International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring
2021, Vol. 19(1), pp.4-27. DOI: 10.24384/n5ht-2722

Academic Paper

The impact of coaching on well-being and performance of managers and their teams during pandemic

Joanna Jarosz ✉ (Department of Social Sciences, University of Silesia, Barcelona, Spain.)

Abstract

In March 2020, the World Health Organization announced that the outbreak of COVID-19 was a pandemic. Many companies were forced to shift to fully remote work following preventative measures imposed by governments across the globe to protect individual and collective health. From that day many employees started working from home. With COVID-19 spreading across hundreds of countries, companies started facing new challenges as their employees' well-being, mental health and performance suffered following adjustments to unexpected changes, worries about their families, feelings of confusion and negativity or simply technical issues when working from home. This study provides some positive empirical evidence that as an approach coaching may be efficient in enhancing the well-being and performance of managers and their teams during the pandemic. The study contributes therefore to establishing very preliminary empirical evidence of the efficacy of coaching under the unprecedented scenario the world is facing - the pandemic of coronavirus (COVID-19), and possibly other crisis scenarios as well.

Keywords

coaching, COVID-19, executive coaching, pandemic, performance, well-being,

Article history

Accepted for publication: 14 January 2021
Published online: 01 February 2021

Introduction

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization announced that the outbreak of COVID-19 was a pandemic (WHO, 2020a). By 15 April, 213 countries, areas or territories had been affected by the virus with nearly 1.9 million cases and 120,000 confirmed deaths worldwide (WHO, 2020b). Many companies were forced to shut down following preventative measures imposed by the governments across the globe to protect individual and collective health. Where possible - the organizations have shifted to fully remote working (WHO, 2020c) and many employees started working from home.

With COVID-19 spreading across hundreds of countries, the companies started facing new challenges as their employees' well-being, mental health and performance suffered following adjustments to unexpected changes, worries about family, feelings of confusion and negativity or simply technical issues when working from home (ICF, 2020a, 2020b; Dans, 2020). With the COVID-19 crisis, stress and emotional challenges employees are facing are high. Feelings of isolation are more common than ever before, more individuals - while pushed to remote work - are struggling to cope (Grensing-Pophal, 2020). The concern for those in isolation has been voiced by the United Nations (2020, p.2): 'Many people are distressed due to the immediate health impacts of the virus and the consequences of physical isolation. [...] Emotional difficulties are exacerbated by [...] social isolation.'

The last 20 years brought a significant shift in mental health care towards promoting well-being and gradually away from preventing mental health issues (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000; Weiss et al., 2016). Scientific literature has shown that high psychological well-being implies improved physical health, lower risk of mental health problems and a longer life duration (Ryff, 2014). The empirical evidence supporting positive effects of psychological well-being on human functioning and experience is growing (Fledderus et al., 2010). Scientific research indicates that some behavioral interventions that focus on enhancing psychological well-being such as coaching, positive psychological interventions, or life review therapy - successfully increase levels of psychological well-being (Fava et al., 2005; Weiss et al., 2016). Effectiveness of coaching with respect to individual wellbeing has also been shown in workplace settings (Grant, Curtayne, & Burton, 2009).

Employee's performance is one of the few critical factors determining the success of an entire organization (Melhem, 2004). Individual performance can be influenced by many different components: personality, motivation, attitude, individual behavior or emotional maturity. Currently the professional environment and industries are characterized by highly rapid change and the need for instant adjustment – required both from organizations as well as their individual employees. Some of the factors that put a lot of pressure on individual performance demands are: competition, globalization, technological change, or speed of expansion of nearly all industries. Excellent performance requires from employees high levels of motivation as well as physical, emotional and mental involvement (Turner, Barling & Zacharatos, 2002). Companies that want to stay competitive and at par with industry innovations keep raising their expectations towards their employees' performance, which creates extra pressure on employees.

Currently coaching applied in workplace, or executive coaching is one of the most effective and widely applied approaches to leadership development and has become a paramount element of organizational learning, workplace talent management (McDermott, Levenson, & Newton, 2007; McGovern et al., 2001). Coaching has been described as a motivational approach - its premise is to facilitate behavioral changes of the individual, which then lead to improved personal and professional functioning (Green et al., 2006; Newnham-Kanas et al., 2010). Coaching as an industry focuses on growth of the individual and in that sense is not a healing professional like therapy, for instance. In a coaching relationship, a coach assumes the role of a 'thought partner', not an expert (ICF, 2020c). The coaches also come from non-clinical populations in a sense that they are healthy, and capable of creating their solutions to well defined problems (Newnham-Kanas et al., 2011; ICF, 2020c).

There is growing empirical scientific evidence that as an approach coaching is efficient in enhancing well-being and performance of individuals and employees (Gabriel et al., 2014; Newnham-Kanas et al., 2010). According to Grant (2007, p. 250) the focus of coaching is 'both on facilitating goal attainment and enhancing well-being'. Grant and Palmer (2002) emphasize that coaching as an approach enhances 'wellbeing and performance in personal life and work domains'. The study by Williams & Palmer (2020) provides preliminary evidence that solution focused cognitive behavioural coaching can be useful in the context of a pandemic for enhancing individual mental health and well-being. So far, however, there are no studies specifically investigating the

impact of the coaching practice on well-being and performance in a work setting during the pandemic. Guidance from the British Psychological Society published this year indicates biopsychosocial approaches are recommended for individuals facing COVID-19 pandemic (British Psychological Society, 2020, p. 3). Coaching, as a holistic approach addressing an individual's biopsychosocial environment and acknowledging the connection between biological, psychological and social factors, may therefore be considered as a viable approach in the scenario of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The purpose of this study is to establish the role of coaching during the pandemic and its impact on well-being and performance of managers and their teams. The research focused on analysing the effects of coronavirus on the well-being of managers and their teams within the workplace environment under circumstances meant that all the employees were required to work from home and were under multiple personal and professional stress factors. Currently there is a gap between coaching science and coaching practice in the context of a pandemic as this is the first time the coaching profession has faced such a challenge since its inception. The results obtained in this study should shed some light on whether coaching can help managers positively impact their team's well-being and performance.

Literature Review

Well-Being

Scientific literature has not yet agreed on an unambiguous definition of well-being. Ryan and Deci (2001, p. 141) define well-being simply as optimal psychological functioning and experience. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2004), well-being is the presence of 'a state in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her own community'. Well-being is not merely an absence of mental illness - it is an important variable from the point of view of social research (Prescott, 2010). Various concepts may be found in scientific research referring to well-being: "happiness", "life satisfaction" or "quality of life" are such examples (Allin, 2007).

