline. We are confident that this review fulfilled its purpose to stimulate further research and conceptual work on coaching supervision with the use of the proposed research questions and methodological recommendations.

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Team coaching: Three questions and a look ahead: A systematic literature review

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Today's organisations most often call upon teams, rather than individuals, to solve their most complex problems. In an effort to improve team processes and performance, organisations invest both time and money into team development interventions, including team coaching. Despite frequent mentions of team coaching in academic literature and its popularity in practice, we know very little about the efficacy of team coaching and reviews on this topic are scant. Accordingly, we conducted a systematic review of the team coaching literature in organisations, providing an overview of the state of the science of team coaching. Our review highlights the general effectiveness of team coaching across studies, identifying mediating mechanisms that explain its effectiveness, outcomes impacted by team coaching and boundary conditions to its efficacy. We end with implications for practitioners and academics and a number of avenues for future research in this timely domain.

Keywords: team coaching; systematic literature review; workplace coaching; team performance; Hackman and Wageman team model; Cochrane review.

TEAMWORK (i.e. team processes and performance) is the paramount mode through which work is conducted in many organisations including those in the healthcare, oil and gas, aerospace, engineering, and military industries. Given the prevalence of teamwork in the modern workplace, organisations have increasingly looked for ways to improve team performance through the use of team development interventions (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018). Team development interventions can include a broad array of activities aimed at improving teamwork, including team and leadership training, debriefing and performance monitoring and assessment (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018). Many of these interventions have received rigorous empirical investigation. For example, team training has been meta-analytically linked to saving lives when it is implemented in healthcare organisations (Hughes et al., 2016).

One popular team development intervention, particularly in practice, is team coaching (Salas et al., 2015). Team coaching was largely introduced by Hackman and Wageman (2005), who argued that team

coaching serves a number of functions for teams and can be targeted at many phases of the team development process. Despite the popularity of this seminal work, which has been cited over 1000 times, the empirical literature on team coaching has remained somewhat limited compared to work on other team development interventions. While robust accounts of team training have examined its efficacy in controlled experimental settings, research on team coaching tends to emerge in the form of practical case studies (Shuffler et al., 2018). Furthermore, with a few exceptions, work on team coaching has not been systematically reviewed. As a result, our understanding of the state of the science on team coaching is quite limited.

In an effort to address this gap, we conducted a Cochrane systematic review of empirical studies of team coaching, which contributes to the team coaching literature in several important ways. We organise our review around three central questions. First, we examine how team coaching is conceptualised by investigating the methodological approaches to the studies in our review and separating interventional from correlational

studies. Next, we answer, 'Is team coaching effective?' by summarising the findings of identified works. Finally, we take a deeper dive into team coaching interventions, examining them in the context of Hackman's criteria. In addition, by limiting the scope of our review to only empirical, quantitative works, we are able to extract and synthesise robust findings, highlighting the most rigorous work in this area.

Defining team coaching

Despite Hackman and Wageman's (2005) seminal work advancing a theory of team coaching, scholars have recently noted the discrepancies between this theory and how team coaching is approached in practice (Donaldson et al., 2013; Jones et al., 2019; Wotruba, 2016). Hackman and Wageman (2005) describe team coaching as 'an act of leadership' (p.269), and define coaching more broadly as any 'direct interaction with a team intended to help members make coordinated and task-appropriate use of their collective resources in accomplishing the team's work' (p.269). Accordingly, some reviews of teamwork that mention team coaching have focused on team coaching as a leader behaviour, using 'coach' and 'leader' synonymously (Salas et al., 2015; Zaccaro et al., 2001). However, other reviews of team coaching define the construct very differently, focusing more on team awareness and motivation (e.g. Clutterbuck, 2009) or describing coaching behaviours as directed at individual members (e.g. Diedrich, 2001).

It should come as no surprise that the operationalisation of team coaching in empirical research varies widely, given that the most recent review of theoretical accounts on the topic identified 15 definitions of team coaching and six dimensions on which these definitions diverge (Jones et al., 2019). After surveying individuals who practice team coaching, the authors advanced a definition of team coaching that incorporated a number of themes including learning and development, a focus on goals and performance, techniques to increase team self-awareness and administration over

a long period of time rather than as a one-off intervention (Jones et al., 2019). However, to date, no work has synthesised empirical (as opposed to theoretical) work on team coaching, and thus we advance the following research question:

RQ 1: How is team coaching operationalised in empirical research?

Outcomes of team coaching

Given the emphasis on team performance and effectiveness as focal dependent variables in the broader academic literature on teams, it should come as no surprise that accounts of team coaching tend to focus on its impact on these outcomes (Kozlowski & Ilgen, 2006; Hackman & Wageman, 2005). However, given that the focus of team coaching is often on improving processes, it may be reasonable to investigate the impact of team coaching on processes as an end in itself (Kozlowski et al., 2009). Generally it is assumed that team coaching has a positive impact on team processes and performance, and brief overviews of the team coaching literature tend to find this to be true (Shuffler et al., 2018). However, given the lack of consensus surrounding the construct of team coaching, some argue that it is difficult to determine whether team coaching is effective at all (Shepherd & Suddaby, 2017).

Though not typically recommended, the focus of coaching may also be more interpersonal in nature (Hackman & Wageman, 2005). Indeed, meta-analyses of leader behaviour have found evidence that behaviours associated with coaching can have a positive impact not only on performance, but also on member satisfaction with the leader and team (DeRue et al., 2011). Thus, studies of team coaching may consider outcomes other than performance, particularly those that are more affective in nature. Given this, we seek to (a) identify the outcomes explored in relation to team coaching and (b) summarise existing work to provide a general understanding of whether team coaching is effective and the conditions under which team coaching is effective. Thus, we propose the question.

RQ 2: Is team coaching effective at improving team processes and performance?

Approaches to coaching interventions

In their seminal work on team coaching, Hackman and Wageman (2005) provide an in-depth description of approaches to effective coaching, outlining the functions that coaches can play at various stages of team development. Though their definition of coaching is broad, the approaches they provide tend to describe interventions that can be targeted to improve team functioning. Specifically, they describe four types of team coaching interventions: Eclectic interventions (including team facilitation); process consultation; behavioural model and developmental coaching. Eclectic interventions are typically atheoretical, but have high face validity and tend to focus on interpersonal relationships within a team or members' interpersonal skills. Process consultation involves engaging team members to reflect on their team processes and how they impact team functioning. The behavioural model approach goes a step further, wherein coaches provide feedback to members on improving team behaviour to improve performance. Finally, developmental coaching is distinguished by its focus on timing and the team's developmental phase.

More broadly, Hackman and Wageman (2005) describe interventions aimed at interpersonal versus task-related team processes, arguing that interventions targeted at task-related processes will be more effective at improving performance. Accordingly, it is generally recommended that teams focus their coaching efforts more heavily on behavioural processes rather than team affect or interpersonal relationships (Salas et al., 2015). However, without a synthesis of the literature on team coaching, we know little about the approaches to coaching interventions used in the field and, furthermore, the relative efficacy of these interventional approaches. Accordingly, we pose our final questions.

RQ 3: How do organisations approach team coaching interventions?

RQ 4: Does efficacy depend on approach?

Method

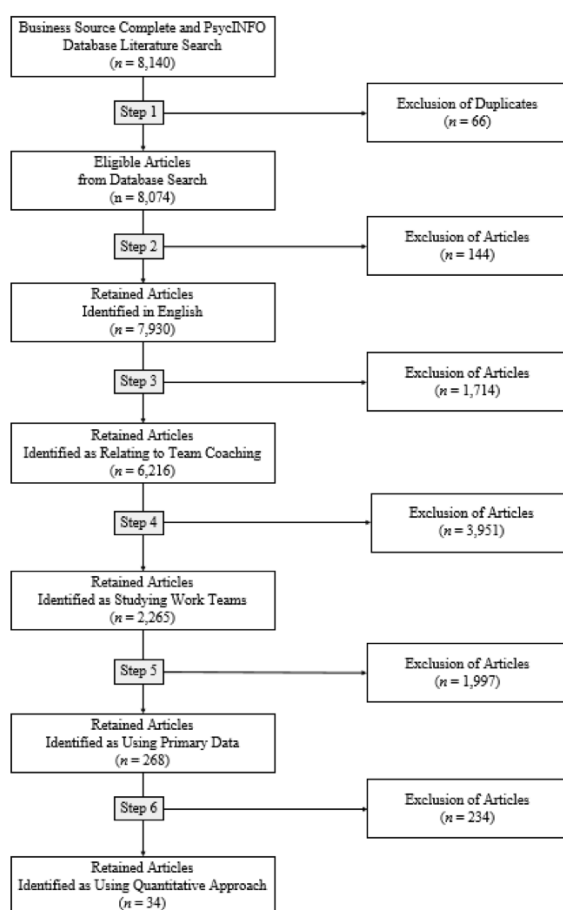
Literature search

We conducted a literature search for work examining team coaching in the Business Source Complete and PsycINFO databases with no restrictions on publication status. While traditionally, Cochrane reviews include searches of central and medline databases, because our review concerns team coaching in workplaces broadly, we chose databases focused on psychology and business sources. Using the Boolean 'and' operator, the terms 'team' and 'coach*' were entered into a search of each database, capturing all articles containing both 'team' and any word stemming from 'coach' (i.e. coach, coaching, coaches). For each database, a preliminary search was conducted to locate all articles containing the search terms anywhere in the article. Our search was conducted in July 2019 and identified articles published in PsycINFO since 1928 and in Business Source Complete since 1953. In total, 8140 articles were returned from the search. All reference data were retrieved and stored using Zotero reference management software.

Next, we used a number of criteria to determine eligibility for inclusion in our review. First, we reviewed article titles and abstracts to determine if articles (a) were published in English, (b) were related to team coaching in a work context, (c) contained primary data and (d) quantitatively assessed group and/or individual effects of team coaching using any study design. These criteria elicited a total of 34 articles for final inclusion in our review. Figure 1 provides an overview of these inclusion criteria using PRISMA reporting guidelines to outline the number of articles removed at each stage.

In order to assess whether articles related to team coaching, we adopted the definition of team coaching used by Hackman and Wageman (2005): Direct interaction with a team intended to help members make

Figure 1: PRISMA article inclusion chart.



coordinated and task-appropriate use of their collective resources in accomplishing the team's work. Based on this definition, solely individualised coaching (such as executive coaching) interventions were excluded from the final review as being irrelevant to team coaching. Additionally, as Hackman & Wageman discuss team coaching primarily in the context of coaching provided by team leaders; therefore, articles examining peer coaching were excluded from the review as being irrelevant to team coaching. Studies were also excluded if they examined teams primarily consisting of (a) students at any education level and (b) athletes. Further, studies containing only qualitative outcomes were excluded. Various work team settings were represented in the final review, including

teams from manufacturing and service industries and members in a wide range of occupations including physicians, research and development, and administrative occupations.

Two authors independently examined each article title and abstract for all databases in order to exclude irrelevant articles. This assessment was done without prior knowledge of the study's authors, results, or other identifying information. Disagreements or uncertainty regarding the relevance of a given article were handled via discussion between the two authors and a final determination regarding inclusion was made by the first author. There were no cases in which the first author made a final determination without having achieved consensus with the other author.

Table 1: Summary of articles included in systematic review.

Article citation	Study type	Summary of coaching-related findings
Albritton (2016)	Correlational	Team psychological safety mediates positive relationship between coaching-oriented team leadership and team learning behaviour, team learning behaviour mediates positive relationship between team psychological safety and the implementation of quality improvement methods.
Anderson (2013)	Correlational	Workplace coaching is distinct from specialised coaching practices, demographic characteristics of individual managers are unlikely to affect their propensity to undertake managerial coaching, leader-member exchange and occupational self-efficacy are predictive of managerial coaching behaviours, managerial coaching requires an acknowledgement of reciprocity, collaborative 'meaning-making' and a diminished 'distance' between leaders and team members.
Attan (2012)	Intervention	Personality-based coaching had a significant impact on team member satisfaction, but the impact was not found to be significant for perceived team performance and team trust; however, personality-based coaching had a significant impact when considering team effectiveness as a combined measure
Barrett (2006)	Intervention	Group coaching lowered burnout, but had no effect on productivity.
Buljac-Samardzic & van Woerkom (2015)	Correlational	Only performance of poorly reflective teams benefits from coaching behaviour.
Cannon & Edmondson (2001)	Correlational	Effective coaching influences beliefs related to failure.
Dahling, Taylor, Chau, & Dwight (2016)	Correlational	Managers' coaching skill was directly related to the annual sales goal attainment of the sales representatives that they supervised—this effect was partially mediated by team-level role clarity, as predicted by feedback intervention theory and goal setting theory. Coaching skill had a cross-level moderating effect on the relationship between coaching frequency and sales goal attainment; coaching frequency had a negative effect on goal attainment when coaching skill was low.
DeRue, Barnes, & Morgeson (2010)	Correlational	Coaching leadership was more effective than directive leadership when the team leader was highly charismatic and less effective than directive leadership when the team leader lacked charisma. Directive leadership was more effective than coaching leadership when team members were high in self-efficacy and less effective than coaching leadership when team members lacked self-efficacy.
Dimas, Rebelo, T. & Lourenço (2016)	Correlational	Significant positive effect of team leader coaching on satisfaction and performance.

Table 1 continued: Summary of articles included in systematic review.

Article citation	Study type	Summary of coaching-related findings
Dimas, Renato Lourenço & Rebelo (2016)	Correlational	Team coaching has a positive effect on team satisfaction, positive effect on positive emotion, negative effect on negative emotion, but no effect on performance.
Duygulu & Çıraklar (2009)	Correlational	Coaching behaviours were significantly related to team effectiveness for professional teams.
Edmondson (2003)	Correlational	Team leader coaching was associated with successful technology implementation in interdisciplinary action teams.
Farh & Chen (2018)	Correlational	Leader coaching behaviour facilitated team voice in the preparation and action phases of team performance and especially in the action phase for more familiar teams.
Hagen (2008)	Correlational	Team coaching expertise demonstrated the most variance in project outcomes.
Hagen & Gavrilova Aguilar (2012)	Correlational	Coaching expertise and team empowerment explained the most variance in team learning outcomes for team members.
Harmer & Lutton (2007)	Intervention	Emotional intelligence coaching had a positive impact on team performance.
Hon & Chan (2013)	Correlational	Empowering leadership, including team coaching, positively influenced team creativity via team self-concordance and team creative efficacy.
Körner, Luzay, Plewnia, Becker, Rundel, Zimmermann & Müller (2017)	Intervention	Team coaching improved team organisation, willingness to accept responsibility and knowledge integration according to staff, whereas other parameters including internal participation, team leadership and cohesion did not improve due to the intervention.
Liu, Pirola-Merlo, Yang & Huang (2009)	Correlational	Team coaching functions had positive effects on the team performance processes of effort and skills and knowledge.
Liu & Batt (2010)	Correlational	The amount of coaching that an employee received from their group leader each month predicted objective performance improvements over time.
Matsuo (2018)	Correlational	Team coaching directly influenced team and individual learning, team reflexivity mediated these relationships.
Matsuo & Matsuo (2017)	Correlational	Managerial coaching had a positive influence on team reflection.
Morgeson (2005)	Correlational	Supportive coaching positively related to perceptions of team leader.
Özduran & Tanova (2017)	Correlational	Effects of higher incremental mindsets of managers on the organisational citizenship behaviours of their subordinates are mediated by the coaching behaviour of the managers.
Rapp, Gilson, Mathieu & Ruddy (2016)	Correlational	Coaches significantly influence team empowerment, and thereby team processes and performance whereas external team leaders do not.

Table 1 *continued*: Summary of articles included in systematic review.

Article citation	Study type	Summary of coaching-related findings
Ratiu, David & Baban (2016)	Intervention	Overall, the analysis of results elicited an increase of scores in the leadership behaviour dimensions measured by multifactor leadership questionnaire that are part of the managerial coaching skills.
Roeden, Maaskant & Curfs (2014)	Intervention	Compared solution focused coaching (SFC) vs coaching as usual (CAU), for both the SFC and the CAU teams, (1) proactive behaviour in teams and (2) the quality of the staff-client relationships were measured before SFC, after SFC, and during follow-up. SFC was compared with CAU on these two measures. Goal attainment was only measured in the SFC teams, as the CAU teams did not formulate team goals. The paper gives a detailed description of a solution-focused consultation. The SFC teams improved on the variables proactive thinking and quality of the relationships statistically significantly more than the CAU teams. This held both for individual staff members (with respondent numbers varying from 45 to 59) and teams.
Rousseau, Aubé & Tremblay, (2013)	Correlational	The relationship between team coaching and team innovation is mediated by team goal commitment and support for innovation.
Schaubroeck, Carmeli, Bhatia & Paz (2016)	Correlational	Indirect, positive relationship between team leader coaching and innovativeness as well as task performance through team learning, but only among teams with contentious interpersonal communication.
She, Li, Li, London & Yang (2019)	Correlational	Managerial coaching was positively related to managers' personal accomplishment, which had a subsequent positive effect on their job satisfaction; coaching also heightened managers' role overload, resulting in their work fatigue; results showed that managers who reported lower (versus higher) perceived organisational support tended to experience lower (versus higher) personal accomplishment and higher (versus lower) role overload associated with coaching.
Shunk, Dulay, Chou, Janson & O'Brien (2014)	Intervention	These findings suggest that the huddle- coaching program was a worthwhile investment in trainee development that also supported the clinic's larger mission to deliver team-based, patient-aligned care
Stoker (2008)	Correlational	Team members with a short team tenure reported higher levels of individual performance when their team leader demonstrated directive behaviour, but these relatively new team members reported lower levels of individual performance and experienced greater emotional exhaustion when their team leader adopted coaching behaviour. For team members with longer team tenure, individual performance was greater and emotional exhaustion less when their team leader exhibited a coaching style of behaviour.

Table 1 *continued*: Summary of articles included in systematic review.

Article citation	Study type	Summary of coaching-related findings
Wageman (2001)	Correlational	How leaders design their teams and the quality of their hands-on coaching both influence team self- management, the quality of member relationships, and member satisfaction, but only leaders' design activities affect team task performance. Moreover, design and coaching interact, so that well-designed teams are helped more by effective coaching— and undermined less by ineffective coaching—than are poorly designed teams.
Weer, DiRenzo & Shipper (2016)	Correlational	Facilitative coaching positively influenced team commitment and, in turn, team effectiveness, whereas pressure-based coaching hindered team functioning by negatively influencing team commitment through heightened levels of tension within the team.

Note: Findings from studies adapted from abstract of each study.

Literature review

Next, one author reviewed each of the articles based on criteria that would inform our proposed research questions. To assess our first research question, we reviewed articles to determine if the approach used conceptualised coaching in terms of leader behaviours or as an intervention. For articles using a behavioural approach, we recorded the scale used to measure team coaching. To address our second research question regarding the effectiveness of team coaching programmes, we noted the findings drawn from each study as well as the criterion used in relation to team coaching. Finally, to examine our third and fourth research questions, we examined intervention-based studies based on Hackman and Wageman's (2005) team coaching intervention types (for example, eclectic interventions, process consultation, behavioural model, and developmental coaching).

Results

The methods we used for our literature review elicited a number of findings, which we organise in relation to our research questions. An overview of the articles included in our study, including the findings from these studies, is included in Table 1.

Operationalisation of team coaching

Our first research question focused on the operationalisation of team coaching. Accordingly, we investigated articles for their study approach as well as the measures used for team coaching. In sum, our results indicate that (a) behavioural studies are far more common than interventions, and (b) the measures used to assess team coaching tend to be linked to the theoretical and conceptual academic literature on team coaching. A notable caveat in our interpretation was that terminology was not consistent across studies. For example, we included a number of studies that examined 'group coaching' rather than team coaching, and a number of studies that may have drawn from different definitions of team coaching, but that broadly aligned with Hackman and Wageman's (2005) conceptualisation.

Overwhelmingly, we found that studies used a more leader-behavioural approach to understanding team coaching – in the studies we included, 81.5 per cent used a behavioural conceptualisation, and therefore conducted a correlational rather than intervention-focused study design. While most correlational studies considered an internal leader's coaching behaviours, some studies investigated the role of an external coach (e.g. Rapp et al., 2016). Conversely, studies of interventions tended to focus on one-time or

ongoing external coaching programmes with an outside consultant or facilitator serving as a coach. Notably, these findings can be contrasted with Jones and colleagues' (2019) recent work, which defines team coaching as a typically long-term intervention with clearly delineated activities, rather than as a series of leader behaviours. Thus, it seems that most of the work captured in the academic literature is more aligned with the definitions advanced by Hackman and Wageman's (2005) more leader behaviour-centric model. However, additional research could provide more clarity on whether the coaching practices captured in published studies provides an accurate reflection of the wide range of team coaching practices implemented in organisations.