Scientific literature lists a few different categories of well-being: subjective, psychological, emotional, and social (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Subjective well-being and psychological well-being are considered key approaches in terms of measuring well-being. Subjective well-being is closely related to "life satisfaction" and as a concept its meaning revolves around how happy individuals are in life, how much pleasure they are experiencing and how much fun they have (Diener, 1984). Ryan and Deci (2001, p. 144) equate subjective well-being also with presence of positive mood or absence of negative mood. Psychological well-being is related to many aspects of individual functioning and experience: how much life purpose individuals have in their lives, how engaged they are, how much contribution they make and how meaningful that contribution is, how they develop relationships with others, how strong is their sense of control of their environment, how authentic they are and how much they learn and grow every day (Ryff, 1989).

According to Ryff and Keyes (1995, p. 719), psychological well-being has the following components: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationships with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance. Autonomy is defined as the ability to follow one's decisions and in doing so resist social pressures. Individuals possess environmental mastery when they can effectively manage their surroundings, circumstances and their lives. According to Ryff and Keyes (1995, p. 710), personal growth is how the individual perceives their present development as a human being and their future growth path. Positive relationships with others is when one can build trusting and warm relationships with other people. Individuals have a purpose in life when they

believe that their life has purpose and meaning. Ryff and Keyes (1995, p. 720) define self-acceptance as the ability to positively evaluate oneself as a person and their past experiences.

Performance

Koopmans et al. (2011, p. 858) describe performance as proficiency of carrying out job-related tasks by employees or the degree to which employees reach their job-related goals. Performance in that sense is related to productivity and quality of the employee. Campbell's definition of performance (1990) highlights the importance behavior - an action carried out by an employee - which conceptually separates *performance* from *outcomes*. Outcomes can occur as a result of an action (behavior) initiated by an employee, but also from other sources, actions or influences. This implies that outcomes are determined by multiple factors, one of which is employee's *performance*.

Research has distinguished five types of performance at work (Warr & Nielsen, 2018, pp. 2-3): task performance ('in-role performance' or 'proficiency'), outside-role performance, organizational citizenship behavior, counterproductive work behavior and work absenteeism. Task performance is focused on behaviors required to achieve goals and carry out tasks specifically defined by the role. Examples of outside-role performance include proactivity, innovativeness, participation in learning, flexibility, or technical competence. Organizational citizenship behavior includes behaviors that exceed the role across more social dimensions - like helping colleagues or supporting new employees during onboarding. Counterproductive work behavior negatively impacts other employees, teams, or the organization – here some examples include bullying other coworkers, or avoiding effort. Absenteeism can also make it difficult for the team to meet their goals or harm organizational growth in a scenario when an employee's absence is unexpected or long-term (Johns & Miraglia, 2015).

Objective performance indicators of an individual employee, such as sales, output, or other "deliverables", are hardly ever available. Output in workplace settings is often measured on a team basis, not at individual level, because many tasks performed by employees are not quantifiable (Warr & Nielsen, 2018, p. 2). For these reasons research has widely utilized subjective assessments as a valid measurement of performance - peer evaluations, self-evaluations, customer ratings, supervisors ratings have all been used as measures of performance (Warr & Nielsen, 2018, p. 2).

Methodology

Recruitment and participants

Participants were 20 adults - all in manager or director roles and actively managing a team - aged between 35-40 years old. Their industries included: banking, technical industries, sales, universities and marketing. The participants of the study were employed in the following countries: China (Wuhan), England, Germany, Poland, Spain, and the United States.

A nonprobability convenience sampling technique was employed to find participants for the study - volunteers were called for through Facebook and LinkedIn and participants were then chosen from those who volunteered. Convenience sampling is a verified and reliable sampling method which selects individuals based on their availability and convenience for the researcher (Christensen, 1994).

The inclusion criteria were the following: (1) English-speaking, (2) not currently in therapy, (3) not taking medications for anxiety or depression. Additionally, participants in the Experiment group (the one receiving coaching) needed to be able to commit to four weekly group coaching sessions and

individual coaching sessions. The participants of the Experiment group were selected on a 'first come first serve' basis - once the Experiment group reached 10 people, those who submitted their availability for the coaching sessions later were no longer accepted in the Experiment group and therefore remained in the Control group. Some of the reasons why 'first come first serve' had been chosen are: (1) its operational simplicity, (2) clear expectations of participants about how the selection mechanism works and (3) fairness.

Procedure

All participants were sent an Information Sheet and a Consent Form. The Information Sheet included the details of the Well-Being and Performance Coaching Program, its goal, clarification of what to expect and what not to expect (for example: therapy, counseling, mentoring, consulting, or training). The participants signed the Consent Form after they had discussed the Coaching Program with the researcher, understood that participation was voluntary, that they could withdraw at any time, that data collected would remain anonymous and only group summaries would be shared in the study. Additionally, the 10 participants of the Experiment Group received Coaching and Confidentiality Agreement as well as the syllabus of the Well-Being and Performance Coaching Program). The Coaching and Confidentiality Agreement contained further information about confidentiality and a statement that the coaching sessions follow ethical guidelines outlined in the Code of Ethics set by the International Coach Federation (ICF, 2020d). No further ethical approval was obtained for the study.

Upon the beginning of the study all participants were clear about its goal. The study and the participants' evaluation throughout was aimed at establishing the role of coaching during the pandemic and its impact on the well-being and performance of managers and their teams. Data collected would shed light on whether coaching can help managers impact their team's performance and well-being. The study focused on analysing the effects of the pandemic on the well-being of managers and their teams under the unusual circumstance that all employees were required to work from home and under multiple personal and professional stress factors.

The duration of the research was five weeks. The study was carried out under tight time constraints due to the fact that the researcher wanted to capture the early stages of the pandemic and its effect on people. Under such new circumstances, it was more realistic for participating employees to commit to a 5 week study rather than 8 weeks or even 12 weeks. Given the uncertainty of the situation, an 8 week study could have possibly captured the effects of a waning pandemic impact on individuals and therefore a results would have been skewed.

During the five weeks, all 20 participants were supposed to fill out two questionnaires each week: the Scales of Psychological Well-Being questionnaire (Ryff, 1989) and Team Barometer (designed by the researcher, see Appendix A) on the performance and well-being dynamics within the teams. The time it took the participants to fill out both forms was approximately 30 minutes every week.

During four (out of five) weeks of study, the 10 participants in the Experiment Group were additionally meeting during weekly group coaching sessions and offered weekly individual coaching sessions. Individual coaching sessions were maximum of 30 minutes followed by a 15 minute interview and the group coaching sessions were maximum of 45 minutes. At the end of each group coaching session, the participants were asked whether the summary of the session could be used in the study. Approval was obtained each time. The content of the individual coaching sessions has not been shared at all in any of the findings, summaries or conclusions in this study - only data from the interviews were processed. All coaching sessions were conducted online via Zoom. After these four weeks, final data from questionnaires were collected and exit interviews conducted during week five.

The 10 participants in the Control Group were only provided the definitions of well-being and performance in order to establish a common ground for knowledge, understanding and communication. The participants in the Control Group have not been introduced to each other (so there was no communication amongst the participants in that group), nor were they offered any coaching (group or individual). These participants were only asked to fill out questionnaires each week and each week an unstructured 15 minutes interviews were conducted weekly around well-being and performance of individual managers and their teams. After the four weeks, final data from questionnaires were collected and exit interviews conducted during week five.

The researcher also assumed the role of the coach, the role of the interviewer and data collector. The participants were clear about all roles assumed. And so, the researcher would assume the role of the coach during all coaching sessions (the researcher is an ICF certified coach and holds an Associate Certified Coach credential). Clear information was given to participants at the beginning and the end of all coaching sessions (group and individual), as well as of the beginning and the end of all interviews.

The interviews were conducted with all 20 participants on a weekly basis. There were no pre-defined, set questions of any sort for any of the participants, although, as Jamshed (2014, p. 87) suggests, all interviews follow some kind of a structure. The first five minutes of the interview were spent on questionnaires (Scales of Psychological Well-Being questionnaire and Team Barometer) and whether the participant had any comments they wanted to share, the next five minutes were focused on the changes noted by the participant from one week to the next and the last five minutes were focused on highlighting a theme of the week or a pattern. Although not exactly the same questions were used during the interviews for all the participants, the same principle was used (as outlined above) to increase trustworthiness of data. Additionally, member checks had been performed when findings, summaries and conclusions were drafted after which the author proceeded with finalizing the study.

All coaching sessions and interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed. There was no reason to suspect that responses shared by the participants either through questionnaires or during the coaching sessions were in any way biased.

The coaching program

The Well-Being and Performance Coaching Program was conducted over a period of four weeks during which four weekly group coaching sessions were held and four weekly individual coaching sessions were offered to each participant. The first week included a detailed program overview, getting familiar with the concepts of coaching, well-being and its components (autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, personal growth, self-acceptance) and the concept of performance. All sessions, group and individual, were focused on the team's well-being, performance and how the managers were able to impact their team members in extreme circumstances such as pandemic. During all sessions the participants were encouraged to share their experiences and learnings and get familiar with experiences of other participants. Additionally, the last session was followed by the summary of progress and closing remarks.

During each session, the participants established the agenda. Because of the scope of the study and their initial interest in well-being and performance, the agenda was (1) either focused on a particular aspect of managers' or teams' well-being, (2) or on a particular aspect of managers' or teams' performance. The coaching sessions offered a safe place for participants of the Experiment group, where coachees could talk openly about current achievements and challenges they were experiencing. The coaching approach followed the Core Competency Model by the ICF (2020c).

Qualitative measures

Unstructured interviews, observation and analysis of the collected responses have been employed as qualitative research tools. Interview is probably one of the most common data collection research tools (Oakley, 1998). According to Jamshed (2014, p. 87) all interviews follow a certain structure to some extent; qualitative research interviews can either be semi-structured or in-depth.

Data collected from unstructured interviews and the group coaching sessions (observations) were diverse and complex. It was then analyzed using various qualitative data analysis procedures - inductive data analysis, deductive data analysis, analyzing participants' meaning, clustering, noting patterns, common themes search, finding dependence/co-dependence between variables, using logical induction and noting a logical chain of evidence that could be used to highlight the results of this study. Such an approach to qualitative data analysis is valid and reliable (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Saunders & Rojon, 2014).

Quantitative measures

The researcher is aware that the number of participants is low, which may impose an intrinsic limitation for the quantitative framework and decrease statistical power of results obtained. The low number of participants constitutes a threat to external validity of the methods used, which may inhibit the generalizability of obtained results (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Even with the sample size that low, though, as the Findings section will depict, some of the results obtained are statistically significant. Quantitative methods have been used in this study to add an extra depth to the qualitative findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

Questionnaires have been used to gather quantitative data. Questionnaires are perceived to be objective as a research tool mainly because they can extract data and form conclusions that can be relatively easily applied to the general population (Bryman, 2008).

Well-Being

Ryff's (1989) Scales of Psychological Well-Being questionnaire has 42 questions which span six subscales: autonomy, environmental mastery, positive relationships with others, purpose in life, personal growth and self-acceptance. This questionnaire is a reliable and valid research tool (Ryff & Keyes, 1995).

Performance

According to Warr and Nielsen (2018, p. 2), 'performance ratings by other people can be problematic, because observers may lack adequate knowledge or because target behaviors depend on mental processes which are unobservable; furthermore, self-descriptions might err towards positive assessment'. However, numerous studies in previous scientific research on employees performance validate the use of self-evaluations or manager's assessment of an individual as a reliable and legitimate measure of employee's performance (Lyness & Thompson, 2000). A questionnaire incorporating self- and team-assessment of performance has been employed for the purpose of this study (Appendix A). The variables tracked by this questionnaire are: manager's performance level and team's performance level.

Findings

Qualitative

This section presents the weekly dynamics of well-being and performance levels observed amongst the participants (the qualitative findings described below have also been summarized in Appendix B).

Stages: Well-being and Performance

Week 1 (12-18 March)

The first week of the study fell for the majority of the participants in the early stage of the lockdown and early weeks of working from home. It was characterized by - in general - widely shared moderate enthusiasm, as the situation related to pandemic and introduced restrictions were something different, something new for everyone. Compared to the weeks before the lockdown and before rapid progression of the pandemic nearly all participants reported a drop in their own and their teams' performance and well-being levels.

Individuals struggled with distractions, working from home poses challenges, for example trying to stay productive when one has small children at home. People tried to focus and work but there were certain extra things they need to prepare in a day that they didn't need to take care of before. 'It's not anything necessarily bad but it's more like being prepared to be inside for extended periods of time and just kind of getting things organized'. This has a negative impact in terms of focus, split attention negatively impacts performance.

Every team has a variety of personalities and work styles that allows the team to accomplish bigger, more holistic goals. Some people are used to working remotely, but not everyone on every team was like that and everyone adapted differently, which brought an extra challenge to the team's performance during the pandemic. Technology was also a challenge: 'Technology at home has to work without interruptions if you want your team to perform as before: WIFI, tools, electronics. Make sure the internet is powerful enough for a conference call'.

The managers and teams lost a little bit of sense of purpose during the early stages of the lockdown. The uncertainty roses - individuals and teams were no longer sure if they would be able to meet their targets, in which direction would the company strategy change, how would they need to shift their professional and personal functioning. Surroundings mattered as well - whether or not someone is used to working from home, and 'simple things like having the right chair to sit on, fast internet that allows to attend meetings with high quality sound, speaking with customers remotely'. The work reality was very different for everyone, which generally negatively impacted a team's well-being.

Week 2 (19-25 March)

Week two of the study can be characterized by overwhelming worries around sense of control. Individual environmental mastery was being impacted, individuals started wondering which part of reality - their homes, their work - they are able to consciously impact and control, and which changes simply happen without their involvement. As the managers and their teams were getting used to the situation and introducing fun ideas to keep the morale high, overall performance and well-being slightly increases though.