Though interventional studies did not typically include measures of team coaching, the correlational studies included in our review drew from a number of scales to operationalise team coaching. While some authors created their own organisation-specific measures of team coaching, the most common measures used were Wageman et al.'s (2005) measures of coaching and Heslin et al.'s (2006) measure of coaching behaviour. Both of these measures have clear links to Hackman and Wageman's (2005) team coaching framework, demonstrating that the majority of studies of team coaching behaviours are theoretically linked to this framework. Heslin and colleagues' scale uses three components of coaching employees: guidance, facilitation and inspiration – to measure coaching. Wageman and colleagues' coaching measures come from a larger scale developed as a team diagnostic survey, but are even more clearly tied to the Hackman and Wageman (2005) framework. For example, the scale includes measures of task-focused coaching, operant coaching, interpersonal coaching, and unhelpful directives.

Effectiveness of team coaching

Next, to address our second research question, we reviewed the findings from included articles as well as the constructs considered in relation to team coaching. First, we

reviewed the constructs studied in relation to team coaching. In line with previous work highlighting the effects of team coaching, we found that most studies investigated the effects of team coaching on performance and that this effect was generally both positive and significant. However, a number of studies considered outcomes in addition to team performance. For example, studies commonly considered team satisfaction and team learning in relation to team coaching. Though rarely used as a dependent variable, a number of studies looked at team behavioural processes and emergent states as moderating or mediating mechanisms in the team coaching-performance relationship. For example, Albritton (2016) found that team psychological safety, a team emergent state, mediates the relationship between team leader coaching behaviours and team learning behaviour. Across all studies, relationships between team coaching and these non-performance variables were generally positive.

Though in general, studies reported positive effects between team coaching and outcomes, some studies noted boundary conditions for these effects. For example, Buljac-Samardzic and van Woerkom (2015) found that the positive effect of team coaching on performance held only for teams that had poor reflection. Another study found that the positive relationship between team coaching and innovation held only for teams with contentious communication. Taken together, these findings indicate that team coaching may be more beneficial for teams who need coaching – teams that are already high performing or that are able to monitor and self-correct their own behaviour may not benefit from coaching. Although few studies considered the role of external leaders or coaches, one study found that while external coaches had a significant positive influence on team empowerment, external leaders did not (Rapp et al., 2016).

In sum, the effects of team coaching are, as previous scholars have suggested, generally positive. While some studies did find evidence for boundary conditions for

these positive effects, these studies generally underscored the importance of team coaching for teams with poor behavioural processes.

Approaches to team coaching

Within studies of coaching interventions, our third and fourth research questions were aimed at understanding the types of interventions used in studies of team coaching and the relative efficacy of different interventional approaches, respectively. Interestingly, the studies included in our review tended to indicate that team coaching interventions were not successful in improving performance. As we mention in the previous section, studies of team coaching as a whole tend to find quite positive effects, the interventional approaches rarely elicited performance boosts. However, some of these studies did find positive effects on other variables. For example, Barrett (2006) found that while team coaching had no effect on team productivity, teams did experience less burnout after the intervention. In general, the positive non-performance effects of interventional approaches tended to be more affective in nature (e.g. team satisfaction and relationship quality).

Due to the small number of interventional studies included in our review and the relative dearth of information about the interventions used, we were not able to classify and draw meaningful conclusions regarding the various approaches outlined by Hackman and Wageman (2005). However, one study investigated the effects of coaching-as-usual with those of solution-focused coaching, a corollary to task versus interpersonal-focused coaching, and found that solution-focused coaching experienced a greater increase in proactive thinking and team relationship quality (Roeden et al., 2014).

Discussion

Our systematic review of the literature on team coaching elicited a number of important conclusions with implications for prac-

tioners and academics alike and provides a number of avenues for future research on the topic of team coaching.

Our first research question asked, 'How is team coaching operationalised in empirical research?' In general, we found that team coaching tends to be operationalised in terms of leader behaviour rather than as an intervention. This finding is in line with suggestions from previous reviews of team development interventions, which conceptualise team coaching as synonymous with leadership behaviours (Salas et al., 2015). However, as we found in relation to our fourth research question, team coaching interventions tended to elicit fewer significant impacts on team performance outcomes than studies of team leader behaviour. These findings indicate the importance of distinguishing coaching as a behaviour from coaching as an intervention and existing theoretical perspectives provide a number of potential reasons why leader coaching behaviour may tend to be more effective than outside interventions. For example, Hackman and Wageman (2005) place much emphasis on the role of team development and timing in coaching effectiveness. While the studies in our review did not tend to address time or team development phase explicitly, it may be easier for internal team leaders to identify the team's developmental needs. At face value, Rapp and colleagues' (2016) finding that team external coaches are more effective than external leaders may at first seem counter to the general findings of our review, these findings may actually provide some insight to this issue. The external leaders in their study were not as familiar with the team as an internal leader would be – instead, coaches may have been more likely to put in effort to assess the team's developmental phase and thus elicit greater outcomes. In the same way, we would expect that internal leaders' familiarity with the team would give these individuals more insight than an external coach.

While the findings regarding team coaching interventions were more mixed, our findings regarding team coaching behaviours

were quite positive. Indeed, the studies we reviewed indicated that team coaching tends to have a positive main effect on team performance outcomes and studies that investigated affective and cognitive processes also provided evidence for positive effects. Although we did identify some boundary conditions to the positive effects of team coaching on performance, these boundary conditions actually further emphasise the role of team coaching for teams with poor habits.

Broadly, our findings also highlight a wide range of applications of the term ‘team coaching.’ For example, many of the studies included in our sample used ‘group’ and ‘team’ coaching interchangeably and used a broad range of definitions of team coaching. Although these inconsistencies made a succinct review somewhat difficult, our review is intended to capture the state of current studies and to provide a look forward.

Practical implications

In a recent survey conducted by the International Coaching Federation, organisational and executive coaches ranked team coaching as top five trend in the executive coaching industry in coming years (Underhill, 2018). Given the expected rise in popularity of team coaching, it is imperative that organisations understand what makes coaching effective. Importantly, none of the studies in our review reported a significant negative impact of team coaching on performance or other desired outcomes; however, the efficacy of coaching approaches was not always consistent. Given our earlier discussion of the relative efficacy of internal team leader behaviours and external coaches, practitioners may consider working to improve the coaching behaviours of their leaders over looking to external individuals to provide coaching interventions. Research on leadership training tends to be less equivocal, finding significant, positive effects of leader training on performance (Lacerenza et al., 2018). Perhaps investing in leadership training focused on leader coaching behaviours would be a useful intervention to target team coaching.

It is also important to note that coaching is part of a larger arsenal of an organisation’s team development tools (Lacerenza et al., 2018; Shuffler et al., 2018). Human resource managers should consider team coaching alongside other interventions, like team or team leader training, to enhance the effects of these other programs. Relatedly, all of these interventions should consider a team’s development and needs to elicit the best results.

Theoretical implications

Our review also provides a number of important implications for scholars. First, our findings are promising in that they demonstrate a generally positive effect of team coaching on outcomes. Relatedly, we find a number of mediating mechanisms that explain why this relationship is positive. For example, team leaders who exhibit coaching behaviours create psychologically safe climates, which in turn improve learning and performance outcomes. While the studies in our review thoroughly explored mediating mechanisms for leader coaching behaviour, there is still much room to explore these mechanisms in the context of coaching interventions. In addition, while we generally found that scholars were considering Hackman and Wageman’s (2005) work on team coaching in their studies, we identified few intervention studies that explicitly tested their propositions. As we discuss below, future research investigating how theory may differentially impact team coaching as a leader behaviour and team coaching interventions may be warranted.

Limitations and future directions

As is the case for all reviews of bodies of literature, our study is limited in that we were limited by the research available for our review. While narrowing our review to studies of work teams (excluding, for example, sports teams) provided clarity in the applicability of findings to work teams, we were limited in the variety of articles included. For example, our review contained few unpublished studies, which may partially drive our

overall positive findings as the ‘file drawer problem’ could discourage researchers from publishing studies in which negative relationships between team coaching and outcomes were found. In addition, studies of sports or student teams may elicit different findings, providing additional theoretical or practical implications. Moreover, we made the decision to limit our search on the PsycINFO and business source complete databases because our review was focused on work teams. Future reviews may consider using a broader scope, expanding inclusion criteria or the number of databases searched.

Relatedly, due to the nature of studies provided (for example, very few interventional studies of team coaching), we were unable to fully assess for bias as outlined by recent guidelines from the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews (Cumpston et al., 2019; Sterne et al., 2016). In studies of coaching as a leader behaviour, we are most concerned about the potential for bias due to confounding. That is, because coaching behaviours are so closely tied to other established leadership styles, it is unclear whether the observed effects of coaching stemmed from the coaching behaviours or from a broader approach to leadership displayed by the leader. Regarding the interventional studies, there may have been bias in the teams selected for the coaching intervention, as in many cases the teams were not selected randomly or were selected from a specific department in an organisation. Related to the lack of a clear definition of team coaching interventions, there may also have been bias in the classification of interventions as there is no clear classification system for team coaching interventions.

In addition, because we were limited by existing work, we were unable to examine team coaching interventions as thoroughly as we had hoped. For example, it may be useful to differentiate interventions on the basis of

Hackman and Wageman’s (2005) criteria. Perhaps the interventions used in this study were less effective than studies of coaching behaviours because the studies of coaching behaviour used more theoretically-based measures of coaching, whereas interventions may have been too interpersonally focused. We expect that the use of team coaching interventions may be even more popular in organisations than is suggested by the small number of studies in our review. Therefore, we implore researchers to more thoroughly explore the effectiveness of team coaching interventions, paying close attention to the factors that may help or hinder its effectiveness to generate important implications for organisations.

Finally, we were surprised to find that few studies in our review considered time, given the close integration of team development and team coaching. Future researchers may consider a deeper exploration of team coaching at various stages of team development or team performance. Given our findings that teams with weaker behavioural processes tended to benefit more from coaching, an exploration of time and development in the team coaching space seems particularly relevant.

Our systematic review of studies of team coaching is, to our knowledge, the first of its kind. While previous reviews have considered team coaching as a component, no previous work has fully explored the outcomes of team coaching. We find that team coaching has a generally positive effect on team performance, providing further impetus for practitioners to pay close attention to their organisations’ coaching practices and for scholars to understand the boundary conditions for its effectiveness as well as ways to design interventions so that they are more effective. Furthermore, we outline a number of directions for future research in this important area of inquiry.

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Of SMART, GROW and goals gone wild – A systematic literature review on the relevance of goal activities in workplace coaching

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Goals are posited to play an important role in coaching. However, concerns have been raised about neglecting potential pitfalls of goal-focused coaching practice. Therefore, we investigate the occurrence of goal activities in workplace coaching and their association with coaching outcomes. We conducted a systematic literature review. We synthesised findings of 24 (quantitative and qualitative) empirical studies. Previously researched goal activities encompass goal setting, setting action/development plans and a goal-focused coach-coachee relationship. Coaches report to work with goals frequently, while coachees report this to occur less. Several studies suggest a positive relationship between goal activities and coaching outcomes, while other studies report no significant association. This lack of association seems to relate to both study design and chosen outcome measures. Initial findings point to possible moderating variables (e.g. coachee characteristics, initiator of goal activity) and potential challenges of involving organisational stakeholders in goal activities. The scarcity of empirical research stands in contrast to the prominent role of goals in the coaching literature. Goal activities take a wide range of different forms in practice and research. Inconclusive findings on the relationship between goal activities and coaching outcomes call for research on influencing factors, particularly contextual factors.
Keywords: goal activities; goal setting theory; workplace coaching; outcome; input factors; process factors; contextual factors; systematic literature review.

SINCE THE 1950s, goal setting and its enhancing effects on performance have been extensively studied and widely promoted in organisations (e.g. Drucker, 1954; Grant, 2012; Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002; Ordóñez et al., 2009). Scholars propose that ‘human beings are essentially goal-directed organisms’ (e.g. Grant, 2012, p.153). It is not then by chance that goals have been and currently are a central feature of coaching literature and practice (Clutterbuck & Spence, 2017). In fact, most definitions specify coaching as a goal-directed intervention and coaching interventions are considered a failure should the coachee’s goals not be attained (e.g. Grant, 2006; Schermuly, 2018; Sonesh, Coultas, Lacerenza et al., 2015). Goal setting and goal attainment are regularly described as key components,

unquestioned elements or even the central foundation of coaching practice (e.g. Clutterbuck & David, 2016; Cowan, 2013). Many coaching practitioners take goal setting as a given, ‘something that coaches [just] do’ (David et al., 2014, p.135). Notwithstanding this, there are ongoing controversial discussions among practitioners and scholars on the use of goals in organisations (e.g. Ordóñez et al., 2009) and coaching (e.g. Grant, 2012, 2018). Much of this discussion has focused on goal setting. Ordóñez and colleagues (2009) dissent from the ‘traditional view’ and declare that ‘goals [have] gone wild’ as they postulate that many organisations heavily rely on goal setting while very little attention is given to its potential negative side effects (e.g. neglecting important but non-specified goals). Previous research

findings suggest that goal setting in coaching can on the one hand have positive effects on outcomes but might imply potential pitfalls on the other (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). In other words, focusing on specific goals in coaching can be helpful (e.g. in order to increase the coachee's motivation). However, it might equally be a restriction (Jinks & Dexter, 2012). For example, potentially 'hidden' or underlying issues might be neglected, or coach and coachee might blindly focus on the 'wrong' objective due to minimised complexity when setting specific goals right at the beginning of a coaching engagement (e.g. David et al., 2016), while goals might need time to emerge or change over the course of the coaching engagement (Clutterbuck & Spence, 2017).

Working with goals in coaching has been conceptualised in various ways beyond goal setting (Clutterbuck & Spence, 2017), including for example, a goal-focused relationship between coach and coachee. However, the literature is disjointed and an overview of the various ways of working with goals in coaching (i.e. using goal activities) is lacking to date.

Therefore, the current systematic literature review aims to provide a synthesis of previous research findings on (the occurrence of) goal activities that coach and coachee engage in (i.e. goal setting, setting action/development plans, goal-focused relationship between coach and coachee). Moreover, we present findings on factors that impact upon the occurrence of goal activities.

Regarding the influence of working with goals in relation to coaching outcome, scholars have postulated a gap in current research (e.g. Bozer & Jones, 2018). Thus, we seek to synthesise extant empirical studies that examine the relationship between goal activities and coaching outcome, that is, coaching effectiveness (e.g. increase in competencies, goal attainment). Furthermore, we summarise findings on variables that might affect the relationship between goal activities and coaching outcome.

Given that coaching has grown dramatically in popularity and actual use over the last years (e.g. Sonesh, Coultas, Lacerenza et al., 2015), the term 'coaching' has been applied to interventions in a wide range of fields (e.g. sports, health and clinical fields), as well as to a wide range of target groups (Grant, 2005). In light of recent calls to take the context of coaching into account (e.g. Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018) and meta-analytic findings on differences in outcomes for different samples of coachees (e.g. Sonesh et al., 2015), we focus our review on workplace coaching, that is, coaching adults with regard to professional issues. We define workplace coaching in line with Bozer and Jones (2018) as 'a one-to-one custom-tailored, learning and development intervention that uses a collaborative, reflective, goal-focused relationship to achieve professional outcomes that are valued by the coachee' (p.1).

Goals have been defined in a broad range of ways in the scientific literature (Grant, 2012). We follow Grant (2012, p.148) when defining goals as 'internal representations of desired states or outcomes'. Hence, goals may differ, for example, in regard to their level of abstraction (e.g. specific vs abstract) or temporal range (i.e. proximal vs distal) (Clutterbuck & Spence, 2017).

With this systematic literature review, we advance the coaching field by presenting what is currently known (and not known yet) about goal activities in coaching and their impact upon coaching effectiveness. On these grounds, we provide recommendations for future research and deduce evidence-based guidance on goal-focused coaching practice.

Goal activities in coaching

Even though the use of goals in organisations is criticised by some (e.g. Ordóñez et al., 2009), goals are a central feature of coaching literature and practice (Clutterbuck & Spence, 2017). The most prominent goal concepts in coaching encompass goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002), the GROW model (Whitmore, 1992),

the goal-related component of the working alliance (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) between coach and coachee (e.g. de Haan et al., 2016), and Grant's goal-focused model of coaching (2006, 2012). As a background for our review of the empirical literature, we summarise ubiquitous goal-focused theories and frameworks in the following.

Goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990, 2002) – together with its popular applications – has been one of the most influential theories in coaching research and practice (Theeboom et al., 2017). Based on more than 35 years of empirical research on the relationship between goals and performance, Locke and Latham (1990, 2002) argue that the core to goal achievement lies in its specificity and difficulty level. Put differently, to achieve higher performance, goals should be specific (rather than vague) and challenging. The positive effect of goal setting is supposedly due to focused attention, encouraged effort, maintained persistence, and the harnessed knowledge and resources of the individual (David et al., 2014). In coaching practice, a ubiquitous application of goal setting theory is SMART goal setting (Clutterbuck & David, 2016), first mentioned by Doran in 1981. Following this model, goals are supposed to be specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related. SMART goals are widely advocated for and practised within the coaching industry such that goal setting is often equated with and thereby limited to SMART goals (Clutterbuck & Spence, 2017; Grant, 2012).

Another prominent acronym-model of working with goals in coaching is the GROW model (Whitmore, 1992). It encompasses the stages of Goal setting (i.e. setting short- and long-term goals), reality check (i.e. assessing the current situation), options (i.e. discussing potential alternatives) and will or wrap-up (i.e. delineating action steps; deciding on what is to be done, when and by whom). These are regarded as the four key steps of a successful coaching process (Whitmore, 1992) and goal setting, the 'G', is seen as the fundamental basis of successful coaching engagements.

Adapted from psychotherapy, working with goals in coaching has also been conceptualised as a goal-focused relationship between coach and coachee. Bordin (1979) proposed that the working alliance between therapist and patient is an important success factor of psychotherapy. The most established measure of his conceptualisation is the Working Alliance Inventory (WAI; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) which has been transferred to the field of coaching (e.g. de Haan et al., 2016; Graßmann et al., 2019). The WAI comprises three components, one of which is explicitly goal-related, namely, the mutual agreement on goals between coach and coachee. The other two components consist of agreement on required tasks and relational bonding.

Grant (2006, 2012) suggested an integrative model of goal-focused coaching that is closely tied to the concept of self-regulation. Accordingly, the coaches' task is to support their coachees in moving through the cycle of setting a goal, developing a plan of action, putting it into action, monitoring their performance and adapting their actions to better achieve their goals. More specifically, Grant describes the coach as a facilitator of his or her coachee's goal attainment. After the coachee perceives the need for coaching, the goal selection process starts which is affected by contextual or organisational factors (e.g. system complexity) as well as by the coachee's individual factors (e.g. personal needs). Moderators on the goal selection process stem both from the coachee him- or herself (e.g. level of change readiness) and the coaching session, that is, the coach's knowledge, skills and ability, for example, to support the setting of effective goals and to facilitate action planning. What follows are the final goal choice, deciding on action plans, monitoring the coachee's performance and eventually attainment of the goal(s).

In our review, we define working with goals as a broad range of goal activities, that is, all actions performed by the coach and/or coachee during workplace coaching

that concern coaching goals. Or put differently, specific goal-related behaviour that the coach and coachee engage in over the course of the coaching engagement (Kappenberg, 2008). We therefore concentrate on coaching session moderators of Grant's model (2012). This could be, for example, goal setting, setting action/development plans or the goal-focused aspect of the coach-coachee relationship.

Research questions

While goals enjoy great popularity in coaching research and (supposedly) coaching practice, diverging assessments on the value and risks of goal activity co-exist. The literature on goal activities in coaching lacks integration and scholars identified a research gap concerning the relationship between goal activities and coaching outcome (e.g. Bozer & Jones, 2018). We therefore propose the following research questions.

Research question 1a: Which goal activities do coaches and coachees engage in?

Research question 1b: Which factors impact upon the occurrence of goal activities?

Research question 2a: Which relationship emerges between goal activities and coaching outcome?

Research question 2b: Which factors impact upon the relationship between goal activities and coaching outcome?

Methods

We decided to conduct a systematic literature review to summarise what we currently know and do not (yet) know about the relevance of goal activities in workplace coaching. A systematic literature review not only integrates previous literature but also identifies the central issues of the addressed question (Briner & Denyer, 2012). Thus, it locates, appraises and synthesises 'the best available evidence relating to a specific research question in order to provide informative and evidence-based answers' (Dickson et al., 2017, p.2).

Literature search

We searched relevant electronic databases via EBSCO (i.e. Business Source Premier, EconLit, PsychArticles, PsycINFO, Psyn dex and OpenDissertation) to find studies using the following search terms: Coaching and (goal* or target*) not (sport* or clinical). We deliberately did not restrict our search to 'goal setting' in order to capture the broad range of goal activities outlined in the coaching literature. We further searched in coaching-specific peer-reviewed journals in the English and German languages (i.e. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*; *International Coaching Psychology Review*; *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*; *The Coaching Psychologist*; *Coaching: Theorie & Praxis*), and checked Grant's (2011) compilation of abstracts from articles and theses on coaching. To find unpublished studies, we also sent out requests via mailing-list services of the Academy of Management and the German Psychological Society. Furthermore, based on the results of our search, we conducted a second systematic search on the following search terms: 'coaching and working alliance not (sport* or clinical)' in order to ensure that we would include all relevant studies that conceptualise goal activity in terms of the goal component of the working alliance. No further results emerged.