Introducing fun and inspiring ideas resulted in people actually having more fun and looking forward to the many online events or initiatives keeping team members together and making sure nobody feels isolated. This resulted in increased well-being of managers and teams compared to the week before: 'This is because suddenly people are looking forward to the morning meetings. And they're

just being silly and then laughing a bit and the whole mood changes'. Because whole teams and companies were able to already figure out organizational details of working from home, the performance of the whole teams was usually higher compared to the week before: 'Performance is slower than normal, but people are doing their job and things have definitely picked up compared to last week'.

One challenge that added a heavy burden on the participants of the study and their teams was the gradual loss of sense of control. There 'is a lack of clear instruction and direction from the government, what state we are actually in or not, especially for the distributed team across different states within the US. Each state is handling things differently. I think that keeps everybody in a little bit of a limbo'. Individuals, managers and their teams were still figuring out what they are allowed to do, what they were not allowed to do and how to build their next few weeks or months around that confusion. In general, people did not have control over what is happening regarding the pandemic which had a weakening effect on their morale. This factor started bringing extra anxiety amongst the participants as their basic physiological safety need was not being sufficiently met. Towards the end of week two, this factor became a heavy burden driving both well-being and performance levels down.

Week 3 (26 March - 1 April)

Week three of the study across both the Experiment group and the Control group brought a sharp drop in performance and well-being due to a sharp drop in enthusiasm about the new situation, the sense of 'novelty' started wearing off. The participants of the study mentioned that they started losing track of time. As time passed, these 'working from home weeks' become more of a blur and their enthusiasm hit the lowest point. 'Performance is not normal. It can't be. You can't expect people to function the same way as a number of weeks ago where there was a different situation'.

Over the first three weeks of the experiment, the performance expectations of the managers towards their teams drastically decreased because of the human element. A majority of people understood that their co-workers or subordinates may have a bad morning and need a few hours to recharge. 'The business does not expect people to be at a 100% and that's ok. That message has been reiterated with my team - some of them have kids, some of them have family abroad. I can't realistically expect a 100% from them. At the same time we are running a business so we should try the best we can'. The managers also noticed increasing ambiguity, which too, impacts people, their well-being and their performance.

Another phenomenon that everyone noticed was losing the concept of time. Time - as it had been known before - changed. The participants of the study mentioned that every day was becoming more or less similar. 'It feels like time is more conceptual now, because the markers are gone in a way. We used to be expected somewhere, some places, there were social or work obligations. Seems like there is all this time now. The "in between" has disappeared'.

Week 4 (2-8 April)

Week 4 can be characterized by a boost of productivity. Most of the participants had a strong sense that their performance is higher - presumably in 'an attempt of trying to get back to normal' in a way that they could. A lot of the managers found that focusing on things that they can do, on work, things they can influence, to be very grounding and comforting. They were also able to project the feeling of renewed energy at work onto their teams, and bring the feelings of comfort and steadiness into their workplace. One of the participants stated that it was 'like creating a sense of normality as much as possible'. Week 4 brought a boost of performance and moderate increase in well-being.

During this week, managers and their teams had already started thinking about the world 'after the pandemic' and created hypothetical scenarios that would help the teams succeed in a new reality[1]. Managers mentioned a few scenarios of what might happen. Some mentioned

reevaluation of what matters to them professionally and personally. 'You need to take a step back. Maybe it'll result in a shift, maybe we'll look at our personal freedom from a different perspective'. Others mentioned better connection with their co-workers. 'What matters that we're going through it together. We've all seen each other's homes, bad hair days, families, we've witnessed interruptions. We can all feel a little more connected, we can all become a little more forgiving.' Nearly everyone mentioned a transition stage. 'We'll need to transition out of the current plan. In the industry, the climate will need to shift back to sales, so the customers will be helping too as the demand grows back'.

Week 5 (9-15 April)

This week only data were collected from the questionnaires and exit interviews. There were no coaching sessions. This final week of the study showed stagnation in both levels of well-being as well as performance. The managers and their teams got used to the situation, which - in the meantime - became 'the new norm'. The individuals involved in the study realized that they are able - in most cases - to continue their lifestyles. Thanks to technology it is still possible to work out (there are many online workout programs), have a drink with friends on Skype or have family reunions over Zoom. They learned how to employ technology to help them with that and organized their days around their work, families and hobbies.

Ideas that helped the managers increase their team's well-being and performance

Some of the managers have been 'dialing down' the exposure to new information in order to stay grounded and focused. The initial stage of the pandemic and lockdown in many countries brought too much information for individuals to digest - some of it was repeated information, some of it was 'noise', which can negatively impact one's well-being and how individuals feel in general. With that extra focus, these managers shifted it to pay more attention to their team members. 'The recommendation that we made as a team was that we have a few minutes at the beginning of each call just to let everyone know what's new, how's everybody feeling, and then we go into regular work'.

The managers showed deep worry about their team's well-being. As one of them mentioned: 'We tell people to stay positive, take care of themselves, do things that are going to be beneficial so exercise, nutrition, things that can enhance your immune system'. Nearly all managers agreed that exercise is crucial to keep the well-being on a healthy level, especially in a scenario when you're not allowed to leave the house. 'You need to find alternatives for exercising, routines in your house, using everything that's in your reach, yoga, stretching'.

Some companies have rolled out all company classes, concerts, meetups, or even boot camps from home. 'We found someone like a personal trainer who will train people who want to join the boot camp via video call'. The managers were eager to find creative ways for their team members to interact. The advantage of the Experiment group was that they were exchanging these ideas during the coaching sessions and inspiring each other. 'That's the best thing we can do for ourselves and our teams. Find alternative ways to socialize and keep busy and keep healthy'.

Some managers - especially the ones in the Experiment group of the study - started encouraging their team members to regain a sense of control and inserting new ways of control for the team, even of the small choices every day. 'Our company has decided to offer the product we sell for free. As a manager, I had no control over that decision. Although within that changed framework, I still do have a sense of control - I can decide what my team does in the interim'.

Nearly all of the managers have reiterated to their team that 'the business does not expect people to be at a 100% and that's OK'. They made sure to communicate to their teams that they are not expected to have the exact same performance as before and they should allow themselves to be OK with not being at a 100%. 'If you experience friction, whether it's children or pets or something that's going on in your head, just let that be'. A great reason not to be at a 100% is the mental and

emotional health of the individuals, managers, teams and companies at large. Pushing oneself in such subnormal circumstances - according to the participants of the study - is counter efficient. The advice is to not get frustrated because the pandemic and all of its consequences does not create normal circumstances - the situation is far from normal.

Setting the goals each morning and unplugging from everything else was another helpful strategy. Those who wrote their daily (or weekly) schedules highly benefited from that structure. Here is an example daily schedule that one of the participants shared with the Experiment group:

8-9	meditation and stretching
9-10	errands (laundromat, food)
10-12	work block
12-12:30	lunch
12:30-1	managers coaching session
1-2	online class
2-3	nap and relaxation
3-5	work block
5-6	yoga
6-7	personal journal
7-8	work block
8-9	dinner and relaxation

One last strategy that had been widely employed by the managers is based on the psychology of gratitude, which has been shown to be positively correlated with well-being (Wood et al., 2009). The managers started asking their teams about what has changed for the better for them. Some of the examples are: ‘I wake up later in the morning because I don’t have to commute’, ‘I’m breathing really good air’, ‘I speak more to people and friends’, or ‘I eat better, because I cook myself now’.

Quantitative

Statistical analyses of trends across time were not possible due to the small sample size. Graphs were created to display the changes in scores across the study period for the Experimental and Control groups (Appendix C). What is worth noticing is that the average levels of well-being, managers’ performance and teams’ performance increased more and decreased less over the study period for the Experiment group as opposed to the Control group. Although the levels in the Experiment and Control group were similar at the beginning of the study, the averages remained consistently higher for the Experiment group over Control group.

Both groups experienced decreases in well-being and performance at Week 3, which may have been due to factors described in the previous section (losing sense of control, losing track of time and the effect of “novelty” wearing off for participants). The mean scores depicted in the graphs are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Mean well-being and performance scores across five weeks

Mean Scores		Week1	Week2	Week3	Week4	Week5
Well-Being						
Autonomy	Experimental	32.4	34.7	30.9	32.5	32.8
	Control	34.6	32.4	30.1	31.0	32.1
Environmental Mastery	Experimental	30.1	27.8	27.3	33.7	33.6
	Control	29.6	29.2	28.2	30.4	31.7
Personal Growth	Experimental	35.0	37.2	35.4	35.7	35.8
	Control	35.5	36.3	33.5	35.6	34.8
Positive Relations with Others	Experimental	34.5	35.6	35.7	34.8	34.6
	Control	32.3	35.7	35.5	34.8	35.2
Purpose in Life	Experimental	31.8	33.7	31.5	31.5	32.1
	Control	31.6	33.2	29.8	32.7	31.4
Self-Acceptance	Experimental	32.4	34.1	32.4	34.3	33.7
	Control	31.7	32.0	29.7	31.1	30.6
Total Well-Being	Experimental	196.2	203.1	193.2	202.5	202.6
	Control	195.3	198.8	186.8	195.6	195.8
Performance						
Manager Performance Level	Experimental	6.1	6.4	5.8	7.1	6.9
	Control	6.2	6.3	5.2	6.4	6.3
Team Performance Level	Experimental	5.8	6.7	5.4	7.2	7.1
	Control	6.0	6.5	4.9	6.3	6.4

The percentage increases remained consistently higher for the Experiment group over Control group and the percentage decreases remained consistently lower for the Experiment group over Control group. The comparison has been presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Experimental vs. Control % change in average well-being and performance levels

% change		Week2 to Week1	Week3 to Week2	Week4 to Week3	Week5 to Week4
Total Well-Being	Experimental	3.4	-4.5	5.9	-0.4
	Control	1.0	-5.7	4.4	0.0
Manager Performance Level	Experimental	4.9	-9.4	22.4	-1.8
	Control	1.6	-17.5	23.1	-1.6
Team Performance Level	Experimental	15.5	-19.4	33.3	-1.4
	Control	8.3	-24.6	28.6	1.6

To assess improvement, gain scores were computed for the well-being and performance scores by subtracting Week 1 scores from Week 5 scores. The gain scores were compared between the Experimental and Control groups using Mann-Whitney U tests. The results are presented in Table 3. Two statistically significant differences were found ($p < .10$). In the Experimental group, Self-Acceptance increased (M gain = 1.3) while in the Control group, Self-Acceptance decreased over the study period (M "gain" = -1.1; U = 26, p = .068). The participants in the Experimental group reported a mean increase in team performance (M gain = 1.3), whereas the mean gain reported by participants in the Control group was negligible (M gain = 0.4; U = 27.5, p = .078).

Table 3: Experimental vs. Control on gains in well-being and performance

	Experimental (*n* = 10)		**Control** (*n* = 10)		**Mann-Whitney**	
Gain Scores	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*U*	*p-value*
Well-Being						
Autonomy	0.4	2.7	-2.5	7.6	39.0	0.404
Environmental Mastery	3.5	3.7	2.1	2.9	39.5	0.423
Personal Growth	0.8	3.0	-0.7	5.3	43.5	0.621
Positive Relations with Others	0.1	4.1	2.9	4.3	35.0	0.250
Purpose in Life	0.3	3.3	-0.2	7.5	43.5	0.622
Self-Acceptance	1.3	<2.0	-1.1	5.2	26.0	0.068
Total Well-Being	6.4	9.8	0.5	7.1	31.0	0.150
Performance						
Manager Performance Level	0.8	0.9	0.1	1.4	37.5	0.325
Team Performance Level	1.3	1.1	0.4	1.0	27.5	0.078

Also of note was the fact that mean decreases were observed for four of the well-being scores in the Control group, whereas no negative gain scores were observed in the Experimental group. It is possible that the impact of coaching might become even more evident over a longer period of time.

Discussion

The findings obtained in this study indicate that dynamics of well-being and performance levels over the period of five weeks seem to have been more favorable for the Experiment group than the Control group. The factors that may have been a positive impact in case of the Experiment group is the access to coaching and connection with other coaching group members. The participants in the Control group have not been offered any supportive means.

It is worth highlighting that the directions of changes of well-being and performance levels have been similar for both the Experiment and the Control group, with the difference in magnitude of these changes. Common themes discussed by both groups also seem to coincide - week one was dominated by the feelings of worry and uncertainty (see Appendix B for brief summary). Many participants (in both groups alike) mentioned that they are getting distracted trying to set up their professional life at home. Second week brought a lot of enthusiasm about potential new solutions introduced, as well as the feeling that the participants no longer control the decisions at work, nor do they feel like they know the direction their teams will be moving into. Week three for both groups was the lowest week for well-being and performance levels as the 'novelty' of new solutions started to wear off. The participants also mentioned that they started losing track of time that week. Week four brought fresh energy as participants across both groups were focusing on work and creating 'sense of normality'. The last week of the experiment found the participants simply getting used to the new norm and so the levels of well-being and performance across the managers and their teams seemed to have stagnated at that stage. As this was the last week of data collection, it remains unknown in which direction the levels of well-being and performance have changed from there.

Another finding worth bringing up is that in the Experimental group, Self-Acceptance of participants increased while in the Control group, Self-Acceptance decreased over the study period. One of the explanations of such a phenomenon is that as the weeks went by, the Participants in the Experiment group were exposed to more solutions (coming from the other participants) and suggestions. They were also given more opportunities to share their thoughts, manage and work through their experiences with the coaching group, which - as Williams and Palmer (2020) mention - may have had a positive impact on their well-being (Self-Acceptance being one of the dimensions). The participants in the Control Group were not offered any support of similar kind.