Inclusion criteria

We defined a thorough protocol following predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. To be eligible for further analysis, studies had to (a) be published as journal articles or so-called grey literature (i.e. dissertations, theses, conference proceedings); (b) use the English or German language; (c) be empirical (quantitative and/or qualitative study design); (d) be compatible with our coaching definition, namely, workplace coaching in a formal one-on-one (i.e. coach-coachee) coaching setting; and (e) report on goal activities (e.g. goal setting) applied during workplace coaching (e.g. 'executive' or 'professional' coaching).

Following other scholars (e.g. Bozer & Jones, 2018; Graßmann et al., 2019), we included grey literature in order to maximise study results within the rather young discipline of coaching research and to avoid distortions due to publication bias. Given that some of the most notable empirical research on the coaching process has been carried out in Germany (Bachkirova et al., 2015), we included studies in the German language in addition to English publications. As we aimed at summarising extant empirical research findings, we did not include conceptual or discursive papers, opinion pieces or practitioner contributions without empirical data. Given our focus on workplace coaching, studies on types of coaching other than workplace coaching of adults were excluded (e.g. clinical, sports or music coaching). Studies of student samples were only included when coachees were adults (i.e. over 18 years old) and coaching topics were work-related, for example, career coaching. Research on managerial/supervisory coaching (i.e. coaching provided by a supervisor with formal authority over the coachee) or group/team coaching was excluded. Managerial coaching differs from workplace coaching as it is hierarchical in nature and is therefore more a component of leadership (e.g. Graßmann et al., 2019). Group/team coaching was excluded as it deviates from our definition of a one-on-one coaching engagement. Studies that conceptualised goals only as a dependent variable (i.e. an outcome measure, e.g. goal attainment) without reporting goal activity measures as an independent variable (i.e. an input measure, e.g. goal setting) were ruled out. We focused our search on goal activities that the coach and/or coachee employed during coaching engagements (i.e. coaching session moderators; Grant, 2012). In other words, we excluded studies that only focus on coachee characteristics such as coachee goal orientation. Finally, we excluded studies that did not describe distinctive associations in terms of goal

activities to outcomes, but instead reported overall coaching behaviour or implemented additional interventions besides coaching at the same time (e.g. 360°-feedback, training and coaching). This is because it would not be clear how the two (or more) interventions individually influenced outcomes or if the multiple interventions interact in influencing outcomes.

Data set

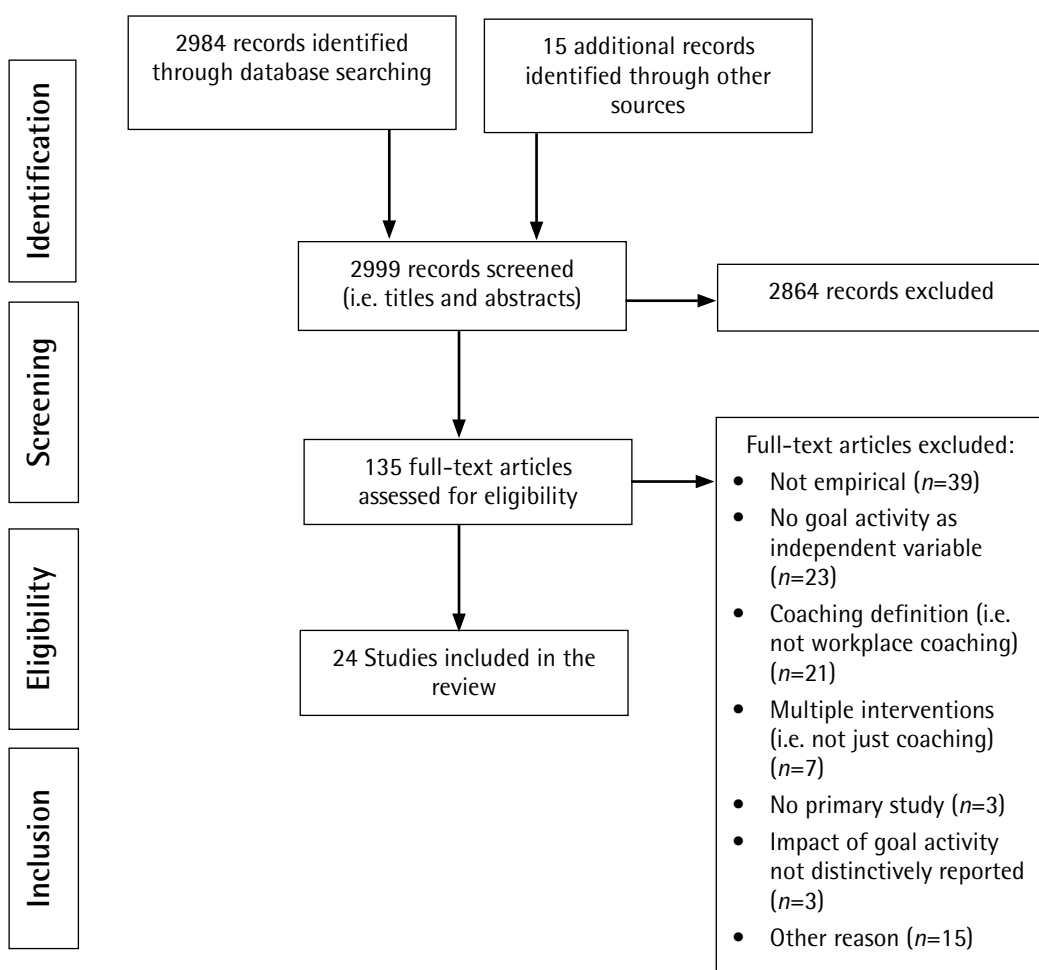
Our search of data bases resulted in 2984 studies. After the assessment of titles and abstracts (i.e. preliminary screening) and the addition of 15 studies from other sources (e.g. through citation chaining), 135 full texts were retrieved and checked for eligibility as per our inclusion criteria. As a result, 24 studies were included in the final synthesis.

Studies were assessed by three reviewers, the two authors and a graduate student. A coding protocol was developed jointly by the research team. Reviewers then screened and coded each study that met the inclusion criteria. In the case of any discrepancies between reviewers, a discussion was held until an agreement between all raters was reached. All studies that were included in the final synthesis are indicated with an * in our list of references.

Results

First, we describe study characteristics, reported goal activities and measured coaching outcomes of the included studies. This is followed by an outline of the findings of studies that reported the occurrence of using different goal activities in coaching (research question 1a) and research on factors that might impact upon the occurrence of goal activities (research question 1b). We then present the findings of research on the relationship between goal activities and coaching outcome (research question 2a) and on factors that might impact upon the relationship (research question 2b).

Figure 1: PRISMA diagram of systematic literature review process (adapted from Moher et al., 2009).



Characteristics of included studies and reported measures

Study characteristics

Table 1 summarises the characteristics of included studies. Out of the 24 studies included in our review, 13 studies were quantitative surveys or (quasi-)experimental studies, six were qualitative interview studies, two employed a mixed methods design and three were observational (case) studies. Nine studies concerned the status quo of goal activity behaviour in coaching without assessing coaching outcomes, while 15 studies also included coaching outcome measures. The majority of studies ($n=21$) employed field rather than student coach

samples ($n=3$). Sample sizes ranged from one participant to 1895 coach-coachee dyads. For those studies that used professional coaches and experience was reported ($n=13$), it ranged from two to 20 years of work experience as coach. Duration of the researched coaching process varied from one session of 30 minutes to eleven sessions. Goal activities were assessed through the perspective of coaches ($n=7$), coachees ($n=6$), both coach and coachees ($n=4$), or others (e.g. expert raters; $n=3$). In four studies, goal activities were manipulated through (quasi-)experimental conditions and therefore not 'assessed'. A total of 15 studies were published in peer-reviewed journals, while

Table 1: Characteristics of studies included in the systematic literature review.

Author(s)	Year	Method	Measured goal activity	Data source: goal activity	Measured outcome	Data source: Outcome	Time of measurement	Sample size	Content of coaching	Coach characteristic: experience/ internal vs external	Coachee characteristic	Coaching duration	Language/ nationality of sample
Bechtel	2018	Quantitative	Goal setting	Coachee	Goal attainment	Coachee	1, Retrospective	171	NA	NA/ external or internal	Executives, managers, supervisors or individual contributors	3–7 sessions or more	English/USA
Bono et al.	2009	Quantitative	Goal setting	Coach	No outcome	NA	1, Frequency in regular coaching practice	428	NA	M = 7.5–11.6 years/NA	Level of vice president, director and middle managers	NA	English/USA
Cowan	2013	Interview study	Goal setting	Coach	Reaction	Coach	1, Retrospective	6	NA (assigned goals)	5–20 years/ external	Corporate clients	NA	English/NA
David et al.	2014	Quantitative	Goal setting	Coach	No outcome	NA	1, Frequency in regular coaching practice	194	NA	NA	NA	NA	English/ International sample (USA & Europe)
de Haan et al.	2016	Quantitative	Goal-focused relationship (coach-coachee)	Coach + Coachee	Over-arching effectiveness	Coach + Coachee	1, Retrospective	1895 coach-coachee dyads	Varied (e.g. management skills, personal development, leadership development)	M = 13.3 years/ external or internal	NA	Modal duration: 4–6 months	English/ International sample (NA)

Author(s)	Year	Method	Measured goal activity	Data source: Goal activity	Measured outcome	Data source: Outcome	Time of measurement	Sample size	Content of coaching	Coach characteristic: Experience/ internal vs external	Coachee characteristic	Coaching duration	Language/ nationality of sample
Ferner	2019	Observational study	Goal setting	External rater	Over-arching effectiveness	Coachee	Ratings: over entire coaching process (all sessions); Effectiveness: 1, post-coaching assessment	3	Varied (e.g. leadership development, career coaching)	M = 12 years/ external	NA	2-8 sessions	German/ Germany
Geschnitzer & Kauffeld	2015	Observational study	Goal-focused relationship (coach-coachee)	External rater	Goal attainment	Coachee	Ratings: over entire coaching process (all sessions); Goal attainment: 2, pre-coaching + post-coaching assessment	31 coach-coachee dyads	Career coaching	Novice (student)/ NA	Collegiate clients (students)	5 sessions, 3 months	English/ Germany
Grant	2014	Quantitative	Goal-focused coaching relationship	Coachee	Learning + Goal attainment	Coachee	2, pre-coaching + post-coaching assessment	49	NA	Novice (post-graduate students)/ NA	Collegiate clients (post-graduate students)	4 sessions, 10-12 weeks	English/ Australia
Greif	2015	Observational study	Goal setting	External rater	No outcome	NA	Ratings over entire coaching process (all sessions)	1	Transition coaching	NA	NA	3 sessions (7 hours)	German/ Germany
Gyllenstein & Palmer	2007	Interview study	Other (i.e. working towards goals)	Coachee	Reaction	Coachee	1, Retrospective	9	Varied (e.g. self-confidence, promotion)	NA/ internal	NA	NA	English/ International sample (UK & Scandinavia)

Author(s)	Year	Method	Measured Goal activity	Data source: goal activity	Measured outcome	Data source: Outcome	Time of measurement	Sample size	Content of coaching	Coach characteristic: Experience/ internal vs external	Coach characteristic	Coaching duration	Language/ nationality of sample
Jansen et al.	2004	Quantitative	Goal setting	Coach + Coachee	No outcome	NA	1, Retrospective	89 coaches; 74 coachees	NA	M = 8.60 years/ external	NA	NA	German/ Germany
Jenson	2016	Quantitative	Goal setting, development plans	Coachee	No outcome	NA	1, Retrospective	351	Varied (e.g. performance, development, career coaching)	NA/ external or internal	Managerial or team lead level	6 months – 1 year	English/ USA
Kaptenberg	2008	Mixed methods (we included only qualitative findings)	Goal setting	Coach	Reaction	Coach	1, General attitude/ overall experience	8 (interview) (36, survey)	NA	M = 11.5 years/ internal	NA	6–12 months	English/ USA
Kotter et al.	2018	Interview study	Goal setting	Coach	No outcome	NA	1, Frequency in regular coaching practice	20	NA	M = 12.1 years/ external or internal	NA	NA	English/ Germany
Newsom & Dent	2011	Quantitative	Goal setting	Coach	No outcome	NA	1, Frequency in regular coaching practice	130	NA	6–10 years/ external	NA	NA	English/ International sample (NA)
Pywys	2012	Quantitative	Goal setting	Experimental condition (randomised controlled between-subject design)	Goal attainment	Coachee	2, pre-coaching + post-coaching assessment	48	Varied	Novice/ collegiate clients (post-graduate students)	10–15 years of professional management experience	15 hours, 4 weeks	English/ USA

Author(s)	Year	Method	Measured goal activity	Data source: Goal activity	Measured Outcome	Data source: Outcome	Time of measurement	Sample size	Content of coaching	Coach characteristic: Experience/ internal vs external	Coachee characteristic	Coaching duration	Language/ nationality of sample
Rank & Gray	2017	Quantitative	Goal setting	Coachee	Learning	Coachee	1, Retrospective	59	NA	Min. 10 years/ external	Managers (varied levels of seniority); either unemployed or at risk of losing their jobs	10 hours, 3 months	English/ UK
Scoular & Linley	2006	Mixed methods (we included only quantitative findings)	Goal setting	Experimental condition (randomised controlled between-subject design)	Reaction + Goal attainment	Coach + Coachee	1, Retrospective	117	Varied (e.g. work-life balance, career coaching)	NA/ external	NA	1 session, 30 minutes	English/ UK
Smith & Brummel	2013	Interview study	Setting development plan	Coachee	Behaviour	Coachee + Expert rating	1, Retrospective	30	Varied	NA/ external	Level of upper management	NA	English/ NA
Terblanche et al.	2017	Interview study	Goal setting	Coach, Coachee, HR	Reaction	Coach, Coachee, HR	1, Retrospective	16	Transition coaching	NA	Senior leaders	NA	English/ South Africa
Vandaveer et al.	2016	Mixed methods	Goal setting	Coach	No outcome	NA	Typical coaching practice	27 (inter-view) 282 (survey)	Varied (e.g. performance, development, transition coaching)	M = 24.3 years/ external or internal	Senior executives, high potentials	NA	English/ USA

Author(s)	Year	Method	Measured goal activity	Data source: Goal activity	Measured Outcome	Data source: Outcome	Time of measurement	Sample size	Content of coaching	Coach characteristic: Experience/ internal vs external	Coachee characteristic	Coaching duration	Language/ nationality of sample
Wastian & Poetschki	2016	Interview study	Goal setting, action plans	Coach + Coachee	No outcome	NA	Retrospective after coaching engagement	42 coaches, 16 coachees	Varied (e.g. performance, development, career coaching)	3–31 years/ NA	Executives, professionals	2–11 sessions	German/ Germany
Williams	2012	Quantitative	Other (Goal-focused coaching)	Experimental condition (random assignment/ switching-replication design)	Behaviour	Coachee	3, pre-coaching, post-coaching + follow-up assessment	64	Leadership development	Min. 2 years/ external	Senior executives (at least level of middle management)	4 sessions, 4–6 weeks	English/ USA
Williams & Lowman	2018	Quantitative	Other (Goal-focused coaching)	Experimental condition (random assignment/ switching-replications design)	Behaviour	Coachee	3, pre-coaching, post-coaching + follow-up assessment	64	Leadership development	Min. 2 years/ external	Senior executives (at least level of middle management)	4 sessions, 4–6 weeks	English/ USA

the other publications can be categorised as ‘grey literature’, that is, five dissertations, one master thesis, two books or book chapters, and one conference proceeding. Most manuscripts ($n=20$) were written in English, while four were in German. Study participants came from a range of different countries: USA ($n=8$), Germany ($n=6$), UK ($n=2$), Australia ($n=1$) and South Africa ($n=1$). Four studies encompassed international samples (e.g. participants from UK and Scandinavia), whereas two primary studies did not mention the nationality of participants.

Reported goal activities

Primary studies applied a wide range of conceptualisations and operationalisations of goal activities, with the majority of studies using self-developed scales rather than standardised measures. We sorted the goal activities of the included studies into the following four categories: (a) Goal setting, (b) Setting action or development plans, (c) Goal-focused coach-coachee-relationship, and (d) Other goal activities.

a) Goal setting

Seven studies operationalise working with goals as goal setting, goal development or goal clarification. They describe them as activities whereby coach and coachee establish coaching goals or the coach gives the coachee a clear direction to work toward, partly resorting to specific underlying models and techniques (e.g. goal attainment scaling, GROW model). In observational studies, goal setting was rated as one of several success factors in coaching (Greif et al., 2010).

b) Setting action or development plans

Three studies considered setting action or development plans. Setting action/development plans goes beyond goal setting as it also explicitly includes the incorporation of plans for achieving and implementing these goals. For example, Vandaveer et al. (2016, p.123) define action planning as ‘agreeing on appropriate measures or indicators of progress and success to reaching coaching goals and developing a plan for achieving those goals’.

c) Goal-focused relationship between coach and coachee

Three studies in our review conceptualise the goal-related coach-coachee relationship. For example, Grant (2014) operationalised it as the assessment of goal-focused interactions between coach and coachee from the coachee perspective. De Haan et al. (2016) and Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015) focus on the agreement on goals between coach and coachee; either operationalised through a component of the working alliance inventory (WAI; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989) from both coach and coachee perspectives or observational other-ratings utilising a specific coding system.

d) Other goal activities

Goal activities that we classified as ‘other’ were rather general. They were described as ‘working towards goals’ (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007) or following a goal-focused coaching approach (vs process-oriented coaching; Williams, 2012; Williams & Lowman, 2018).

Measured coaching outcomes

Coaching outcomes can be manifold, and studies vary in their operationalisation of coaching success (e.g. Graßmann et al., 2019). In order to summarise and compare different outcomes in our review, we use the evaluation framework by Kirkpatrick (1967) which consists of four different levels: Reaction, learning, behaviour and result. Within the included studies, we identified outcome measures that fit Kirkpatrick’s levels of reaction (i.e. subjective overall satisfaction with coaching), learning (i.e. cognitive and affective learning) and behaviour (i.e. changes in competency). Following Kraiger et al. (1993), we consider both cognitive and affective learning outcomes. Given that goal attainment can be seen as a key outcome in coaching (e.g. Graßmann et al., 2019; Spence, 2007) and that goals can be defined at each of the different levels and therefore goal attainment ‘cuts across’ the levels of the taxonomy, we maintained goal attainment as a separate outcome

category. We placed outcome measures that included more than one level of Kirkpatrick's taxonomy (e.g. satisfaction and competency) into the category of overarching effectiveness.

Therefore, we sorted study outcomes into the following categories: (a) Reaction: Subjective satisfaction with the coaching, (b) Learning: Cognitive and affective learning, (c) Behaviour: Changes in competency, (d) Goal attainment, or (e) Overarching effectiveness. Research teams mostly used self-developed measures to assess coaching outcome, only seven out of 15 studies used established scales.

a) Reaction: Subjective satisfaction with coaching success

To measure coaching success, coaches and/or former coachees were asked to indicate their subjective satisfaction with the coaching engagement (e.g. Scoular & Linley, 2006).

b) Learning: Cognitive and affective Learning

In order to identify learning in relation to different cognitive and affective constructs, two research groups applied established rating scales. Rank and Gray (2017) used scales of self-reflection and self-esteem. Grant (2014) utilised a self-insight scale and employed established scales to measure coachees' well-being and depression, anxiety and stress.

c) Behaviour: Changes in competency

In the studies included in our review, coachees assessed their leadership competencies themselves, described specific leadership situations they encountered that were then subjected to expert ratings and/or coachees' supervisors assessed their leadership behaviour.

d) Goal attainment

In order to measure goal attainment, coachees were asked to identify a goal they would like to achieve and rate the degree of goal attainment at the beginning of the coaching engagement (e.g. in the first coaching session) on a scale from 0 per cent (no attainment) to 100 per cent (complete attainment) and again at the end of the coaching process.

e) Overarching effectiveness

For example, Fenner (2019) merged ratings of an evaluation questionnaire with goal attainment ratings of coachees to create an integrated outcome measure for assessing coaching success.

Findings of included studies

Figure 2 summarises our research questions as well as findings on goal activities and their relationship to coaching outcome. We will address each research question in the following.

RQ 1a: Which goal activities do coaches and coachees engage in?

We identified 11 research articles that address the occurrence and/or perceived importance of goal activities (i.e. goal setting, setting action plans) during workplace coaching engagements, either from the perspective of coaches (Bono et al., 2009; David et al., 2014; Kotte et al., 2018; Newsom & Dent, 2011; Vandaveer et al., 2016), coachees (Bechtel, 2018; Jenson, 2016), both coach and coachee (Jansen et al., 2004; Wastian & Poetschki, 2016), or observers (Fenner, 2019; Greif, 2015).