Both groups experienced decreases in well-being and performance during Week 3, which is particularly interesting because participants in one of the groups were not communicating with participants of the other group. The fact that a similar phenomenon was observed in both settings may indicate that Week 3 could bring difficulties to a larger population as well. The reasons listed by participants also coincided - losing sense of control, losing track of time and the effect of 'novelty' wearing off for participants. However, it is possible that in a larger group or general population other factors could negatively impact well-being and performance during Week 3, after a couple of weeks of isolation, remote work and being subject to stress.

Benefits of the coaching sessions

The participants in the Experiment group stated that it was a great experience to be able to connect with everyone in a meaningful way during the 5 weeks of experiment. The participants found coaching sessions really rewarding and helpful as they were able to share their experiences, listen to the experiences of other participants and learn what can be applied in their situation. The

Experiment group was very diverse, the participants found it very beneficial to be able to 'hear everyone else's perspective and thoughts - different roles, different industries, different countries'. What was also very important was that the coaching sessions became a marker during every week, so when the participants looked back, they saw '4 distinct points in the past month and this month went by so quick'.

The most valuable coaching aspects for the Experiment group were: (1) having a safe, non-judgmental environment where everyone (including the coach) was supportive and respectfully listening to each other; (2) receiving a helpful nudge helping to get 'unstuck'; (3) increased self-awareness and better perception; (4) learning how to use all available resources to one's advantage.

The participants of the Experiment group noticed positive shifts occurring in their thinking patterns as well, especially in how they evaluate and think about themselves. This consequently resulted in increased self-acceptance or taking the time to grow and learn. Nearly all of the participants admitted that they feel more productive when managing projects or working towards individual/team/company goals.

Evidence in current research

The results of the study suggest that the application of coaching in the workplace improves employee well-being and performance. This is consistent with outcomes obtained in several other empirical studies (Gabriel et al., 2014; Grant, 2003; Grant & O'Hara, 2006; Leach et al., 2011; Neale et al., 2009). However, the concepts related to well-being or performance have not been studied in detail under the circumstances of global pandemic. According to Williams et al. (2019) individuals may be impacted by the pandemic on many levels across private and professional domains and a stress reaction has been commonly seen where an individual faces a combination of problems. Such problems are related to the fact that new, pandemic-related, circumstances require from an individual a significant, abrupt and quick transition (Panchal, Palmer, & O'Riordan, 2020). According to Williams and Palmer (2020, p. 4), such transitions, the pandemic, related changes or life events may become the focus of many coaching conversations during the coaching process. This way, the coachee uses the support offered by the coaching relationship to manage, work through and tackle the experiences of the pandemic as well as their responses in a new scenario (Williams & Palmer, 2020, p. 4).

According to Grant and Greene (2001) a coaching approach guides individuals through a set and systematic process, where coachees perform self-assessment, set their own goals and plan their actions accordingly. The coaching approach helps individuals create a self-regulation cycle, where the individuals together with the coach can evaluate and monitor their progress towards set goals. Clear goals are paramount to effective executive coaching - they provide metrics, direction and measures of success for the coachee (Grant & Greene, 2001; Gregory & Levy, 2010). Owler (2012, p. 66) claims that when coachees set realistic, attainable goals, they are intrinsically more motivated to work towards them, which consequently has a positive impact on performance (Whitmore, 2004). The level of satisfaction, well-being and fulfilment associated with achieving such goals are also higher (Green et al., 2006; Whitworth et al., 2007).

Grant (2017) suggested the following elements of coaching allow for enhanced wellbeing of the coachee: the supportive nature of the coaching relationship, working towards meaningful goals, action planning, problem solving, and focus on one's personal strengths. According to William and Palmer (2020, pp. 4-5), problem solving, focusing on solution, individual strengths, resources and generating an action plan are very empowering for coachees under the scenario of a pandemic.

Grant (2003) also suggested that as coachees successfully apply changes, their level of well-being increases. It is the positive change that is underlying all coaching processes (Stober, 2006). And it

is that change that leads to optimal use of coachee's potential, their growth and development and it is the role of the coach to help coachees identify ways to grow and reach their maximum potential. Utilizing maximum potential and reaching optimal outcomes allows coachees to reach a higher level of performance. There are a few assumptions about the coachees that imply their growth in a coaching setting: (1) a desire to grow is innate for the coachees (Biswas-Diener, 2010), (2) the coachees have the ability to change and grow (Kegan & Lahey, 2009; Newnham-Kanas et al., 2011a; Williams & Davis, 2007), and (3) people seek value, they always have a choice and they grow from connection (Coach U, 2005; Jarosz, 2016).

Limitations

This study has some limitations, which may negatively affect the robustness of obtained results. First, using a non-probability convenience sample may have created biased outcomes in a sense that the participants of the study could have been more driven to perform better and more focused on their well-being compared to participants selected randomly. Second, the sample had only 20 participants, which provides a limited statistical power for the quantitative analysis of obtained data. Lastly, the duration of the study was only five weeks, which included only four weekly coaching sessions. With already promising results, a longer duration of a study could have shown higher benefits of the coaching approach for the participants.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of coaching on well-being and performance in a work setting during the pandemic. There is slight positive empirical scientific evidence that as an approach coaching may be efficient in enhancing well-being and performance of managers and teams during the pandemic. The participants listed the following aspects of coaching as the most valuable during the study: (1) having a safe, non-judgmental environment where everyone (including the coach) was supportive and respectfully listening to each other; (2) receiving a helpful nudge helping to get 'unstuck'; (3) increased self-awareness and better perception; (4) learning how to use all available resources to one's advantage. The study helps therefore establish the empirical evidence under an unprecedented scenario the world is currently facing - the pandemic of coronavirus (COVID-19), and possibly other crisis scenarios as well.

Practical implications

This study has involved participants from many different organizations across the world and in a real-time professional setting. The results obtained have a number of practical applications for the organizations concerned with performance and well-being of the employees during the pandemic - or in a crisis setup in general. Both quantitative and qualitative outcomes obtained in this study provide encouraging empirical evidence that coaching can be employed by organizations during the pandemic in order to enhance employee performance and well-being. Having an effective performance and well-being improvement strategy is paramount during the pandemic as it allows to decrease absenteeism, sickness, it builds employee trust and loyalty and helps the organizations reach better outcomes while keeping their employees happy (Hesketh & Cooper, 2019, pp. 9, 46, 73).

Directions for future research

Future research should include: longitudinal empirical study designs, large samples, randomised sample selection mechanism. Replicating the study over a longer period of time or across industries where remote work is not feasible would also shed more light on the efficacy of coaching in a workplace during the pandemic. Also, future studies can widely benefit from using more

complex performance assessment tools rather than self-reported inventories (for example 360-degree assessment).