Status quo on goal setting

Coaches reported frequently applying goal setting in their coaching practice (Bono et al., 2009; Jansen et al., 2004; Kotte et al., 2018; Newsom & Dent, 2011; Vandaveer et al., 2016). In fact, coaches surveyed by Newsom and Dent (2011, $n=130$) indicated 'frequently' or 'routinely' ($M=4.51$, $SD=0.44$) identifying coaching goals with the client. Psychologist ($M=4.40$, $SD=0.74$) as well as non-psychologist coaches ($M=4.42$, $SD=0.83$) from Bono and colleagues' study (2009, $n=428$) reported 'often' or 'always' applying goal setting in coaching engagements. In line with these findings, in Vandaveer and colleagues' mixed methods study (2016) of experienced coaching practitioners, three quarters of the sample ($n=212$) reported using goal setting in 66 per cent or more of their coaching engagements.

Figure 2: Research questions 1 and 2 and respective findings within an overarching coaching framework.

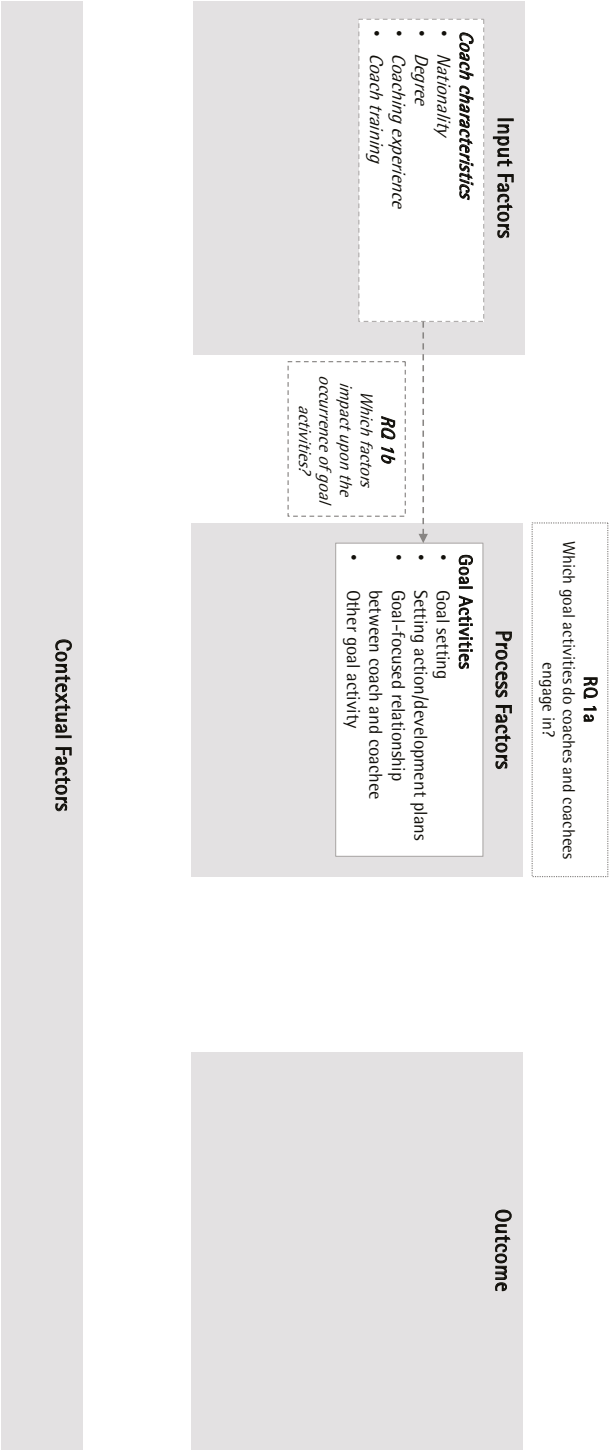
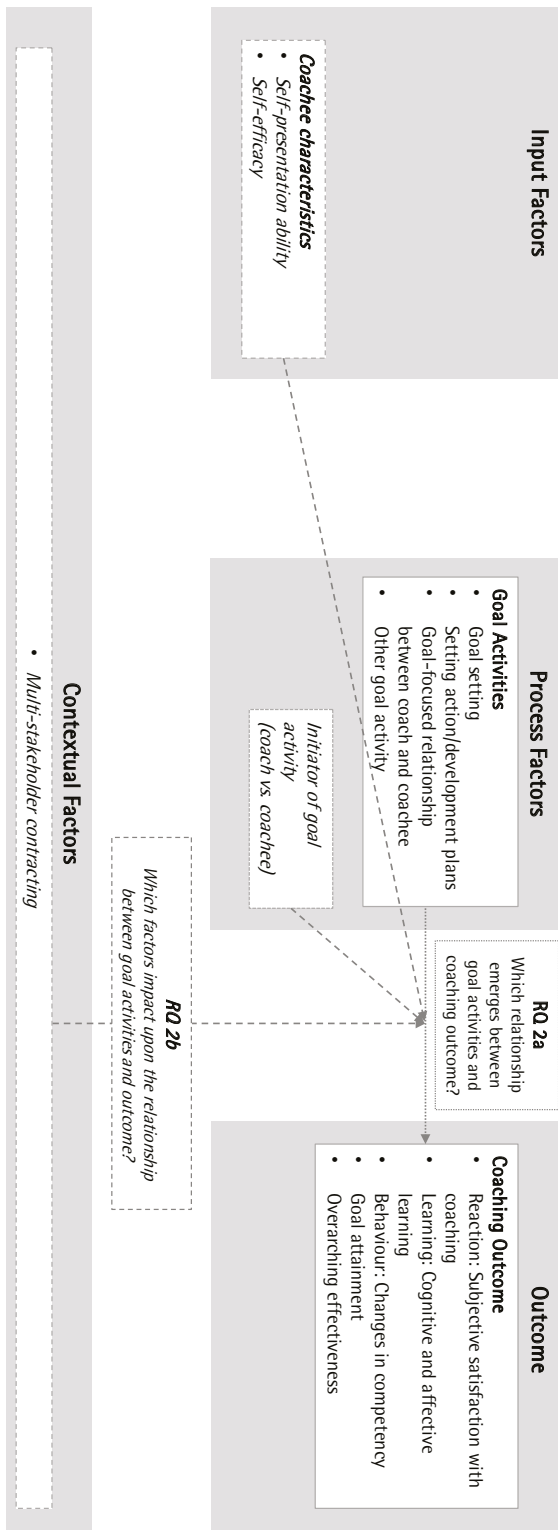


Figure 2 continued: Research questions 1 and 2 and respective findings within an overarching coaching framework.



Furthermore, the large majority (94 per cent) indicated goal setting as a 'very important' or even 'essential' part of their coaching practice. Findings of Kotte and colleagues' (2018) interview study with 20 experienced workplace coaches indicate that the large majority of coaches ($n=19$) conduct a goal clarification during the initial exploration in coaching. However, coaches describe it as an open process rather than, for example, applying SMART goal setting.

Regarding the perspective of coachees, findings by Bechtel (2018) point in the same direction. In fact, 98 per cent of coachees (of $n=171$) indicate retrospectively that their coach worked with them to set at least one coaching goal, thus being the most spread behaviour of described coaching sessions. Other studies suggest that the perspective of coachees differs substantially from that of coaches regarding the frequency of goal activities adopted in coaching. In Jenson's (2016) study, only 47 per cent of 351 questioned former coachees indicated having experienced their coaches practising goal setting behaviour during their coaching engagements (i.e. performance, development, career or transition coaching). However, 80 per cent of respondents reported that they formally negotiated and set goals prior to the coaching. Often multiple individuals were involved in this goal setting process (i.e. not only and necessarily coach and coachee but also coachee's supervisor in 46 per cent and coachee's organisation in 27 per cent of coaching engagements).

Jansen and colleagues (2004) conducted a survey with 89 coaches and 74 coachees. Coaches indicate having applied significantly more goal setting than their coachees report having experienced, $t(91.47)=2.25$, $p<.05$. Wastian and Poetschki (2016) also explored the perspective of both coaches ($n=42$) and coachees ($n=16$) on how coaches conduct goal setting. Coaches report engaging in setting specific (90 per cent), realistic (100 per cent) and attractive (65 per cent) goals more frequently than coachees report having experienced these during

their coaching engagements (specific: 30 per cent; realistic: 50 per cent; attractive: 50 per cent). By contrast, the degree to which changes in goals over the course of the coaching engagement were addressed is perceived more similarly between coaches (85 per cent) and coachees (70 per cent). In addition, two distinct patterns of coaches' working with goals were identified. While some coaches identified SMART goal setting as the focus of the coaching at the beginning of the coaching process, other coaches engage in a continuous process of goal clarification and adaptation throughout the whole coaching engagement.

Two observational case studies utilised the rating manual of coach behaviour by Greif et al. (2010) which includes (among eight success factors) the dimension of goal setting. The first observational study was conducted by Greif (2015). The single case that was examined encompassed three online coaching sessions (total of seven hours) of a coachee who was transitioning to a new role with more responsibilities. All success factors were demonstrated by the coach but differed in frequency. The most prominent coaching behaviour was support of the coachee's self-reflection (observed in 41 per cent of sequences of coaching sessions), whereas affect reflection had the lowest ratings (three per cent). Goal setting was rather prominently demonstrated in 34 per cent of all rated sequences and even more during the first session (50 per cent). Fenner (2019) examined audio material from three complete coaching processes that were conducted by three different coaches with a total of 16 sessions (total of 22 hours). Emotional support was the most frequently shown coaching behaviour (60 per cent), while goal setting was demonstrated least frequently, that is, in 11 per cent of all rated sequences. The findings by Greif (2015) and Fenner (2019) indicate that coaches seem to apply a variety of success factors during coaching sessions but differ in the individual frequency of demonstrating specific factors (e.g. goal setting).

Table 2: Summary of measured goal activities split by measured coaching outcomes.

		Outcome				
		Reaction: Subjective satisfaction	Learning: Cognitive and affective learning	Behaviour: Changes in competency	Goal attainment	Overarching effectiveness
Goal activity	Goal setting	4 Cowan (2013); Kappenberg (2008); Scoular & Linley (2006)*; Terblanche et al. (2017)	1 Rank & Gray (2017)		3 Bechtel (2018); Prywes (2012); Scoular & Linley (2006)*	1 Fenner (2019)
	Setting action/ development plan			1 Smith & Brummel (2013)		
	Goal- focused relationship		1 Grant (2014)*		2 Gessnitzer & Kauffeld (2015); Grant (2014)*	1 de Haan et al. (2016)
	Other goal activity	1 Gyllensten & Palmer (2007)		2 Williams (2012); Williams & Lowman (2018)		

Note: Some studies employed multiple outcome measures (marked as *).

Status quo on setting action plans

Three studies addressed the occurrence of setting action plans in workplace coaching. In Jenson's study, 43 per cent of surveyed former coachees ($n=351$) indicated that action plans had been made during their coaching engagement. Wastian and Poetschki (2016) report differences in perspective between coaches and coachees concerning setting action plans, namely, 60 per cent of coaches ($n=42$) indicate to have used them while only 30 per cent of coachees ($n=16$) describe this retrospectively. A similar difference in perspective appears in relation to

following up on action plans, that is, monitoring and evaluating goal progress during coaching (coaches: 85 per cent; coachees: 40 per cent). Vandaveer et al. (2016) report that interviewed coaching practitioners ($n=27$) described action planning (together with goal setting) as a usual step during their typical coaching processes in addition to the steps of needs assessment, contracting, general assessment and data gathering, feedback provision, plan implementation, evaluation of the progress and transitioning to 'post-coaching'.

RQ 1b: Which factors impact upon the occurrence of goal activities?

Given the substantial differences in the reported and observed frequency of goal setting and setting action plans, the question arises which factors impact upon the occurrence of goal activities. Only two studies so far provide initial insights. They focus exclusively on using goal setting as the type of goal activity and on coach characteristics as potential moderating variables. Findings suggest that the degree to which a coach uses goal setting might depend on the coach's educational background and region.

Newsom and Dent's (2011) findings from 130 coaches from different countries showed that coaches with a bachelor's degree reported performing goal setting more frequently than those with doctoral degrees. They further report that more experienced coaches (i.e. with five or more years of coaching experience) applied more goal setting than those with less coaching experience. According to the authors, the reasons for differences between coaches with bachelor versus doctoral degrees might be related to the desire of those with less educational credibility to demonstrate professional credibility by adhering to 'standard coaching practices'. Regarding the influence of the coaches' level of experience, they argue that more experienced coaches might have a deeper understanding of their coaching practice and therefore take coaching to a more advanced level by applying more goal setting.

David and colleagues (2014) surveyed 194 coaches from the USA and Europe. They showed that coaches who had undergone a coach training (lasting longer than five weeks) use goals more often in their practice than coaches who learned through experience only. In contrast to Newsom and Dent, David et al. discuss whether more experienced coaches rely more on their accumulated competency and eschew standard models of goal setting (e.g. SMART). Furthermore, they found that coaches from the USA reported applying goal setting more frequently than European coaches. They

argue that this could be explained by means of the respective cultural traditions from which coaching was developed in the USA and Europe.

However, we found no studies that examined contextual factors impacting upon the way in which coach and coachee work with goals.

RQ 2a: Which relationship emerges between goal activities and coaching outcomes?

In the following, findings on the relationship of goal activities on coaching outcomes are reported. Table 2 provides an overview of the measured goal activities and coaching outcomes of the included studies.

The relationship between goal setting and coaching outcome

Eight studies assessed the relationship between goal setting and outcomes.

Rank and Gray (2017) examined the association between goal setting and career-related self-reflection of 59 managers who received coaching as they were either unemployed or at the risk of losing their jobs. The coaching was sponsored by a regional economic-development agency. They found that goal setting correlated positively with career-related self-reflection ($r=.54$) and it emerged as a positive and significant predictor ($\beta=.32, p<.05$), whereas it did not predict career-related self-esteem.

Bechtel (2018) surveyed 171 former coachees. Participants reported coaching behaviours of their coach and self-rated goal attainment in retrospect. Results show that goal setting significantly correlated with goal attainment ($r=.41, p<.01$). Other measured coaching behaviours also correlated significantly (and even higher) with outcomes, that is, guidance ($r=.53, p<.01$), facilitation ($r=.54, p<.01$) and inspiration ($r=.45, p<.01$).

By contrast, the (quasi-)experimental studies of Scoular and Linley (2006) and Prywes (2012) contradict the previously reported findings. Scoular and Linley (2006) investigated the success of coaching sessions conducted in eight different organisational

contexts ranging from large multi-national organisations to small entrepreneurial firms across the southern UK. They did not find a significant difference between participants ($n=117$) of either goal setting or no goal setting conditions within an experimental between-subjects design on goal attainment or subjective satisfaction with coaching success. Prywes (2012) administered a between-subject design study with 48 postgraduate students and four conditions. Participants either received only a goal attainment scaling interview (GAS), only coaching, both GAS and coaching, or neither. Results show no significant main or interaction effects of coaching or GAS on coachees' goal attainment.

Kappenberg (2008) conducted in-depth interviews with eight seasoned internal executive coaches from one firm on factors that they experience as important for coaching success. Five coaches mentioned goal setting as an important step of successful coaching engagements. It was the second most frequently mentioned coach behaviour ($n=10$) that coaches referred to both within and across interviewees, while providing candid, honest and constructive feedback ($n=18$) was the most frequently mentioned.

Terblanche et al. (2017) interviewed 16 experts (i.e. recently promoted senior leaders, coaches, human resource partners and line managers) about their previous experiences with transition coaching (i.e. coaching during processes of promotion into a senior leadership position). Goal setting emerged as 'standard practice' and an important part of a successful coaching process from coaches' and coachees' perspectives.

In Cowan's interview study (2013), one of the key findings was that the beliefs of external executive coaches ($n=6$) about the relationship between goal setting and coaching success vary widely. Whereas some coaches describe goal setting as a necessary component of a successful coaching engagement, others assessed goal setting only as a starting point of the coaching that does not predict the coaching outcome.

Only one observational study on the relationship between goal setting and coaching outcome satisfied our inclusion criteria. Fenner (2019) conducted observational ratings of 16 workplace coaching sessions from three coaching dyads using audio material from the sessions. The coachees sought guidance concerning their work-life balance, leadership development and professional transformation. In a descriptive analysis, she found that in successful coaching engagements (i.e. higher goal attainment and satisfaction ratings of the coachee), the coach applied slightly more goal clarification (on average in 11 per cent of all sequences) in comparison to an unsuccessful coaching process (seven per cent).

The relationship between setting action plans and coaching outcome

We identified only one study (Smith & Brummel, 2013) that examined the relationship between creating an action plan during coaching engagements and coaching outcome, namely, competency changes (e.g. on communication or leadership). Smith and Brummel (2013) found that out of 30 executives, those who created a formal action plan (vs. creating an informal action plan or none at all) in the course of their coaching engagement (43 per cent) reported more self-rated competency changes than those who did not, $F(2,52)=4.58$, $p<.05$, $d=0.85$. However, there was no effect with respect to expert-rated, rather than self-rated, behaviour changes.

The relationship between goal-oriented coach-coachee relationship and coaching outcome

Three studies investigated the impact of a goal-focused relationship of coach and coachee on coaching outcome.

Grant (2014) examined the role of a goal-oriented coach-coachee relationship on coachee's goal attainment and coaching effectiveness in 49 coaching engagements from the perspective of coachees (postgraduate coaching students). He found

a significant positive correlation between the goal-oriented coach–coachee relationship and goal attainment ($r=0.43$, $p<0.01$) but not for changes in measures of self-insight, well-being, anxiety, stress or depression. Nonetheless, results indicated that a goal-focused relationship between coach and coachee was a significantly more powerful predictor of goal attainment than autonomy support or proximity to an ‘ideal’ relationship.

De Haan et al. (2016) analysed the relationship between coaching effectiveness and mutual agreement on goals between coach and coachee, that is, an adapted version of the goal-related subscale of the Working Alliance Inventory (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989). Findings of their large-scale study of 1895 coaching dyads (from 92 sponsors) suggest a positive correlation between a goal-focused relationship and coaching effectiveness both rated by coaches ($r=.56$, $p<.004$) and by coachees ($r=.56$, $p<.004$). Coach-perceived effectiveness and goal-focused relationship assessed by the coachee correlated significantly to $r=.23$ ($p<.004$), and coachee-perceived effectiveness and goal-focused relationship assessed by the coach showed a correlation of $r=.19$ ($p<.004$). Therefore, when coach and coachee rate both effectiveness and the goal-focused relationship, respectively, the correlation is highest. Given that correlations between the subscale of bond and coaching effectiveness are slightly smaller from coach ($r=.43$) and coachee perspectives ($r=.46$), the authors conclude that while the bond aspect of the relationship is important, coaches need to give particular attention to the coachee’s goals during coaching engagements.

In the study by Gessnitzer and Kaufeld (2015), the goal-focused relationship between coach and coachee was rated by means of behavioural data (i.e. sequential analysis of interaction coding data). When the goal behaviour was initiated by the coachee (e.g. the coachee stated a goal and the coach agreed), it was positively related to coaching success ($r=.32$, $p=.039$) whereas it had the opposite effect when it was initiated by the coach ($r=-.39$, $p=.015$).

The relationship between other goal activities and coaching outcome

Gyllensten and Palmer (2007) conducted interviews with nine former coachees from two large organisations (a UK finance and a Scandinavian telecommunication organisation) in order to identify components that they described as making the coaching engagement a beneficial experience for them. Besides the general coaching relationship, coachees highlighted working towards goals as an important factor of coaching success.

Williams (2012) and Williams and Lowman (2018) conducted a quasi-experimental field study on the effect of coaching on outcomes (i.e. leadership competency and behaviour) with 68 managers who worked for the same profit organisation. The coaching intervention was financed by research funds. Coachees either participated in a goal-focused coaching, a process-orientated coaching, or were in a waiting control group. Williams (2012) describes goal-focused coaching as being content-driven and based on goal setting theory (Locke & Latham, 1990). By comparison, a process-oriented coaching emphasises interpersonal processes (rather than specific content or goals). Whereas coached individuals showed higher self-ratings of leadership competency and behaviour than the control group shortly after the coaching intervention and at the time of the follow-up assessment, there was no significant difference in outcomes between the two coaching groups. Namely, in both groups, regardless of the coaching approach, outcomes increased after receiving coaching. Williams and Lowman (2018) discuss the possibility that coaches might not have adhered to just a goal-focused or process-oriented coaching approach, or that the two approaches might not be readily separated. They further argue that in coaching, many variables are at play beyond using a particular coaching approach.

RQ 2b: Which factors impact upon the relationship between goal activities and outcomes?

Six of the included studies reported factors that impacted upon the relationship between goal activities and outcomes. Three quantitative studies found significant moderator variables (i.e. input and process factors) while findings of three interview studies suggest that contextual factors might influence the relationship between goal setting and coaching outcome.

Rank and Gray (2017) identified the coachee's self-presentation ability as a moderator variable on the relationship between goal setting and coaching outcome (i.e. self-reflection). More specifically, goal setting related more strongly to self-reflection among coachees high in self-presentation ability. The authors propose that coachees high in self-presentation ability may benefit more strongly from goal setting during coaching as a way of enhancing their introspective capabilities than coachees low in self-presentation 'because low self-presenters are anyway guided by their personal beliefs' (Rank & Gray, 2017, p.192).

In the study conducted by de Haan et al. (2016), coachees self-efficacy acted as a moderator variable on the correlation between a coach-coachee goal-focused relationship and coaching effectiveness. Coachees low in self-efficacy benefitted more strongly from a goal-focused relationship. The authors therefore argue that a strong emphasis on goals in coaching might partially compensate for low coachee self-efficacy.

Results of the study by Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015) indicate that the effect of a goal-focused relationship on outcomes may depend on who initiates the goal behaviour. Given that the goal-focused relationship only correlated positively with goal attainment when the goal behaviour was coachee-initiated rather than coach-initiated (e.g. the coachee stated a goal and the coach agreed), the authors argue that this effect might be explained by means of the roles of coach and coachee, respectively, during coaching inter-

actions. When coaches initiate too much goal activity, the coachee might feel as though he or she no longer 'owns' their goal.

In her interview study ($n=6$), Cowan (2013) addresses the influence of the organisational context on the goal setting during coaching engagements. More specifically, she investigates dynamics and possible challenges when not only the coach and coachee are involved in the coaching engagement and its goal setting, but when there is also 'a third party input' from the coachee's organisation concerning (assigned) coaching goals. She concludes that coaches' fundamental beliefs about goal setting are rather diverse. Some interviewed coaches stated that coaching needs goals in order to being able to evaluate the coaching success for the coachees themselves as well as for the coachee's organisation. In contrast, other coaches emphasised that setting goals at the beginning of the coaching engagement leads to only superficial goals being set and that assigned coaching goals have unhelpful consequences on coaching success for all the parties involved.

In Kappenberg's study, interviewed coaches ($n=8$) emphasised that goals not only need to be clear and agreed upon by the coach and coachee, but also mentioned the alignment of other stakeholders (e.g. coachee's supervisor) as important to the general success of coaching.

In the study conducted by Terblanche and colleagues (2017), interviewees ($n=16$) emphasised the relevance of goal alignment for coaching success, that is, goal setting that involves not only the coachee but also the organisation and includes each party's respective needs.

Assessing the risk of bias

In the following, possible biases of the included studies are discussed, more specifically concerning measurement and operationalisation of constructs, overall study design, study samples and sample size.

Regarding measurement and operationalisation, the majority of included studies reported self-ratings of the experience of

goal activities from only one perspective (i.e. coach or coachee). Specifically, (rather) objective other-ratings from expert raters are only seldom investigated. As Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015) point out, coaching research trails far behind psychotherapy research in terms of the use of behavioural data. Moreover, research findings indicate discrepancies between the perspectives of coach and coachee concerning the application of goal activities. Therefore, when using data only from one source providing both a predictor and criterion measure (i.e. self-reports of coach or coachee), study findings need to be interpreted with caution. Accordingly, there may be a risk of common method bias (e.g. Podsakoff et al., 2003) within the data set of included studies that should be acknowledged as it might lead to an overestimation of the relationship between goal activities and coaching effectiveness.

It should also be investigated if the chosen outcome measure (e.g. goal attainment) might be particularly sensitive to the effects of goal-oriented coaching approaches (e.g. following the GROW model) and therefore possibly lead to overestimated associations. Jensen (2016) argues that goal-specific evaluation criteria might produce larger effects than general criteria. Five of 15 studies that included outcome measures assess goal attainment as an outcome. For example, in the study by Grant (2014), goal setting was shown to positively correlate with goal attainment but less closely with less goal-related outcome measures, such as self-insight, wellbeing, depression, anxiety and stress. Furthermore, the majority of studies used self-developed questionnaires rather than standardised and validated measures. This circumstance makes it more difficult to compare findings across studies.

Regarding the study design, studies were mostly cross-sectional and retrospective and not longitudinal, that is, pre-coaching and follow-up assessments are rarely reported. Furthermore, out of the 15 studies assessing the relationship between goal activity and coaching outcome, only four were (quasi-)

experimental designs that allow for causal inferences. It is noteworthy that whereas none of the four (quasi-)experimental studies found a significant relationship between goal activities and outcomes, all correlational studies report at least partly positive associations. As discussed for example by de Haan et al. (2016), a correlation does not imply causality. Especially in regard to the goal-focused relationship between coach and coachee, effects in both directions seem plausible. Namely, a strong (goal-focused) relationship between coach and coachee might predict higher coaching effectiveness ratings, or higher effectiveness might be the reason for strong retrospective assessment of the relationship between coach and coachee.

With regard to study samples, in general, when the sample consists of students (i.e. as coach and/or coachee), the question of generalisability of findings arises. This was the case in three of the included studies. In fact, meta-analytic findings indicate higher effect sizes regarding the outcome of coaching students versus professionals (Sonesh, Coultas, Lacerenza et al., 2015). In other words, coaching behaviour that engenders results for students coached by fellow students may not be the same as what is needed for executives (e.g. Sonesh, Coultas, Marlow et al., 2015). Sonesh, Coultas, Marlow and colleagues (2015) argue that, for example, motivation of coachees might differ from one another in student versus field coachee samples.

Further reconsideration is necessary concerning sample sizes. Some of the included studies (both quantitative and qualitative) comprised comparatively small samples. For example, Prywes' (2012) and Williams' (2012) or Williams and Lowman's (2018) lack of findings might also be explained through low statistical power when conducting a between-subject study design with four conditions that involves only 42 or 64 participants, respectively. Although we acknowledge the difficulty of gathering field data, the small sample size and related lack of power limit the interpretability of the

(absence of) effects (e.g. Faul et al., 2009). Actual relationships between goal activities and coaching outcome might not have been detected. For qualitative studies, findings of interview studies with small sample sizes (i.e. below 10 interviewees) should not be over-estimated.

Discussion

We conducted a systematic literature review in order to shed light on what we know about the occurrence of different goal activities in workplace coaching and their relationship to coaching outcomes. A total of 24 studies met the eligibility criteria and were synthesised. We summarise our findings on goal activities within a conceptual framework that encompasses coaching outcomes, as well as input, process and contextual factors of coaching (Figure 2).

Summary of findings

We found that conceptualisations of ‘working with goals’ in coaching within prior research encompass a wide range of goal activities that could be grouped into four overarching categories, namely, (1) goal setting, (2) setting action/development plans, (3) goal-focused relationship between coach and coachee, and (4) other goal activities. Overall, goal setting is by far the most frequently researched goal activity (total of 17 out of 24 studies). By contrast, studies on supporting goal implementation (e.g. setting and supporting coachee’s development plans) or goal adaptation over the course of the coaching process are far less frequent and thus little is currently known about them empirically.

Concerning the status quo of goal activities, we found that coaches frequently indicate the application of goal setting in their coaching practice. Studies with coachee samples, however, show in part differentiating findings: Mostly, they indicate that coachees perceive goal setting (and other goal activities such as goal implementation support) as occurring less often than coaches describe.

While goal setting is assessed as promi-

nent coaching behaviour, it emerges as only one of many components of coaching practice together with other, generally more prominent coach behaviours (e.g. providing emotional support or feedback).

Initial findings indicate that coaches’ use of goal setting might depend on their regional and educational background. Research on factors impacting upon the occurrence of goal activities so far has, however, neglected to examine the potential influence of contextual factors of the coaching engagement.

Regarding the relationship between goal activities and coaching outcome, most frequently measured and reported are outcomes on the level of reaction and goal attainment (five out of 15 studies, respectively). Six out of 15 studies indicate that goal activities relate to positive coaching outcomes, while five studies found empirical support for only partly positive associations (i.e. depending on the perspective or assessed outcome measure). Four studies found no significant link between goal activities and coaching success. Within the quantitative studies, reported effect sizes range from $r=.32$ to $.56$ or $d=.85$, that is, they can be interpreted as medium to large effects (Cohen, 1988).

All in all, studies only rarely reported variables that might have impacted upon the relationship between goal activities and coaching outcomes. Hence, empirical evidence on possible moderators is rather scarce so far. Initial findings from quantitative studies suggest that whether the goal-focused relationship between coach and coachee impacts positively or negatively upon goal attainment might depend on process factors, namely, on who (i.e. coach or coachee) initiates the goal behaviour. Coachee characteristics (i.e. input factors) were also identified as moderator variables on coaching effectiveness, namely, coachee self-efficacy and coachee self-presentation ability. What is mostly absent from previous research are moderators that relate to the content of the coaching (and coaching goals) and the

context of the coaching engagement (i.e. beyond the general conclusion that goal alignment is relevant for coaching success).

Relative scarcity of empirical research on working with goals in coaching

One of the main findings of our review is the rather low number of studies that could be included, in spite of the extensive literature search. We can thereby confirm a – somewhat surprising – lack of empirical research on goal activities in coaching so far (Bozer & Jones, 2018), notwithstanding the prevalence and popularity of goals amongst practitioners and their uncontested place in most coaching definitions (e.g. David et al., 2014; Sonesh, Coultas, Lacerenza et al., 2015). Many articles that we found during our literature search had to be excluded as they were purely conceptual, descriptive or prescriptive, and did not include any empirical data. Others were not included because they simply claimed a positive effect of goals on the grounds of high goal attainment after coaching without assessing goal activities.

Manifold nature of working with goals in coaching research and practice

Another key finding of our study is the diverse array of goal activities besides (SMART) goal setting that has been examined in research so far. We advance the rather disjointed literature on goals in coaching by proposing a categorisation of goal activities and thereby providing an overview of different conceptualisations of working with goals in extant coaching research.

Concerning coaching practice, it has been criticised that many coaches tend to equate goal setting with SMART goals rather than considering different types of goals at different levels of abstraction (Clutterbuck & Spence, 2017). Here, our synthesis of empirical data provides support for a slightly different picture, indicating that coaches pursue various approaches of working with goals in coaching practice and conduct goal setting not necessarily (only) at the beginning of a coaching engagement.

For example, Wastian and Poetschki (2016) identified two distinct patterns how coaches report to work with goals in coaching that are in line with Clutterbuck and Spence's (2017) differentiation between a linear and a more systemic view on goals. While the linear (i.e. SMART-oriented) view assumes that coaching is a sequential process of relatively discrete events, namely, goal setting, action planning and goal-oriented action implementation, a systemic view considers goals to be rather unstable and contingent upon contextual influences, thereby requiring ongoing flexibility in discovering, formulating and adapting goals over the course of the entire coaching engagement.

Inconclusive research on the relationship between goal activities and coaching outcome

We found that the few extant findings on the relationship between goal activities and coaching outcomes are not as clear or unanimous as one might expect considering the central role that goals are assumed to play in coaching within the conceptual and practitioner literature (e.g. Clutterbuck & David, 2016).

Interestingly, a lack of (or limited) association was found in studies that implemented 'stricter' study designs, that is, a (quasi-)experimental study design, explored learning rather than reaction outcomes, or operationalised goal activities or outcome measures through other-ratings. Put differently, reaction and goal attainment seem to be related more closely to goal activities than other outcome measures (i.e. learning, behaviour) and effects appear more strongly when both goal activity and outcome were assessed by the same source (e.g. coachees) and in retrospective.

The empirical evidence to date therefore seems to resonate with rather critical voices that question the frequent advocating of goal setting as an imperative of successful coaching (e.g. Clutterbuck & Spence, 2017; Grant, 2012).

Neglected role of the (organisational) context

Few studies addressed potential moderating variables on the occurrence of goal activities or the relationship between goal activities and coaching outcome. These were coach or coachee characteristics, or whether the coach or coachee initiated the goal behaviour, that is, input and coaching process factors (see Figure 2). However, moderators that concern the content of the coaching (e.g. operational vs more holistic issues) or the organisational context (e.g. involvement of the coachee's organisation) are mostly absent from the current research.

More specifically, included studies rarely provided sufficient information about the content of the coaching engagements or their organisational embeddedness (e.g. who initiated or paid for the coaching, i.e. the coachee, the coachee's organisation or a third party). It was therefore not possible in our review to draw any conclusions regarding the impact of coaching content on goal activities.

Furthermore, we identified only three (qualitative) studies that addressed goal setting processes that include a 'third party input' (Cowan, 2013) or that touched upon the organisational context of the coachee, namely, the alignment of goals between coachees and their organisation (Kappenberg, 2008; Terblanche et al., 2017). However, coaching is increasingly discussed as a contextualised, triangular intervention, shaped by the organisational context it is embedded in (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Louis & Fatien Diochon, 2014). Against this background, the involvement of third parties and the organisational context might affect the goal selection process and goal attainment (e.g. Grant, 2006, 2012). Moreover, as Clutterbuck and Spence (2017) point out, the adequacy of different types of goals might depend on the degree of complexity and speed of change of the environment. They argue that while SMART performance goals might be adequate for simple problems in slowly changing environ-

ments, highly complex and/or fast-changing environments require flexible performance goals, learning goals and/or 'fuzzy' goals. Given that today's business world is commonly described as volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous (VUCA; e.g. Wilson & Lawton-Smith, 2016), it requires concepts of 'new work' (e.g. Schermuly, 2019) and in turn a context-sensitive approach to working with goals in coaching.

Implications for future research and practice

The current body of research suggests that coaching practitioners use a broad range of goal activities in coaching. However, the majority of included studies only addressed one specific goal activity in isolation. Hence, fertile areas for future research could be to investigate the (simultaneous) occurrence of different approaches of working with goals in coaching and their distinct relationship to coaching outcome. Ideally, this would be investigated both in large-scale survey designs (considering a range of goal activities as predictors of coaching outcome) as well as in (quasi-)experimental study designs (i.e. manipulating types or range of goal activities).

In light of the tentative findings that goal activities appear neither consistently beneficial nor uniformly harmful in relation to coaching outcome, more research is needed to better understand factors that impact upon the relationship between goal activities and coaching outcomes. Most of the reported studies rarely provided (sufficient) information on the organisational embeddedness of the coaching (or lacked an organisational context altogether by relying on student samples), let alone considered the potential impact of the organisational context or content of the coaching goal on goal activities and coaching outcome. Therefore, future studies should examine the influence of goal characteristics (e.g. specificity/level of abstraction, goal content) and contextual factors (e.g. third party involvement concerning goals, complexity and volatility of the organisational context, organisational

and societal culture) on goal activities and coaching outcome. This appears necessary in order to do justice to the allegedly rather complex relationship between goal activities and coaching outcome, and the likely impact of additional influencing factors. For example, the impact of goal alignment (and potential goal conflicts) among different coaching stakeholders (e.g. the individual coachee, organisational sponsors) on the goal setting process and coaching outcome could be investigated in additional studies.

Even though we strongly suggest that additional research is needed in order to gain a more differentiated understanding of goals in coaching and provide evidence-based guidelines for practitioners, first practical implications can be deduced. We reason that rather than arguing for or against (a certain way of) setting goals in coaching, coaches should adopt more nuanced perspectives that seek to determine how to work with goals in different ways and contexts, taking into account both the personal characteristics of their coachees as well as contextual factors (Clutterbuck & Spence, 2017). Furthermore, seeing that coach-initiated goal behaviour can also be negatively related to coaching outcome (Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015), we agree with David and colleagues (2016) that coaching practitioners should keep potential pitfalls of (simplistic) goal approaches in mind, for example, focusing too fast on a 'wrong' objective or superficial goal, and hence neglecting the exploration of potentially 'hidden' issues.

Limitations

We discussed limitations that arise from included studies above, in particular the possible biases that result from operationalisation, design and samples. The main constraint of our review itself is the limited number of studies that could be included although we allowed for a broad scope of quantitative, qualitative and observational studies. Therefore, our findings are only tentative, given that they could not be grounded on an extensive empirical data base. We acknowledge that our

strict inclusion criteria may be a double-edged sword (e.g. Bozer & Jones, 2018), as there may have been studies that were excluded from our review due to our rather narrow focus. Namely, we chose to focus on goal activity, in other words, coaching session moderators (Grant, 2012). Consequently, studies that examined only goal-related coachee characteristics (e.g. motivation or goal orientation) or coach characteristics (e.g. coach's authentic leadership style) without also examining goal activity were not included. Furthermore, we focused on workplace coaching as life coaching usually deals with more holistic issues while the work-related focus that is at the core of our review constitutes only one of many possible coaching topics and of varying relevance (Grant, 2005). Finally, we only included studies in English and German. Therefore, findings concerning a broader spectrum of coaching topics or published in other languages are not contained in our review. Although the nationality of study participants was diverse, we cannot rule out potential biases of culture on the findings of the included studies. Put differently, the direction or existence of findings on the relationship between goal activities and coaching outcomes might (also) depend on the coach's and/or coachee's national and cultural background.

Conclusion

'Working with goals' in coaching is conceptualised in various forms in the extant research. Nonetheless, empirical findings on goal activities, especially goal activities other than goal setting, are rather scarce. A number of studies indicate that goal setting is reported as being applied frequently, but that perspectives of coaches and coachees might diverge. Findings suggest that goals may indeed play an important role in improving coaching outcomes. However, findings are not unanimous and the scarce empirical basis to date stands in stark contrast to the strong claims made about the central role of goals in coaching (e.g. Grant, 2012). Does our review challenge the 'sacred cow' (Scoular & Linley,

2006, p.9) of goals in coaching research and practice? Partly, yes. More research is thus warranted in order to further investigate the relevance of goal activities in workplace coaching. We take this as an opportunity

to call for future research on moderating factors (i.e. input, process and contextual factors) that might affect the relationship between (a broader range of) goal activities and coaching outcomes.

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Coaching psychology events

Blue-green psychology: Coaching in the outdoors

Date: 18 September 2020 12:00 – 13:00

Speakers: Anna Marie Watson and Alex Burns

This lunchtime webinar session will explore the psychological benefits of working in blue-green spaces and the practical considerations coaches need to put in place to plan an outdoor coaching session.

Bookings: BPS events page

Free for SCGP members; £6 for BPS members;

£10 for non-BPS members (or join the BPS SGCP)

Positive psychology coaching

Date: 18 November 2020 13:00 – 1400

Speaker: Professor Christian van Nieuwerburgh

This session webinar session will explore the emergence of positive psychology as a frame for coaching. Christian will explore a range of psychological constructs and how these can enhance coaching outcomes with clients.

Bookings: BPS events page – Free for SCGP members;

£6 for BPS members; £10 for non-BPS members (or join the BPS SGCP)

Digital events 2021

We have an exciting schedule of monthly events planned for 2021. The details of speakers and dates will be released in Mid-Autumn 2021.

The full details will be on the BPS events page.

Global Coaching Psychology Conference 2021

Date: 9 and 10 May 2021

Bookings for these events will open on 1st November 2020 with discounts for BPS SGCP members.

For any queries regarding a webinar or masterclass session
please email **membernetworkservices@bps.org.uk**
quoting 'SGCP Practitioner Masterclass and Webinar Programme'
in the subject line.

Understanding what drives the coaching working alliance: A systematic literature review and meta-analytic examination

Carolyn Graßmann & Carsten C. Schermuly

Research in coaching has confirmed the working alliance between clients and coaches to be a key factor for coaching outcomes, such as clients' goal attainment and preventing negative effects. However, surprisingly little is known about which factors contribute to establishing working alliances. We conducted a systematic literature review to investigate which factors influence the working alliance between clients and coaches. We included studies when they pertained to individual and work-related coaching, reported quantifiable data and potential antecedents referred to the client, the coach, or both. Wherever possible, we also analysed relationships by meta-analytical means. We identified 21 samples in 18 studies in our literature review. As suggested by social exchange theory, we identified factors that focus on clients (e.g. change motivation), coaches (e.g. perceived competence), and the client-coach dyad (e.g. similarity). The number of studies allowed us to examine clients' change motivation and coaches' perceived competence by meta-analytical means, which revealed medium-sized effect sizes (for change motivation: $r=.37$, $p<.001$, $k=8$; perceived competence: $r=.42$, $p<.001$, $k=4$). Coaches' experience was not significantly related to working alliance, $r=.10$, $p=.22$, $k=4$). Personality and personality similarity appear unrelated to working alliance, whereas behavioural similarity was identified as an antecedent. Both coaches and clients contribute to establishing working alliances. Clients' motivation and coaches' perceived competence rank among the most promising antecedents for establishing a working alliance in coaching. Several coach behaviours have been suggested in relation to working alliance. These results contribute to a better understanding of the factors that are related to the working alliance in coaching, which may also help coaches to reflect on and improve in their practice. In particular, more behaviour-oriented studies are needed in pursuing the driving factors in coaching working alliances.
Keywords: coaching; change motivation; meta-analysis; relationship quality; systematic literature review; working alliance.