Endnotes

[1] ↩
The participants from Wuhan, China stated that what they experienced after the lockdown had been lifted could be described as 'Coronavirus laziness'. Managers and teams were taking a step back and taking a breath. People have been reuniting in person. Performance has been described as lower than before the pandemic because people reconnected with their homes, their families, their friends and in that time other areas of their lives had grown.

References

Allin, P. (2007) 'Measuring Societal Wellbeing', *Economic and Labour Market Review*, 1(10), pp.46-52. DOI: 10.1057/palgrave.elmr.1410157.

Biswas-Diener, R. (2010) *Positive psychology coaching: Assessment, activities, and strategies for success*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

British Psychological Society (2020) *Guidance for psychological professionals during the Covid-19 pandemic*. Available at: https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/new-guidance-psychological-professionals-during-covid-19-pandemic.

Bryman, A. (2008) *Social research methods*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Campbell, J.P. (1990) 'Modeling the performance prediction problem in industrial and organizational psychology', in Dunnette, M.D. and Hough, L.M. (eds.) *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press, pp.687-732.

Christensen, L.B. (1994) *Experimental methodology* (6th edn.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Coach U, Inc (2005) *The Coach U personal and corporate coach training handbook*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Creswell, J.W. and Creswell, J.D. (2017) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th edn.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Dans, E. (2020) *Why The Coronavirus Is A Great Opportunity To Really Put Remote Working To The Test*. Available at: https://www.forbes.com/sites%20/enriquedans/2020/02/19/why-the-coronavirus-is-a-great-opportunity-to-really-put-remote-working-to-thetest/.

Deiner, E. (1984) 'Subjective Well-being', *Psychological Bulletin*, 95, pp.542-575. DOI: 10.1037/0033-2909.95.3.542.

Fava, G.A., Ruini, C., Rafanelli, C. and et al, (2005) 'Well-being therapy of generalized anxiety disorder', *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 74(1), pp.26-30. DOI: 10.1159/000082023.

Fledderus, M., Bohlmeijer, E.T., Smit, F. and Westerhof, G.T. (2010) 'Mental health promotion as a new goal in public mental health care: a randomized controlled trial of an intervention enhancing psychological flexibility', *American Journal of Public Health*, 100(12), p.2372. DOI: 10.2105/AJPH.2010.196196.

Gabriel, A.S., Moran, C. and Brodie, J. (2014) 'How can humanistic coaching affect employee well-being and performance? An application of self- determination theory', *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 7(1), pp.56-73. DOI: 10.1080/17521882.2014.889184.

Grant, A.M. (2003) 'The impact of life coaching on goal attainment, metacognition and mental health', *Social behavior and personality*, 31(3), pp.253-264. DOI: 10.2224/sbp.2003.31.3.253.

Grant, A.M. (2007) 'A languishing-flourishing model of goal striving and mental health for coaching populations', *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 2(3), pp.250-264.

Grant, A.M., Curtayne, L. and Burton, G. (2009) 'Executive coaching enhances goal attainment, resilience and workplace well-being: A randomised controlled study', *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4(5), pp.396-407. DOI: 10.1080/17439760902992456.

Grant, A.M. and Greene, J. (2001) *Coach Yourself: Make real change in your life*. London: Momentum Press.

Grant, A.M. and O'Hara, B. (2006) 'The self-presentation of commercial Australian life coaching schools: cause for concern?', *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 1(2), pp.21-32.

Grant, A.M. and Palmer, S. (2002) *Coaching Psychology (workshop and meeting)*. Annual Conference of the Division of Counselling Psychology, British Psychological Society, 18 May, Torquay, UK.

Grant, A.M. (2017) 'Solution-focused cognitive-behavioral coaching for sustainable high performance and circumventing stress, fatigue, and burnout', *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 69(2), pp.98-111. DOI: 10.1037/cpb0000086.

Green, S., Oades, L.G. and Grant, A.M. (2006) 'Cognitive-behavioral, solution-focused life coaching: enhancing goal striving, well-being, and hope', *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1(3), pp.142-149. DOI: 10.1080/17439760600619849.

Gregory, J.B. and Levy, P.E. (2010) 'Employee coaching relationships: Enhancing construct clarity and measurement', *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 3, pp.109-123. DOI: 10.1080/17521882.2010.502901.

Grensing-Pophal, L. (2020) *Pandemic Takes a Toll on Employees' Emotional Well-Being*. Available at: https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/benefits/pages/pandemic-takes-a-toll-on-employees-emotional-well-being.aspx.

Hesketh, I. and Cooper, C. (2019) *Wellbeing at Work: How to Design, Implement and Evaluate an Effective Strategy*. London: Kogan Page .

International Coach Federation (2020a) *COVID-19 Resources for coaches*. Available at: https://coachfederation.org/covid-19-resources-for-coaches.

International Coach Federation (2020b) *Coaching in times of crisis*. Available at: https://coachfederation.org/blog/coaching-in-times-of-crisis.

International Coach Federation (2020c) *Core Competencies*. Available at: https://coachfederation.org/core-competencies.

International Coach Federation (2020d) *Code of Ethics*. Available at: https://coachfederation.org/code-of-ethics.

Jamshed, S. (2014) 'Qualitative research method-interviewing and observation', *Journal of Basic Clinical Pharmacy*, 5(4), pp.87-88. DOI: 10.4103/0976-0105.141942.

Jarosz, J. (2016) 'What is life coaching? An integrative review of the evidence-based literature', *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 14(1), pp.34-56. Available at: https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/c8c5109a-e29e-4a70-b85e-bb2f2db40e54/1/.

Johns, G. and Miraglia, M. (2015) 'The reliability, validity, and accuracy of self-reported absenteeism from work: A meta-analysis', *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 20, pp.1-14. DOI: 10.1037/a0037754.

Joseph, S. (2006) 'Person-centred coaching psychology: A meta-theoretical perspective', *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 1(1), pp.47-54.

Kegan, R. and Lahey, L. (2009) *Immunity to Change: How to overcome it and unlock the potential in yourself and your organization*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Press.

Koopmans, L., Bernaards, C.M., Hildebrandt, V.H. and et al, (2011) 'Conceptual frameworks of individual work performance: A systematic review', *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 53, pp.856-866. DOI: 10.1097/JOM.0b013e318226a763.

Leach, C.J., Green, L.S. and Grant, A. (2011) 'Flourishing youth provision: the potential role of positive psychology and coaching in enhancing youth services', *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 9(1), pp.44-58. Available at: https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/43962c78-8334-415d-826a-b660da16df9f/1/.

Lyness, K. and Thompson, D. (2000) 'Climbing the corporate ladder: Do female and male executives follow the same route?', *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(1), pp.86-101. DOI: 10.1037/0021-9010.85.1.86.

McDermott, M., Levenson, A. and Newton, S. (2007) 'What coaching can and cannot do for your organisation', *Human Resource Planning*, 30, pp.30-38.