COACHING DESCRIBES a one-on-one learning and development intervention between a client and a professional coach that employs an egalitarian relationship based on collaboration, self-directed learning, goal setting and creating solutions (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Grant & Stober, 2006; Smither, 2011). Coaching aims to help clients in achieving their professional goals, such as improving clients' satisfaction, wellbeing and job performance (Kilburg, 1996). The popularity of coaching seems to be enduring (Bozer & Jones, 2018), 53,300 coaches are in business worldwide and generate an annual revenue of more than 2.3 billion dollars, an increase

of 19 per cent over an estimate from 2011 (ICF, 2012, 2016). The average effectiveness of coaching is now well established through several meta-analyses and systematic literature reviews (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018; Grover & Furnham, 2016; Jones et al., 2015; Sonesh et al., 2015; Theeboom et al., 2014). The heterogeneity in these studies is shown to be large though, indicating that some coaching processes are more effective than others. This moved the discussion from the general effectiveness of coaching to the question of what predicts its effectiveness.

The working alliance between client and coach was proposed early on as one of

the main active ingredients in explaining coaching effectiveness (Bluckert, 2005; McKenna & Davis, 2009; O'Broin & Palmer, 2006). Working alliance 'reflects the quality of the client and coach's engagement in collaborative, purposive work within the coaching relationship, and is jointly negotiated and renegotiated throughout the coaching process over time' (O'Broin & Palmer, 2007, p.305). When clients and coaches establish high-quality working alliances, they mutually agree on the goals and tasks that they want to achieve and employ in coaching, and they create a bond to each other entailing trust, respect and liking (Baron & Morin, 2009; Bordin, 1979; Graßmann et al., 2019; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989). Research demonstrated that the working alliance is indeed moderately and consistently related to a broad array of outcomes for clients (for a meta-analysis see Graßmann et al., 2019). Working alliance was not only related to affective and cognitive outcomes, but also to results (such as goal attainment) and less unwanted negative effects for clients (Graßmann et al., 2019). These findings position working alliance as the key factor in explaining why some coaching processes are more successful than others.

Despite working alliance being the potential key for fostering coaching success, surprisingly little knowledge is available to help coaches establishing high-quality working alliances to their clients. Only a few studies focused directly on the predictors of working alliance (e.g. Gettman et al., 2019). So far, more effort has been directed towards identifying predictors of coaching effectiveness, but often in conjunction with working alliance (e.g. Sonesh et al., 2015). These studies could also deliver insights into what predicts working alliance, although this might not have been the study's objective. Moreover, different research streams further complicate the current state of research on working alliance. These streams used different methodologies such as behavioural interaction analysis (e.g. Ianiri & Kauffeld,

2014) or questionnaire surveys (e.g. Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016) and concentrated on other research topics such as personality and similarity (e.g. de Haan et al., 2016), coaching skills and behaviour (e.g. Sonesh et al., 2015), or the antecedents of negative effects for clients, such as client motivation (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016). In light of our research question, these research findings appear fragmented, as they are discussed mostly in isolation from each other.

To identify which factors are related to the working alliance between clients and coaches, we believe that time has now come to integrate those findings. We have conducted a systematic literature review to develop knowledge that is not apparent from reading the individual studies in isolation (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Denyer & Tranfield, 2009) and utilise this approach to identify, synthesise and integrate relevant research findings (Cooper, 2003). We seek to create bridges that link those research findings that have previously appeared to be unrelated (Cooper, 2003). We additionally seek to assess the identified factors in our review with a meta-analytical approach in order to estimate the magnitude and heterogeneity of their relationship to working alliance. Such a statistical analysis provides a transparent, objective and replicable framework for our discussion (Borenstein et al., 2009) and finally contributes to more robust suggestions for helping coaches in practice.

We use social exchange theory (SET; Cropanzano et al., 2017; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) as a theoretical framework for our systematic literature review, as SET can help to explain the importance of the working alliance in coaching (Graßmann et al., 2019). SET assumes that each actor is involved in a series of transactions, where they exchange and reciprocate resources and thereby develop a relationship to each other (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Resources are, for example, information, emotional support/love, money, services, goods and status (Foa & Foa, 1980), which can all be of

importance in coaching processes (Scher-muly, 2018). In light of SET, high quality relationships develop when the interaction partners perceive the reciprocal exchange processes as fair (Cook & Rice, 2006). SET stresses the assumption that both interaction partners actively form the relationship to each other, by exchanging resources (Cropanzano et al., 2017). Drawing on SET, we therefore expect that both clients and coaches contribute to establishing a working alliance with each other in coaching (what we call client and coach factors in our paper). Furthermore, we assume that clients and coaches do not only independently contribute to that exchange process, but also factors that are inherited between them, such as their similarity. Similarity as a predictor for working alliance has, for example, received intense attention in leadership research (for a meta-analysis, see Dulebohn et al., 2012). We refer to these factors as client-coach factors in the remainder of this paper.

To sum up, our systematic literature review aims to identify and synthesise the factors that are related to the working alliance between client and coach. Drawing on SET, we expect to find client, coach, and client-coach factors that are related to working alliance. We additionally use meta-analytic techniques to provide insights into the magnitude and heterogeneity of these relationships whenever possible. By doing so, we seek to add knowledge about what is important in developing working alliances in coaching, to finally help clients and coaches to achieve the best possible working alliances and thereby improve coaching outcomes.

Method

Systematic literature search

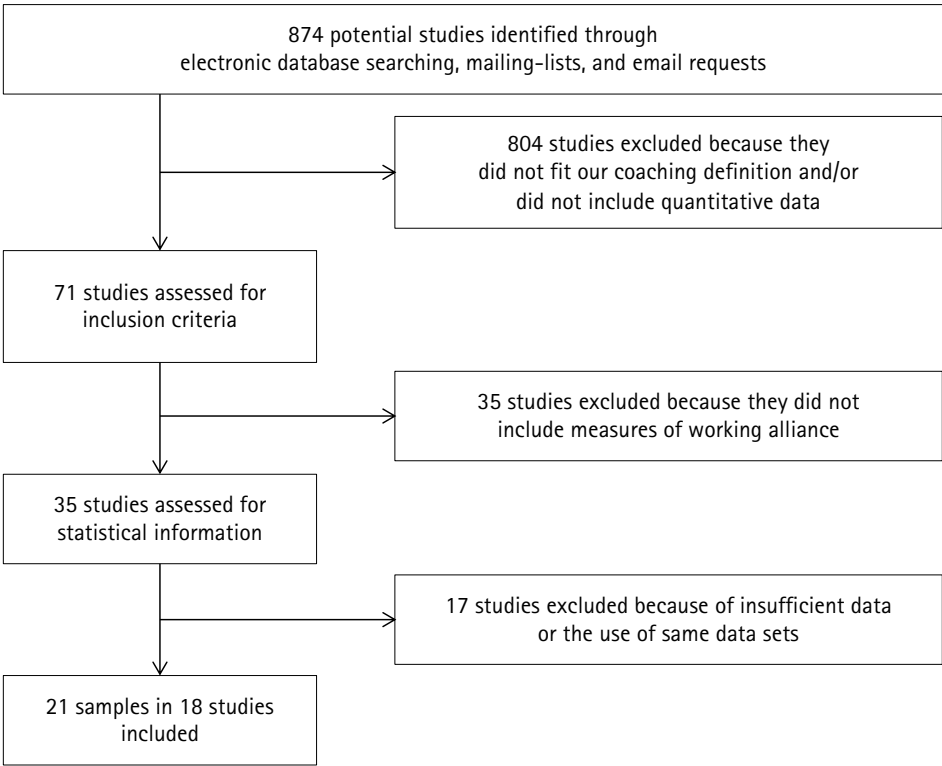
We followed the procedure of Graßmann et al.'s (2019) meta-analysis to obtain comparability with their findings on the relationship between working alliance and client outcomes in workplace coaching.

To identify relevant studies to include in our review, we searched several databases (EBSCO, including PsycINFO and PsychArticles; Web of Science; ProQuest Dissertations; Mendeley; ICF Research Portal) and coaching-specific journals (*Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*; *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*; *International Coaching Psychology Review*; *Coaching: Theorie und Praxis*). We used 'coaching' as a keyword in combination with the following additional keywords: 'working alliance', 'relationship quality', 'bond', 'coaching alliance', or their German counterparts. Although this might inflate the number of studies that need to be screened, we did not include the keywords 'predictor', 'antecedent', or any equivalent to ensure that we would identify studies that might have originally focused on another research question but reported relationships relevant to our research question. To identify forthcoming, but as yet unpublished work related to our research question, we contacted researchers who are known to be active in the field of coaching research, and sent out a request for unpublished studies via the organisational behaviour and the management education list services of the Academy of Management.

Inclusion criteria

We included studies according to the following guidelines: (a) The working alliance had to be defined as working alliance, relationship, relationship quality, bond, or alliance; (b) the coaching intervention pertains to individual, work-related coaching (we focused on workplace coaching for compatibility to the meta-analysis of Graßmann et al., 2019, which analysed the consequences of the working alliance in coaching); (c) the study includes correlations between measures of working alliance and its potential antecedents (or other statistic that can be converted to it); (d) the potential antecedents refer to the client, the coach, or both (we therefore did not include factors such as social support, e.g. de Haan

Figure 1: Search strategy used for the inclusion of studies considered in this systematic literature review.



et al., 2019); and (e) the study was written in English or German. We excluded all studies that did not fit these criteria (see again Figure 1). Most studies were eliminated because they did not report a quantifiable measure of the relationship between working alliance and its potential antecedents. Our literature search also revealed unpublished data, dissertations and books. We incorporated this grey literature to maximise the number of studies and to reduce the magnitude of publication bias (Hopewell et al., 2006).

Our literature review identified 21 independent samples, reported in 18 articles, which met our inclusion criteria. A total of 17 samples were published in peer-reviewed journals. Included samples without undergoing a peer-reviewed process were unpublished data, or were published as dissertations, or books ($N=1$, respectively). All samples included in our review are indicated with an * in our list of references.

Categories for factors related to working alliance

The studies included in our review investigated a wide array of factors that are potentially related to working alliance. Building on SET, we categorised these factors according to the actor to which they relate: client factors, coach factors or client-coach factors. We further distinguished between these factors to allow for a more differential synthesis of studies.

Statistical analyses

Wherever possible, we also used a meta-analytical approach. We employed the Hedges and Olkin (1985) approach to meta-analysis, which weights effect sizes by sample size, so that larger samples have a larger weight in estimating the population effect size. A random effects model was used to allow the true effect size to differ

from study to study (Borenstein et al., 2010), which may be more appropriate given the high variability between coaching processes. We used linear composites of correlations if more than one indicator referred to the same construct. We examined the effect sizes from a study individually when it reported more than one antecedent. As clients and coaches can differ in their perception of working alliance, we did not average their evaluations to avoid meaningless aggregations (Graßmann et al., 2019). Following the procedure of Graßmann et al. (2019), we utilised the effect sizes from the clients' perspective to calculate effect sizes when more than one perspective was available. For all calculations, we used comprehensive meta-analysis software (Borenstein et al., 2014).

Results and discussion

We structured our results around the factors that drive the working alliance regarding client factors, coach factors and client-coach factors. Table 1 (overleaf) presents an overview of the included studies and the factors being investigated.

Client factors

On the part of the client, studies in our review investigated client motivation, client behaviour and client personality as factors related to working alliance. We will synthesise and discuss the findings in the following, beginning with client motivation as the most often studied client factor.

Client motivation

Client motivation refers to clients' willingness to invest time and energy into coaching and to accept personal responsibility for transfer and change, even in the face of difficulties that might arise in the process (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016; McKenna & Davis, 2009). Coaching does not work without the active participation of the client (Kilburg, 2002) and empirical research has demonstrated that client motivation shapes

coaching effectiveness (for a literature review, see Bozer & Jones, 2018).

There are eight samples within six studies that investigated client motivation in relation to working alliance (see Table 1). Client motivation was related to working alliance across most studies, ranging from small-sized relationships (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016; Sperling et al., 2017) to medium-sized relationships (Baron & Morin, 2009; Jansen et al., 2004). Schermuly (2018) surveyed coaches and added insight into coaching processes, where clients dropped out prematurely. He found a strong relationship between change motivation and working alliance not only in completed coaching processes, but also in the processes where clients dropped out prematurely. He also found that clients' change motivation and working alliance were lower in the dropout sample in general (Schermuly, 2018). In partial contrast to these findings, Sonesh and colleagues (2015) found inconclusive results across their executive and student sample of clients: There was a strong relationship between motivation and working alliance in their executive sample, but not in their students sample.

To resolve these issues and to synthesise findings across studies, we meta-analytically examined the relationship between client motivation and working alliance. Table 2 (p.78) presents the effect sizes for each study. The overall aggregated correlation between change motivation and working alliance was $r=.37$ ($N=521$, $k=8$, 95% CI [.22, .51], $p<.001$). Removing one single study did not alter the magnitude of the effect size to a large extent. We found large heterogeneity in effect sizes, $Q=24.38$, $p=.001$, $I^2=71.29$, $T^2=.04$. This suggests that client motivation, in general, has a significant positive and medium-sized relationship to working alliance. The heterogeneity, however, indicates that there are boundary conditions to this relationship.

These findings position client motivation as a potential key factor for establishing the working alliance in coaching.

Table 1: Systematic literature review on the factors that are related to working alliance.

Sample	N ^a	Method	Factors related to working alliance	Finding
Baron & Morin, 2009	31 dyads	Survey of clients (managers) and coaches (executives trained as coaches)	Client motivation; coaches' perceived competence	Working alliance is positively related to client's motivation to transfer and coaches' self-efficacy as a coach in regard to facilitating, but not in regard of relation and communication skills.
Berry, 2005 – Face-to-face sample – Distance sample	51 51	Survey of professional coaches	Coach experience	Working alliance was unrelated to coaches' experience in both samples.
Boyce et al., 2010	74 dyads	Survey of student clients and senior leader coaches in a military setting, either randomly assigned or matched	Matching regarding commonality, compatibility, and credibility	Clients with complementary learning styles (or not similar to their coaches' managerial style) developed more effective relationships.
de Haan et al., 2013	146 dyads	Survey of clients and professional coaches, field sample	Coach behaviour (perceived range of coach techniques); client and coach personality; personality matching	There was a large relationship between the range of coach techniques and working alliance as perceived by clients, but not from the coaches' perspective. They did not report a significant impact of personality or personality matching.
de Haan et al., 2016	1627 dyads	Survey of clients and professional coaches, field sample	Client and coach personality; personality matching	Personality types and personality matching were not strongly related to working alliance.
de Haan et al., 2019	180 dyads	Survey of clients in healthcare and qualified internal coaches in a randomised controlled trial	Coach behaviour (confronting, informing, prescribing, releasing, and supporting); client and coach personality; personality matching	There was an overall relationship between working alliance and coach behaviour from the clients' perspective, but not from the coaches' perspective. Working alliance was unrelated to personality and matching.

Sample	N ^a	Method	Factors related to working alliance	Finding
Gettman et al., 2019	111	Survey of executive clients	Coach behaviour (contracting)	Working alliance was strongly and positively related to contracting.
Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016	111	Survey of clients, field sample	Client motivation; coaches' perceived competence	Working alliance was positively related to client motivation and coaches' competence as perceived by their clients.
Graßmann et al., 2019	275	Survey of professional coaches	Coaches' perceived competence	Working alliance was positively related to competence as a coach as perceived by coaches themselves.
Henriques et al., 2017	319	Survey of coaches	Coach behaviour (stimulating action, planning and structuring activities, warmth behaviour); coach experience	Working alliance was positively related to all three coach behaviours and coach experience, respectively.
Ianiro & Kauffeld, 2014	48/ 16 dyads	Analysis of verbal and nonverbal behaviour and survey of student clients and student coaches	Client and coach behaviour (interpersonal behaviour: dominance and affiliation), coaches' mood	The combination of dominant and friendly behaviour predicted working alliance. Coaches' mood was also related to working alliance.
Ianiro et al., 2013	30	Analysis of verbal and nonverbal behaviour and survey of student clients and student coaches	Client and coach behaviour (interpersonal behaviour: dominance and affiliation)	Affiliation of the coach was positively related to working alliance but dominance of the coach was not. The more similar coach and client behaved on the dimensions of dominance and affiliation, the more positive the working alliance was perceived.
Ianiro et al., 2015	30	Analysis of verbal and nonverbal behaviour and survey of student clients and student coaches	Client and coach behaviour (interpersonal behaviour: dominance and affiliation)	Submissive, neutral or dominant client behaviours had no impact on working alliance. Working alliance was only related to dominant-friendly coach behaviour, but not to dominant-neutral or dominant-hostile coach behaviour. Clients' and coaches' reciprocal friendliness was positively related to working alliance.

Sample	N ^a	Method	Factors related to working alliance	Finding
Jansen et al., 2004	72	Survey of clients and coaches, field sample	Client motivation; coach behaviour (verbal techniques, behavioural methods, concept transparency, participation in the way of working together, specification of goals); coach experience	There was a positive relationship between working alliance and client behaviour and all investigated coach behaviours. There was no relationship between working alliance and coaches' experience.
Schermuly, 2018 – Sample with dropout – Sample without dropout	66 49	Survey of professional coaches	Client motivation; client personality (neuroticism)	Working alliance was positively related to change motivation and unrelated to clients' neuroticism in both samples ^b .
Sonesh et al., 2015 – Student sample – Field sample	44 dyads 89 dyads	Survey of student clients and executive MBA coaches Survey of field clients and professional coaches	Client motivation; client behaviour (information sharing); coach behaviour (rapport building, coaching authentically, providing content, boundary setting, regulating motivation); coach personality (psychological mindedness)	Working alliance was related to client motivation only in the student sample but not in the academic sample, and was positively related to clients' information sharing in both samples. Regarding coach behaviour, working alliance was only related to regulating motivation in the student sample and negatively related to boundary setting in the field sample. Working alliance was unrelated to coaches' psychological mindedness in both samples.
Sperling et al., 2017	20	Survey of clients (insolvent entrepreneurs) and professional coaches	Client motivation	From the clients' perspective, there was a small relationship between working alliance and client motivation, although not significant due to small sample size ^b .

Sample	N ^a	Method	Factors related to working alliance	Finding
Sun et al., 2013	18/21 dyads for each condition	Experimental design with two conditions: transformational and skills coaching; clients were rehabilitation support staff and senior staff was trained as coaches, survey of both clients and coaches	Coach behaviour/ coaching approach (transformational vs. skills coaching)	Working alliance was stronger in transformational coaching from both clients' and coaches' perspectives. Working alliance developed over time in transformational coaching, but not in skills coaching.

Note. ^a Reported sample size for the relationship between working alliance and the factors related to it; ^b supplementary data analysis has been provided on request.

Table 2: Studies on the relationship between client motivation and working alliance.

Study	N	r	Client sample	Perspective motivation	Perspective working alliance
Baron Et Morin, 2009	70	.36	Field	Client	Client
Graßmann Et Schermuly, 2016	111	.20	Field	Client	Client
Jansen et al., 2004	72	.39	Field	Client	Client
Schermuly, 2018					
– Sample with dropout	66	.61	Field	Coach	Coach
– Sample without dropout	49	.60	Field	Coach	Coach
Sperling et al., 2017 ^a	20	.21 ^{ns}	Field	Client	Client
Sonesh et al., 2015					
– Study I	44	.45	Student	Client	Client
– Study II	89	.06 ^{ns}	Field	Client	Client
Total	521	.37 ^{***}	95% CI (.22; .51)		

Note. ^aSupplementary data analysis has been provided on request and multiple time points were available. We used client motivation in the beginning of coaching and working alliance in the end of coaching; N = sample size; r = correlation coefficient; ns = nonsignificant in original study; CI =95% confidence interval.

***p < .001.

Many definitions of motivation emphasise the directing and the energising character of motivation (Kleinginna & Kleinginna, 1981). Clients who are motivated to invest energy into coaching might lay a good basis for establishing a high-quality working alliance. Client motivation might stimulate coaches' motivation and could lead to a positive affective and motivational cycle. These findings therefore align well with the premises of SET (Cropanzano et al., 2017), that clients and coaches exchange resources that contribute to their relationship quality, and positions client motivation as an initial contribution needed for the exchange process. Clients are unlikely to start or reciprocate in such an exchange cycle with their coaches when they are not willing to invest in this relationship in the first place. Not contributing to exchanges, such as honesty or providing enough information, may hinder the establishment of high-quality working alliances, where coaches and clients are aligned in

how and what they want to achieve, accompanied by a mutual bond in that endeavour. Therefore, coaches may want to draw their attention on their clients' motivation if they feel that they need to work on their working alliance. Drawing on SET, client motivation might be more important in the beginning of coaching, to initiate the exchange cycle between clients and coaches. Future research should therefore test temporal dynamics in the relationship between client motivation and working alliance, such as the relative importance of motivation across time. This would also lead to a better understanding of the temporal precedence or reciprocity in the relationship between client motivation and working alliance.

Client behaviour

The next client factor that we synthesised from the existing coaching literature is the clients' behaviour (in five studies). Sonesh et al. (2015) collected client behaviours in two

questionnaire studies. The authors focused on information sharing of the client, which they understand as a cognitive component of the development of a relationship (Sonesh et al., 2015). In both studies, they found a strong relationship between clients' information sharing and working alliance from the perspective of the client. A German research group collected coaching behaviour directly (Ianiro et al., 2013, 2015; Ianiro & Kauffeld, 2014). These studies were based on interpersonal theory (Kiesler, 1996) and have been part of a dissertation project of the first author of these studies. Master's students have been trained as career coaches and coached other students in career-related topics. These coaching processes were videotaped and coded act for act with the Discussion Coding System (DCS; Schermuly & Scholl, 2012). The DCS makes it possible to code nonverbal and paraverbal behaviours in interactions along the two basic dimensions of interpersonal theory (Kiesler, 1996) – dominance and affiliation. In two studies of the dissertation project, client behaviour was analysed as an antecedent for working alliance (Ianiro et al., 2015; Ianiro & Kauffeld, 2014). Submissive, neutral or dominant client behaviours had no impact on working alliance (Ianiro et al., 2015). The combination of dominant and friendly behaviour nevertheless predicted working alliance in the other study (Ianiro & Kauffeld, 2014). Clients who showed more dominant and friendly behaviour at the same time perceived higher working alliance at a later point in time.

In sum, these results are in line with SET. Information, status (dominance) and love (affiliation) seem to be important exchange resources within the SET framework. If clients are willing to offer these resources to their coaches, it seems to be a good predictor for establishing a working alliance with their coaches. Regarding dominance and affiliation, the combined occurrence of both dimensions (dominant-friendly sector of the interpersonal circumplex) seems to be crucial.

Client personality

Personality is one of the most-studied topics in psychology and one of the 'sacred cows' (Scoular & Linley, 2006, p.9) in coaching. Despite this vivid notion, personality did not enter research on working alliance to a great extent. We found four studies that shed light on the relationship between client personality and working alliance (de Haan et al., 2013, 2016, 2019; Schermuly, 2018). Three studies by de Haan and colleagues (2013, 2016, 2019) indicated that client personality was unrelated to working alliance. In their large-scale study, which analysed more than 1000 coaching processes, de Haan et al. (2016) neither expected large effects of personality on working alliance nor did they find evidence of that. From many possible personality characteristics, only extraverted clients (as well as coaches) seem to achieve more agreement on tasks within the working alliance, possibly a consequence of interacting more (de Haan et al., 2016). Keeping in mind that sample size was large (making it easier to detect small effects) and most personality types were unrelated to working alliance, one could conclude that personality is not a driving force for establishing working alliances in coaching. In addition, de Haan and colleagues (2019) reported no relationship between clients' resilience and working alliance from both the clients' and coaches' perspectives. In accordance with these findings, additional data by Schermuly (2018) also indicated no significant relationship between clients' neuroticism and working alliance in a sample with client dropout ($N=66$, $r=-.20$, $p>.05$) and without dropout ($N=49$, $r=-.18$, $p>.05$).

These findings neither align well with the view that personality is a 'sacred cow' in coaching (Scoular & Linley, 2006, p.9), nor with evidence on SET within leadership research. Although SET lacks theoretical precision (Cropanzano et al., 2017) and does not explicitly consider personality, one could have expected a small effect of some personality traits. For instance, one could have expected that clients' openness or

extraversion might slightly simplify exchange processes by fostering interaction (as suggested by the finding of de Haan et al., 2016). Finding no evidence for a general impact of personality might indicate that coaching processes may differ from other exchange processes, such as in leadership, where personality is repeatedly shown to be related to the relationship between leader and member at least to a small extent (for a meta-analysis, see Dulebohn et al., 2011). This matches the known low predictability of personality factors for behaviours and interaction variables (see Mischel, 1968). It remains theoretically unclear why there seems to be no empirical evidence in coaching, as SET cannot explain why personality does not play its expected role in explaining relationships. Future research could use that as a starting point to develop coaching-specific theories and may wish to test other personality traits when the theoretical framework proposes them.

Coach factors

Having synthesised what clients contribute to establishing a working alliance, we now shift the attention to coaches as the other part of the social exchange process. Our review revealed factors pertaining to perceived competence and experience, coach behaviour, and coach personality.

Perceived competence and experience

From the perspective of the coaches themselves, perceived competence can be understood as their self-efficacy to perform their job as a coach. It refers to a specific work role (Spreitzer, 1995) and describes coaches' belief in their capabilities to master their work as a coach (Graßmann et al., 2019). From the clients' perspective, coaches' perceived competence describes a part of their credibility and refers to being perceived as meeting the credentials to fit clients' needs in coaching (Boyce et al., 2010). Coaches' perceived competence can be fuelled by diverse sources, such as 'coaching competence, business, management, leadership and political expertise' (Boyce et al., 2010, p.917) and is also

shaped by the relevance of coaches' experience for their clients' needs (Wycherley & Cox, 2008). We therefore also included findings on the relationship between coaches' experience (in years) in this category.

Our review revealed eight samples in seven studies that reported the relationship between perceived competence or experience of the coach and working alliance (four samples each). Regarding perceived competence, most studies asked coaches for their evaluation. The findings are mixed and range from no relationship (Baron & Morin, 2009) to a medium-sized relationship (e.g. Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016; Graßmann et al., 2019) between perceived competence and working alliance. Baron and Morin (2009) made a further distinction and investigated coaches' perceived competence in terms of coaches' self-efficacy in regard to coaching skills and differentiated these skills into relational skills, communication skills, facilitating learning and results. They found no relationship between coaches' self-efficacy regarding relational and communication skills, but a strong relationship between working alliance and self-efficacy regarding facilitating skills. Regarding coaches' experience (in years), Berry (2005) and Jansen et al. (2004) found no relationship to working alliance, but Henriques et al. (2007) reported a small and significant relationship.

We also meta-analytically analysed the relationship between working alliance and perceived competence, as well as experience (see Table 3). The overall aggregated correlation between perceived competence and working alliance was $r=.42$, 95% CI [.17, .62], $p=.001$, $k=4$, $N=430$. The overall aggregated correlation between coaches' experience and working alliance was not significant, $r=.10$, 95% CI [-.06; .25], $p=.22$, $N=493$, $k=4$). Again, we found heterogeneity in effect sizes (for perceived competence: $Q=14.86$, $p=.002$, $P=79.81$, $T^2=.06$; for experience: $Q=6.28$, $p=.10$, $P=52.22$, $T^2=.01$). The (non-)significance of the relationships did not change when one study was removed. These results suggest that coaches' perceived

Table 3: Studies on the relationship between coaches' perceived competence and working alliance.

Study	N	r	Client Sample	Perspective competence	Perspective working alliance
Perceived competence					
Baron & Morin, 2009					
– Relation	24	.07 ^{ns}	Field sample	Coach	Client
– Communication	24	.00 ^{ns}	Field sample	Coach	Client
– Facilitating	24	.42	Field sample	Coach	Client
Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016	111	.41	Field sample	Client	Client
Graßmann et al., 2019	275	.25	Field sample	Coach	Coach
Sperling et al., 2017 ^a	20	.82	Field sample	Client	Client
Total	430	.42***	95% CI (.17; .62)		
Experience as a coach (in years)					
Berry, 2005					
– Face-to-face sample	51	.00 ^{ns}	Field sample	Coach	Coach
– Distance sample	51	.00 ^{ns}	Field sample	Coach	Coach
Henriques et al., 2007	319	.24	Field sample	Coach	Coach
Jansen et al., 2004	72	.01 ^{ns}	Field sample	Coach	Coach
Total	493	.10	95% CI (-.06; .25)		

Note. a Supplementary data analysis has been provided on request and clients evaluated perceived competence and working alliance in end of coaching; N=sample size; r=correlation coefficient; ns = nonsignificant in original study; CI=95% confidence interval.

***p < .001.

competence, but not coaches' experience *per se*, has a significant positive relationship to working alliance. The found heterogeneity again suggests boundary conditions to this relationship. However, only few studies were available for analysis.

These findings position coaches' perceived competence as another factor in our understanding of what drives the working alliance between clients and coaches. Relying on SET, coaches' perceived competence is likely to be a precondition to start the social exchange process. If coaches are perceived as competent, the exchange resources of the coaches (e.g. support, information and service) might be seen as more valuable for the clients. This should help clients to be

open to feedback and coaches to be better able to assess clients' important issues and help to find workable solutions (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016). These findings echo leadership literature, which shows clear links between subordinates' competence and a positive relationship to their supervisors (Dulebohn et al., 2011; Gerstner & Day, 1997). It appears interesting that we did not find a relationship between coaches' experience and the working alliance to the client. This supports the notion that coaches' perceived competence depends on their clients' needs (Boyce et al., 2010) and may indicate that this assessment could be subjective. There are several indicators for coaches' competence (Boyce et al., 2010) and their experience

may only be one of them. Nonetheless, one must interpret these findings with caution due to the small number of studies. As clients and coaches can differ in their perspectives (Graßmann et al., 2019), one fruitful avenue for future research could be studying the agreement between how clients and coaches evaluate coaches' perceived competence. We could not explicitly test to what extent clients and coaches agree regarding coaches' perceived competence, or whether coaches' competence is related to their experience as a coach. Future studies could analyse the differential impact on establishing a working alliance in the beginning and over the course of coaching.

Coach behaviour

By coach behaviour we understood all behaviour, techniques, or coaching approaches that coaches can employ to guide their clients through the coaching process. We identified 11 samples in 10 studies that investigated coaching behaviour in its relation to working alliance. These studies shed light onto a heterogeneous set of coaching behaviours. The findings are preliminary and should be treated with caution, as a single study almost never provides enough evidence for an effect and its explanation (Open Science Collaboration, 2015).

A questionnaire study by de Haan and colleagues (2013) showed that clients reported stronger working alliances when they experienced a range of different interventions from their coach, such as challenging thoughts and actions, helping to make discoveries, or helping to release emotions. This was also found from the coaches' perspective, though to a lesser extent (de Haan et al., 2013). Moreover, working alliance partially mediated the relationship between perceived coach behaviour and coaching effectiveness, which supports the idea that working alliance is the key in coaching processes (Bordin, 1979; Graßmann et al., 2019). In another questionnaire study, de Haan and colleagues (2019) investigated confronting, informing, prescribing,

releasing and supporting in relation to working alliance and found an overall relationship from the clients' perspective. This relationship was not significant from the coaches' perspective. Taking a deeper look at the specific coach behaviour that clients experienced, the following pattern emerged: confronting and supporting behaviour was positively related to working alliance, prescribing negatively and informing and releasing was unrelated to working alliance (de Haan et al., 2019). Gettman et al. (2019) added that contracting behaviour is strongly related to working alliance, as reported by clients. Interestingly, all three studies did not find major differences regarding the dimensions of working alliance, namely goal, task and bond (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989). This may indicate that coach behaviour tackles working alliance in a more holistic way. In other words, the same coach behaviour may not only help to achieve agreement on mutual tasks and goals, which is more task-related, but also seem to help establishing an affective bond to clients. According to these results, coaches may not behave differently to establish all three dimensions of the working alliance.

Henriques et al. (2017) investigated stimulating action, planning and structuring activities, and warmth behaviour in relation to working alliance. They surveyed coaches and found support for all of them. Jansen et al. (2004) found a large relationship between working alliance and verbal techniques, such as feedback, reframing, and guiding self-reflection. They also found medium-sized relationships between working alliance and behavioural methods (e.g. role play or relaxation), concept transparency, participation in the way of working together, and specification of goals. A questionnaire study by Sonesh et al. (2015) shed more light on rapport building, coaching authentically, providing content, boundary setting and regulating motivation as coach behaviours. They found differential effects for their academic and executives sample. For instance, regulating motivation exhibited the strongest

relationship to working alliance in the academic client sample, but was unrelated to it in the executive sample. In contrast for executives, working alliance was positively related to providing content and negatively to boundary setting (Sonesh et al., 2015). These results fuel the idea that the same coaching behaviour may have a different effect on developing working alliances, depending on the specific client. The overall pattern does not suggest a general effect for student and field samples as a generic approach to capture the differences in clients. The study by Sonesh et al. (2015), however, raises the idea that coaches may need to behave differently when they coach executives, and may reverse the pattern that was found for other clients.

All studies mentioned above used subjective questionnaires to measure behaviour. As described above, three studies within the dissertation project by Ianiro captured coach behaviour explicitly. Ianiro et al. (2013) investigated coaches' dominance and affiliation as antecedents for working alliance. They showed that by using nonverbal behaviour, affiliation of the coach was positively related to working alliance but dominance of the coach was not. Ianiro and colleagues (2015) further investigated combinations of coaches' dominance and affiliation. They found that working alliance was only related (positively and strongly) to dominant-friendly coach behaviour, but not to dominant-neutral or dominant-hostile coach behaviour. In the last study (Ianiro & Kauffeld, 2014), dominant-friendly behaviour was again associated with working alliance after the first and the fifth coaching session. They also found that coaches' mood (good/bad and calm/nervous) at the beginning of coaching was strongly related to the later working alliance. Taken together, these results from the realm of observed nonverbal behaviour show that coaches' affiliation in terms of friendliness is positively associated with working alliance but coaches' dominance seems to be helpful only when combined with high friendliness. As described above for client

behaviour, these findings are in line with SET where love and status seem to be both important exchange resources.

Concerning coaching approaches, Sun et al. (2013) examined differences in working alliance between transformational and skills coaching. Transformational coaching resulted in higher working alliances from both the clients' and coaches' perspectives. Within six months, the working alliance between clients and coaches improved over time in transformational coaching, but not in skills coaching (Sun et al., 2013). This indicates that the coaching approaches that coaches work with have different potential to foster working alliances.

These findings resemble more of a hodgepodge than a coherent research theme, but they illuminate that coach behaviour, as diverse as it might be, is repeatedly related to the working alliance between clients and coaches. This is an interesting finding in itself. SET specifically assumes that behaviour (in terms of initiating actions and behavioural responses) from both actors constitutes the exchange cycle and therefore relationship quality (Cropanzano et al., 2017). This premise positions coach behaviour at the forefront of establishing working alliances. On the other hand, the common factors approach (Rosenzweig, 1936; de Haan et al., 2013) proposes that common factors better explain coaching effectiveness than specific techniques (as can be seen above in the case of motivation and perceived competence). Although this does not necessarily transfer to establishing a working alliance as well, it raises the concern as to whether specific behaviour contributes much. Our synthesis of research findings contradicts this assumption by showing that coach behaviour does play a role in explaining working alliance. We therefore encourage researchers to follow this path. For now, we call for more replication studies of the coach behaviour that has already been introduced rather than investigating new behaviour or techniques. This would help to draw reliable conclusions

on what coaches could do to establish a working alliance with their clients, which could be useful in coaching education and professional development.

Coach personality

Five studies tested the influence of coaches' personality on working alliance. Sonesh et al. (2015) analysed in two studies the effect of coaches' psychological mindedness on working alliance. They define psychological mindedness as the 'ability to self-regulate and sustain attention throughout the coaching process and to reflect on his or her psychological state' (Sonesh et al., 2015, p.192). They found no significant relationship to working alliance in both studies. The same picture was found in the studies conducted by de Haan and colleagues (2013, 2016, 2019), who showed that coach personality was largely unrelated to working alliance.

To summarise this research, we see the same picture for the effects of coach personality as for client personality. Coaches' personality has so far not been supported as a relevant factor for the working alliance between clients and coaches. This means in practice, for instance, that coach personality does not seem to be relevant in selecting coaches when the goal is to secure a strong working alliance.

Client-coach factors

After having synthesised research findings that refer to clients and coaches independently, we now move to the interaction between them. We identified studies that centre around the idea of similarity between client and coach and their appropriate matching to each other.

Similarity and matching

Theoretical approaches such as similarity-attraction paradigm (Byrne, 1971) and empirical results from social psychology consistently show that similarity is related to positive interpersonal relationships (Dulebohn et al., 2012). Similarity increases behavioural predictability and

facilitates communication processes (Bauer & Green, 1996) for instance, which should be theoretically and practically relevant in coaching processes. In following this path, Boyce et al. (2010) matched coaches and clients according to communality, compatibility, and credibility. They found initial support for complementary learning and managerial styles supporting the development of client-coach relationships (Boyce et al., 2010). Subsequent studies by de Haan and colleagues (2013, 2016), however, have repeatedly demonstrated that personality similarity did not predict the working alliance between client and coach.

Contrasting findings exist for behavioural data. Ianiro et al. (2013) found a strong negative relationship between the distance from perfect similarity and the working relationship. In other words, the more similar coach and client behaved on the dimensions of dominance and affiliation, the more positive the working alliance was perceived. In a second study (Ianiro et al., 2015), this behavioural similarity pattern and its consequence for working alliance were confirmed for the affiliation dimension. The underlying mechanism for these results might be explained by behavioural mimicry, which is associated with positive relationship perceptions (Hess et al., 1999).

Summarising these results, similarity in personality appears inconsequential for the development of the working alliance so far. This differs from results for leader-member relationships, where similarity does predict positive relationships (Dulebohn et al., 2012). This may be a good sign for coaching practice as personality is more difficult to change than behaviour. According to the state of research, coaches should mirror the nonverbal behaviour of their clients. For instance, if coaches work with a client showing a high degree of dominance and affiliation, they should not behave submissively and should not forget to send friendly signals (see Schermuly & Scholl, 2012, for an overview of nonverbal signals on the affiliation and dominance dimension).

General discussion and conclusions

Coaching psychology can help to gain more knowledge about the psychological processes leading to purposeful change (Grant, 2006). Working alliance plays a key role in that regard (Graßmann et al., 2019) and the current paper successfully identified factors that are related to it, both on the side of clients and coaches. To date, clients' motivation and coaches' perceived competence rank among the most promising antecedents for establishing a working alliance in coaching. Practitioners therefore may want to keep track of clients' motivation throughout coaching and reflect if they feel competent for their clients' needs. They should also make these competencies visible to their clients, for instance in their first meeting with the client. Partially speaking against the assumption that specific coach behaviour does not contribute much to coaching effectiveness when compared to common factors as mentioned above, our literature review revealed several coach behaviours that seem to contribute to establishing working alliances. There are, however, little replication studies for the specific coaching behaviour so far and we caution practitioners to rely on the behaviour outlined above without further reflection. Importantly, behavioural oriented variables seem to be better predictors for the working alliance than personality factors. Concluding from the results concerning personality and matching, our findings echo prior notions that clients, coaches, or their similarity in personality are not major antecedents for working alliance (de Haan et al., 2019). This matches the well-known evidence for the low predictability of personality factors for behaviours and interaction variables so far (see Mischel, 1968). Given these findings, organisations

may not need to match clients and coaches based on their personality, in the hope to give clients a better start into the coaching relationship.

However, there are promising results concerning behavioural similarity based on interpersonal theory (see Ianiro et al., 2013), which might provide insight into how coaches' can effectively adapt to clients during the coaching process through micro-mimicry behaviours, but it is important to note that these results stem from student clients and coaches. To date there is no behavioural data available from professional coaches establishing working alliances with, for example, executive clients. It is a big challenge for coaching research to find, observe, code and analyse quantitatively a large sample of experienced coach-client dyads. Only with such behavioural data can the sequential, reciprocal and simultaneous nature of communication (Schermuly & Scholl, 2012) in coaching be captured and put in to relation in a fruitful way with important variables such as working alliance.

Despite having identified factors related to the working alliance between client and coach, we cannot derive causal assumptions from these studies. Moreover, only few studies referred to the same factors. We therefore strongly call for the replication and robust examination of these findings to support coaches and clients in establishing high-quality working alliances.

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Book Review

Doing A Systematic Review: A Student's Guide

Boland, A. Cherry, M. C. & Dickson, R.

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2nd Ed. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Reviewed by Julia Carden

MANY JOURNALS have indicated an interest in reporting systematic reviews and meta-analytic work (Daniels, 2019), and an increasing number are published in high-level journals for example *The Leadership Quarterly*, *International Journal of Management Reviews* and the *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, therefore a book providing guidance on how best to tackle a systematic review is a helpful resource. This book aims to provide guidance for post-graduate students in conducting a systematic literature review.

The '10 step roadmap' provided at the start and the associated chapters provides a guide to novices in conducting systematic reviews and the book is a helpful starting point. It is a pity that each of the chapter titles do not mirror the 10-step stages, whilst there is synergy between the 10 steps and the chapter titles there is some inconsistency. Each chapter ends with a helpful 'frequently asked questions' section, which can really help the reader, and this supplemented with each chapter containing a list of 'further reading and resources' relevant to that chapter. In addition, the book is supported by a wealth of on-line resources at: <https://study.sagepub.com/doingasystematicreview2e>

The first chapter really positions who the book is aimed at i.e. 'Master's' students, and this indicates the level the content is pitched

at. However, for the first-time postgraduate research student undertaking a systematic review it is a valuable first stop before reading more advanced guidance.

The early chapters 2, 3 and 4 provide practical guidance and advice on managing the review process, defining inclusion and exclusion criteria and developing the search strategy. Throughout the chapters there are helpful tables and diagrams which helps summarise the points discussed and really helps the readability. Chapter 3 includes a section on identifying inclusion and exclusion criteria, but it is a shame that it does not discuss the use of 'grey literature' (Adams, et al., 2017) in reviews, and it is felt that guidance on this would have added value to this chapter. A flow diagram showing the systematic review process, such as that used by Nolan and Garavan (2016) and how inclusion criteria are used would be a helpful summary to chapter 3.

Chapter 6 provides guidance on data extraction, which is supported by chapters 8, 11 and 12. Chapter 7 on quality assessment feels like an interruption to the flow, and perhaps would be better situated before the data extraction is discussed. Likewise it would have helped the flow of the book if chapters 11 and 12 were positioned before the writing up chapter (chapter 9). What is not discussed in these chapters is how the

extracted data might be analysed, and whilst this might be too detailed for this book some signposting to additional resources and reading on appropriate research methodologies to use would be helpful.

The concluding chapters on writing up and disseminating the review provide useful guidance. Perhaps guidance on what journals may look for in terms of publishing systematic literature reviews or indeed signposting of resources detailing this would have been a useful addition.

The overall strength of this book is that it provides a readable and usable step-by-step

guide to the novice. It is a recommended starting point for first timers. It's frequently asked questions and additional resources/reading are extremely valuable inclusions. To develop a deeper expertise and knowledge of conducting systematic reviews further reading is recommended such as Higgins and Green (2008) or Gough et al. (2017).

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Book Review

Introduction to Meta-Analysis

Borenstein, M., Hedges, L.V., Higgins, J.P.T. & Rothstein, H.R.

(2009). Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley.

Reviewed by Ben Van Den Assem

THERE ARE various approaches to doing systematic reviews. Meta-analysis is but one. The authors refer to meta-analysis as 'the statistical synthesis of results from a series of studies' (pp. xxi, xxiii, xxiii). The focus and content of their book therefore is the statistical approach to conducting the synthesis of the data in systematic reviews.

Unlike the narrative review, where the reviewers implicitly assign some level of importance to each study, in meta-analysis the weights assigned to each study are based on mathematical criteria that are specified in advance (p. xxvii).

Purpose of the meta-analysis

Meta-analysis serves several purposes particularly in terms of synthesising evidence with respect to practice, research and policy-making. It has been widely used in medicine with respect to the efficacy of treatment decisions, with 3700 meta-analyses synthesising treatment data in all areas of health care reported as of January 2009 (pp. xxiii–xxiv). How and when it is to be most purposely and effectively employed is discussed in detail in the book.

Purpose of the book

The authors see their book as providing 'a framework that allows [users] to under-

stand the logic of meta-analysis, as well as how to apply and interpret meta-analytic procedures properly' (p. xxv). It 'is intended for [those] from various substantive fields including medicine, epidemiology, social sciences, business, ecology and others', although the 'meta-analysis method developed in any one of these fields has application to all of them' (p. xxvi).

The authors note that their book is intended for those who 'actually use meta-analysis' but 'have not had the opportunity to learn about it systematically' (p. xxv). Since its publication in 2009, meta-analysis has been 'taking root' along with the broadening appeal of the evidence-based movement. '[R]esearchers in many fields [were] moving away from the narrative review, and adopting systematic reviews and meta-analysis' (p. xxiii). Today it has become a research tool and methodology of interest for both students and researchers across a number of other disciplines and, of late, one of interest for research in coaching. The book is aimed at 'researchers, clinicians and statisticians' and seen by the authors 'as the basis [for] a course in meta-analysis' (p. xxvi).

Where to start

Although this book will be appreciated by the advanced or seasoned systematic reviewer, it also offers a clear descriptive overview in the preface and parts 1 and 9 for those who are

new to or considering using meta-analysis for their systematic reviews.

Part 1 explains where each element of the meta-analysis fits. It describes 'how a meta-analysis works' and 'why perform a meta-analysis'. The basic statistical concepts used in meta-analysis are described (pp.3–14).

Part 9 (pp.357–387) is very helpful and should be considered jointly with part 1 as an introduction, particularly for the newcomer to meta-analysis, before moving on to the other parts. It provides a good description for deciding 'when' to do a meta-analysis, 'reporting the results', 'cumulative meta-analysis' and 'criticisms of meta-analysis' (pp.357–387). Part 9 is helpful in deciding if meta-analysis is appropriate and how when considering a particular systematic review.

Analysis and applications

The remainder of the book, parts 2 to 8 and 10, is focused on statistical analysis. The scope of statistical analysis considered includes the 'mean', 'standard deviation', and 'procedures analogous to analysis of variance or multiple regression' (p.xxiii).

Part 2 provides an overview and a more in-depth technical and statistical explanation of the concepts introduced in part 1, such as 'effect sizes based on means, binary data correlations' and 'converting' these 'to a common index' and a discussion on 'factors that affect precision' (pp.17–65).

Part 3 describes and compares the 'fixed-effect' and 'random effects' models and offers examples of 'continuous, binary and correlational' data (pp.61–102).

Part 4 introduces the topic of 'identifying and quantifying heterogeneity', 'prediction intervals' and offers examples to 'compute the measure of heterogeneity' of 'continuous, binary and correlational data', 'prediction intervals', 'subgroup analyses', 'meta-regression' (pp.105–212).

Part 5 addresses the topic of 'independent subgroups within a study', 'multiple outcomes or time-points', 'multiple-comparisons' and 'complex data structures' (pp.215–245).

Part 6 addresses other technical considerations such as 'vote counting', 'power analysis' and 'publication bias' (pp.251–292).

Part 7 considers technical issues such as 'effect size', '*p*-values', 'Simpson's paradox', 'the basic inverse-variance method' (pp.297–319).

Part 8 provides more material on 'meta-analysis methods based on direction and *p*-values', 'methods for dichotomous data', 'psychometric meta-analysis' (pp.325–352).

Part 10 provides an overview of computer programs for meta-analysis and 'an annotated listing of suggested readings for... components not addressed by the authors' (p.xxviii).

Conclusion

The authors offer a purposeful descriptive introduction for the place and use of meta-analysis in systematic reviews. Their book provides a very comprehensive and in-depth presentation of the technicalities involved in meta-analysis, the statistical basis upon which these rest and how these may be applied 'to synthesise evidence on the effects of interventions or to support evidence based policy or practice' (p.xxiii). It acknowledges that 'there is no single right way' to conduct a meta-analysis since '[i]t all depends on the purpose of the synthesis, and the data that are available' (p.xxiii).

The content of the book and its presentation may initially appear daunting in terms of its emphasis on statistical formulas and analysis, however the text is helpful in explaining their purpose and application. Although it will be of greater interest to the experienced systematic reviewer than the beginner, its content clearly suggests that an appreciation and understanding of statistical analysis would be helpful for both in ensuring the quality of their systematic reviews.

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Book Review

Cochrane Handbook for Systematic Reviews of Interventions

Higgins, J.P.T. & Green, S.

ISBN 978-0-470-69951-5 (HB) 2008).

Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell.

Reviewed by Ben Van Den Assem

SYSTEMATIC REVIEWS were introduced by the Cochrane Collaboration in 1993 as a response for the managing, understanding and integrating the increasing volume of research being generated in the field of health. The Handbook was first published in May 1994 to support authors of Cochrane Reviews, which in 2015 was over 31,000 from more than 120 countries. As such, it has become the authoritative compendium among other current publications* of what is required to competently and professionally undertake a systematic review from start to finish.

The Handbook is experientially and technically well-grounded and readable for the novice and the professional author or user of systematic reviews. Although it presents a bias in favour of medicine and health, it will appeal to a wide variety of disciplines engaged in quantitative and qualitative reviews. About half of the Handbook is readily applicable and useful for both. Qualitative reviews unfortunately are only specifically covered by one chapter. However, the Handbook more than compensates for this in the quality and thoroughness with which it addresses the subject of systematic reviews and how to conduct them.

The conclusion to the Handbook, Chapter 22, provides a succinct yet very helpful overview of the material covered

in the Handbook, which is both useful as an introduction to the subject as well as a conclusion to the book.

Planning and preparing to conduct systemic reviews

Chapters 2 and 3 are of particular interest with respect in planning and preparing to conduct systemic reviews, from establishing a protocol for the review, implementation and the assistance needed and keeping them current and relevant.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 are most important in guiding the first phases of the review which are the fundamental building blocks for ensuring the review is on a sound footing from the start.

Searching for data

Chapter 4 describes the methods to search for studies for the review, the layout of the review, and the criteria for including/excluding studies for the review. Chapters 5 and 6 elaborate on these as well as the importance of the review question, searching strategies for studies and planning the process. Although there is a medical bias or emphasis in the description of these, the two chapters 5 and 6 are very practical and useful in explaining how to do searches. The importance of searching is emphasised since often many existing studies are overlooked

or not found. For example, the Handbook reports that only 30–80 per cent of all known published randomised control trials were identified using MedLine, one of the major medical data bases.

Assessing and using the data

Chapter 7 considers the collection and selection of studies located and assessing the ability of these as well as extracting of data from the studies and coding. It emphasises that the methods used in these steps must allow for transparency and accountability of the processes involved. Chapter 8 addresses the risk of bias in the process of carrying out reviews, which may even occur in the studies ‘performed to the highest possible standards’ (p.189). Tools such as scales and checklists for assessing quality and risk of bias are considered.

Analysis of the data

Chapters 9 and 10, which focus on the analysis of data, meta-analysis and biases, are likely to have more appeal for the seasoned systematic reviewer. As such, these are quite technical and statistical, for example, sensitivity analysis, meta-analysis and its potential for misleading combinations of unrelated data.

Although a basic but an important aspect of systematic reviews, Chapter 11 considers the presentation of the results and summary of the findings. It is helpful in describing the use of forest plots, summery tables, abstracts, use of plain language summaries and titles.

Interpretation of the data

Chapter 12 considers the interpretation of results and drawing conclusions. It describes factors which increase and decrease the quality of evidence and the system to define its quality. In addition, the chapter addresses interpreting statistical analysis such as confidence intervals, *p* vales, statistical significance and standardised means difference.

Qualitative research and systematic reviews

Unfortunately only chapter 20 is specifically

devoted to qualitative research and systematic reviews. Since most of the coaching research is currently qualitative, this should be of particular interest and assistance for researchers and authors of systematic reviews of the literature. This lesser prominence given by the Handbook to qualitative reviews seems to account for Cochrane’s delayed acknowledgement of the importance and potential contribution of the qualitative dimension to systematic reviews. It is hoped that this imbalance might be rectified in the upcoming next edition of the Handbook.

Other special areas of interest for advanced reviewers

Chapters 13 to 19 and 21 are dedicated to a number of special topics most of which would likely be of particular interest to the more seasoned reviewer, for example, non-randomised studies; adverse effects; economic evidence; statistical issues such as missing data and standard deviations; patient reported outcomes; individual patient data; prospective meta-analysis; public health and health promotion.

Conclusion

The overall strength and value of the Handbook lies in presenting the technical and methodological issues in a clear and compelling manner. Even though the Handbook in places is quite technical and statistical, it remains the leading authoritative source to turn to for most aspects related to systematic reviews. It serves to introduce and guide the user and systematic reviewer from the basic level to developing an expertise well beyond this. In so doing it provides highly relevant information and specific guidance on many of the technical and nuanced issues which invariably arise during most systematic reviews. Other texts may be more user friendly and suffice in giving the novice reviewer a basic introduction to commence and conduct a systematic review, for example, Booth et al. (2017).

My review and comments on the *Cochrane Handbook* are not to dissuade the beginner from using it. On the contrary, I offer

these as source for appreciating and understanding how and when the Handbook may help to build one's knowledge and expertise in doing systematic reviews and in making a contribution to the coaching research literature. To that end, the experiences of the many systematic review professionals who have contributed to the Handbook over the

past quarter century, offer a very valuable and comprehensive overview of systematic reviews.

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*Other related current publications

- Boland, A., Cherry, M.G. & Dickson, R. (Eds.) (2017). *Doing a Systematic Review: A Student's Guide*, 2nd edn. London: Sage.
- Booth, A., Sutton, A. & Papaioannou, D. (Eds.) (2016). *Systematic Approaches to a Successful Literature Review*, 2nd edn. London: Sage.
- Centre for Reviews and Dissemination (2008). *Systematic Reviews*. York, UK: University of York.
- Gough, D., Oliver, S. & Thomas, J. (2017). *An Introduction to Systematic Reviews*, 2nd edn. London: Sage.

APS CPIG Chair's Report

Vicki de Prazer

WE HAD ALL BEEN discussing the 'future of work', in a world we considered 'rapidly changing'. The terms disruption and VUCA had started to sound a little trite, a little clichéd.

Now we must adapt to multidimensional change, far beyond the future we anticipated.

Tragically the world has experienced immense loss and grief, battling Covid-19. Humanity has been challenged psychologically, individually, societally and economically.

From the perspective of coaching psychology, we are obliged to reflect on what we have learned and how can we promote resilience and optimism in a changed world.

I would like to highlight some of the insight's experts are reflecting on.

These insights remind us that change can be brutal, yet the phenomena of Covid-19 has offered the world a turbo charged platform for change, that is exciting and revolutionary.

Tom Burton, editor, *Financial Review*, March 31, notes 'Coronavirus turbo charges disruption. Decades of old analogue ways and rules are being swept aside as the Coronavirus emergency turbo charges the digital economy in a matter of weeks'.

Burton notes industries that have been reticent to change have shifted overnight. Telehealth has become an essential service, the legal system is seeing virtual hearings, banking, education and shopping having totally embraced a new reality. A reality that many predict will not return to what was.

Coaching psychologists need to be agile and well informed to contribute to opti-

mising the experience and performance of individuals, workers, employers and organisations to manage and thrive in this new world.

The value of professional dialogues, research and knowledge exchange at a global level, via an online environment is now evident, available to coaches and exciting for our profession.

Global economic recovery strategies, environmental sustainability gains, intellectual exchange and social exchange are all profoundly positive outcomes, we are starting to recognise.

USA researcher Kate Lister from Global Workplace Analytics noted in April 2020, that '75 million employees could be working from home during Covid-19 and saving employers \$30 billion dollars a day.'

These savings are achieved by reduced costs in real estate, infrastructure, travel for business meetings and daily commuting, reduced absenteeism, increased productivity, global teams and exponentially enhanced communication.

An opportunity exists for coaching psychologists to play a vital role in the new future of work, the wellbeing of our communities and the lives of individuals as they build resources, resilience and optimism.

I hope you and your loved ones are doing well. CPIG is keen to participate in global exchange with coaching psychologists about these challenges and opportunities.

Vicki de Prazer

National Chair APS CPIG

SGCP Chair report for July 2020

Laura Rees-Davies

NOW, MORE THAN EVER, we are reminded that we should consider how we approach our coaching practice in a sustainable way. We are very grateful that our conference plan for 2020 included a one-day virtual conference focusing on sustainability. This conference started early in the day (0600 UK time), and finished late (22:30 UK time) to allow our international partners to join us from time zones across the world. We were pleased to welcome over 400 delegates and that we were in the position to host this event despite the health crisis. While we were sorry that we were not able to see you at the London Conference this year, we are looking forward to a combined physical and online event on 9 and 10 May 2021.

We have been developing our online presence of online continuing professional development opportunities. These sessions are free for SGCP members, with a fee for colleagues who choose not to subscribe to the SGCP. I encourage you to look at the SGCP webpages for our programme of events, join us for the remainder of 2020

and as our series continues into 2021. The committee are keen to hear your thoughts on the type of sessions you would appreciate, and the speakers you would like us to invite. Similarly, if you are interested in becoming a speaker for the webinar series, please contact us by emailing your ideas to sgcpchair@bps.org.uk.

Despite the limitations on travel, we continue to make good progress towards achieving a set of professional standards for coaching psychology. We have also been able to continue working with our Peer practice group facilitators, and hope to extend our PPG network in the very near future. If you are interested in hosting a group, please contact PPG Coordinator Tony Page by emailing membernetworkservices@bps.org.uk.

We send our best wishes to you all. I hope that you are, and continue to be, safe and well.

Dr Laura Rees-Davies

Coaching in blue and green spaces

Coaching is traditionally held indoors, though scientific research in other fields such as health and education indicates the restorative and stress relieving effects of blue and green spaces on the body and mind. The opportunity to hold coaching sessions amongst blue (rivers, lakes, sea, ponds, canals or fountains) and green spaces (woods, meadows and parks) would build on these mental health, emotional wellbeing and wider immediate and long-term health benefits in combination with the coaching experience, enhancing coaching outcomes.

Learning outcomes:

During this webinar you will:

- Get an introduction to, and better understand, the theory and research behind blue and greenspace;
- Identify how to integrate the benefits of blue and greenspaces to improve the coaching experience, by deepening your coaching practice and enhancing coaching outcomes;
- Consider practical tips to facilitate successful coaching sessions in blue and greenspaces.

Alex Burn – Alexandra Burn – is an independent business coach and L&D professional who works with individuals, teams and organisations across all sectors. Her focus when working in-house in global organisations, such as Samsung and Siemens, was talent management and leadership development. Alex's passion for both coaching and for all things nature related has led to her recently completing an MSc in Coaching and Behavioural Change from Henley Business School, where her dissertation research focused on the impact of outdoor coaching on coaching outcomes.

Social media links:

Website: www.alexburnconsulting.com; LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/alexandraburn

Anna-Marie Watson – Anna-Marie is an Executive Coach (PCC) and Coach Supervisor with a serious passion for the outdoors. She has over 19 years' experience, initially serving in the British Army; then supporting clients across five continents to achieve healthy and sustainable performance at work and beyond. Anna-Marie is on a mission to encourage fellow coaches take their coaching practice outdoors across the world.

Website: www.rfmcoaching.com; LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/awatson4/

Twitter: @rfmcoaching; Instagram: @rfmcoaching

4. Online submission process

- (a) All manuscripts must be submitted by email to: ICPRsubmissions@bps.org.uk
- (b) The submission must include the following as separate files:
 - Title page consisting of manuscript title, authors' full names and affiliations, name and address for corresponding author.
 - Abstract.
 - Full manuscript omitting authors' names and affiliations. Figures and tables can be attached separately if necessary.

5. Manuscript requirements

- Tables and figures should be included as part of the article. Images should be supplied as separate JPG files. The resolution of digital images must be at least 300 dpi.
- The following structure is suggested, although may be varied with good reason: Abstract – summarizing each of the following sections in 2 or 3 sentences; Introduction – containing a review of the literature and a link to theory where relevant; Method – description of the process with sufficient detail that another researcher could repeat the process followed during the study; Results – what was found; Discussion – What do the results mean, when considered in the light of past research findings and theory, and the limitations of the research; Implications for Practice – what does this mean for coaches; Conclusions: a short summary of the paper
- Overall, the presentation of papers should conform to the British Psychological Society's Style Guide (available at www.bps.org.uk/publications/publications_home.cfm in PDF format). Non-discriminatory language should be used throughout. Spelling should be Anglicised when appropriate. Text should be concise and written for an international readership of applied psychologists. Sensationalist and unsubstantiated views are discouraged. Abbreviations, acronyms and unfamiliar specialist terms should be explained in the text on first use.
- Particular care should be taken to ensure that references are accurate and complete. Give all journal titles in full. Referencing should follow BPS formats. For example:

Billington, T. (2000). *Separating, losing and excluding children: Narratives of difference*. London: Routledge/Falmer.

Elliott, J.G. (2000). Dynamic assessment in educational contexts: Purpose and promise. In C. Lidz & J.G. Elliott (Eds.), *Dynamic assessment: Prevailing models and applications* (pp.713–740). New York: J.A.I. Press.

Passmore, J. (2010). A grounded theory study of the coachee experience: The implications for training and practice in coaching psychology. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 5(1), 48–62.
- SI units must be used for all measurements, rounded off to practical values if appropriate, with the Imperial equivalent in parentheses.
- In normal circumstances, effect size should be incorporated.
- Authors are requested to avoid the use of sexist language.
- Authors are responsible for acquiring written permission to publish lengthy quotations, illustrations, etc., for which they do not own copyright.

6. Publication ethics

BPS Code of Conduct – Code of Conduct, Ethical Principles and Guidelines.

Principles of Publishing – Principle of Publishing.

7. Supplementary data

Supplementary data too extensive for publication may be deposited with the British Library Document Supply Centre. Such material includes numerical data, computer programs, fuller details of case studies and experimental techniques. The material should be submitted to the Editor together with the article, for simultaneous refereeing.

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10. Checklist of requirements

As a general guide we would expect most papers to include the following sections, and approximate word lengths:

- Title and Abstract (100–200 words – this should include a sentence or two summarising each of the main sections, along with author names and affiliations)
- Full paper (4500–6000 words, with number pages and anonymised) including:
 - References
 - Tables, figures, captions and images (suitable for reproduction in black and white)

11. Ethical standards for publication

This publication has adopted a statement of compliance with COPE, as part of its ethical standards of publication. A copy of the policy can be downloaded from the ICPR website.



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