McGovern, J., Lindemann, M., Vergara, M. and et al, (2001) 'Maximizing the impact of executive coaching', *Manchester Review*, 6(1).

Melhem, Y. (2004) 'The antecedents of customer-contact employees' empowerment', *Employee Relations*, 26(1), pp.72-93. DOI: 10.1108/01425450410506913.

Neale, S., Spencer-Arnell, L. and Wilson, L. (2009) *Emotional intelligence Coaching: improving performance for leaders, coaches and the individual*. London: Kogan Page.

Newnham-Kanas, C., Morrow, D. and Irwin, J.D. (2010) 'Motivational coaching: A functional juxtaposition of three methods for health behaviour change: Motivational interviewing, coaching, and skilled helping', *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 8(2), pp.27-48. Available at: https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/95786bfd-83d8-4186-a79d-5d7a8b483791/1/.

Newnham-Kanas, C., Irwin, J.D. and Morrow, D. (2011) 'Findings from a global survey of certified professional co-active coaches', *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 9(2), pp.23-36. Available at: https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/59249457-629b-4b30-a770-8787e5bda8b3/1/.

Newnham-Kanas, C., Irwin, J.D., Morrow, D. and Battram, D. (2011) 'The quantitative assessment of Motivational Interviewing using co-active life coaching skills as an intervention for adults struggling with obesity', *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 6(2), pp.211-228.

Oakley, A. (1998) 'Gender, methodology and people's ways of knowing: Some problems with feminism and the paradigm debate in social science', *Sociology*, 32, pp.707-731. DOI: 10.1177/0038038598032004005.

Owler, K. (2012) 'Facilitating internal motivation: impacts of the life code matrix model on working life', *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 10(2), pp.65-75. Available at: https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/c75cf3be-d263-4b22-a0d0-8f64db527d44/1/.

Panchal, S., Palmer, S. and O'Riordan, S. (2020) 'Enhancing Transition Resilience: Using the INSIGHT coaching and counselling model to assist in coping with COVID-19', *International Journal of Stress Prevention and Wellbeing*, 4(3), pp.1-6. Available at: https://www.stressprevention.net/volume/volume-4-2020/volume-4-article-3/.

Prescott, T. (2010) 'Why is Progress a Controversial Issue in Coaching?', *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, pp.21-36. Available at: https://radar.brookes.ac.uk/radar/items/53b4439d-f7e4-470f-bd39-cd3d262be5a1/1/.

Ryan, R.M. and Deci, E.L. (2001) 'On happiness and human potentials: a review of research on hedonic and eudaimonic well-being', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52, pp.141-166. DOI: 10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.141.

Ryff, C. (1989) 'Explorations on the meaning of PWB', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 57, pp.1069-1081.

Ryff, C.D. (2014) 'Psychological well-being revisited: Advances in the science and practice of eudaimonia', *Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics*, 83(1), pp.10-28. DOI: 10.1159/000353263.

Ryff, C.D. and Keyes, C.L.M. (1995) 'The structure of psychological well-being revisited', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69, pp.719-727. DOI: 10.1037/0022-3514.69.4.719.

Saunders, M. and Rojon, C. (2014) 'There's no madness in my method: explaining how your coaching research findings are built on firm foundations', *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 7(1), pp.74-83. DOI: 10.1080/17521882.2014.889185.

Seligman, M.E. and Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2000) 'Positive psychology: An introduction', *The American Psychologist*, 55, pp.5-14. DOI: 10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.5.

Stober, D.R. (2006) 'Coaching from the humanistic perspective', in Stober, D.R. and Grant, A.M. (eds.) *Evidence-based coaching handbook: Putting best practices to work for your clients* . Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, pp.17-50.

Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C. (1998) *Mixed methodology: Combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Applied Social Research Methods Series.

Turner, N., Barling, J. and Zacharatos, A. (2002) 'Positive psychology at work', in Snyder, C.R. and Lopez, S.J. (eds.) *Handbook of positive psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

United Nations (2020) *United Nations Policy Brief: COVID-19 and the need for action on mental health*. Available at: https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/un_policy_brief-covid_and_mental_health_final.pdf.

Warr, P. and Nielsen, K. (2018) 'Wellbeing and work performance', in Diener, E., Oishi, S. and Tay, L. (eds.) *Handbook of well-being*. Salt Lake City, UT: DEF Publishers.

Weiss, L.A., Westerhof, G.J. and Bohlmeijer, E.T. (2016) 'Can We Increase Psychological Well-Being? The Effects of Interventions on Psychological Well-Being: A Meta-Analysis of Randomized Controlled Trials', *PLoS ONE*, 11(6). DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0158092.

Whitmore, J. (2004) *Coaching for performance*. London: Nicholas Brealey.

Whitworth, L., Kimsey-House, K., Kimsey-House, H. and Sandahl, P. (2007) *Co-Active Coaching: New Skills for Coaching People Toward Success in Work and Life* (2nd edn.). California: Davies-Black Publishing.

WHO (2004) *Mental health; Strengthening our response*. Available at: https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-strengthening-our-response.

WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 – 11 March 2020 (2020a). Available at: https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020.

WHO (2020b) *Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Pandemic*. Available at: https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019.

WHO (2020c) *Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report – 65*. Available at: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/situation-reports/ 20200325-sitrep-65-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=ce13061b_2.

Williams, H. and Palmer, S. (2020) 'Coaching during the COVID-19 pandemic: Application of the CLARITY solution-focused cognitive behavioural coaching model', *International Journal of Coaching Psychology*, 1, pp.1-11. Available at: https://ijcp.nationalwellbeingservice.com/volumes/volume-1-2020/volume-1-article-2/.

Williams, H., Palmer, S. and Gyllensten, K. (2019) 'Stress, resilience, health and wellbeing coaching', in Palmer, S. and Whybrow, A. (eds.) *Handbook of Coaching Psychology: A guide for practitioners*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, pp.395-409.

Williams, P. and Davis, D.C. (2007) *Therapist as life coach, an introduction for counsellors and other helping professionals*. New York: WW Norton & Co.

Wood, A.M., Joseph, S. and Maltby, J. (2009) 'Gratitude predicts psychological well-being above the Big Five facets', *Personality and Individual Differences*, 46, pp.443-447. DOI: 10.1016/j.paid.2008.11.012.

About the authors

Joanna Jarosz has an MA degree in economics from the University of Minnesota, holds an ACC credential with the ICF and is waiting to defend her doctoral thesis at the University of Silesia (on Psychoeducational Role of Coaching in developing Emotional Intelligence and Well-Being). Her research interest includes coaching and its application in enhancing well-being and performance in the workplace. She is growing her coaching practice - Suite Coaching and is a manager at a tech company.

Appendix A: Team Barometer

1) How would you rate your team's well-being compared to last week?
- Lower
- About the same
- Higher

2) What do you think are some of the reasons?

3) How would you rate your team's performance compared to last week?
- Lower
- About the same
- Higher

4) What do you think are some of the reasons?

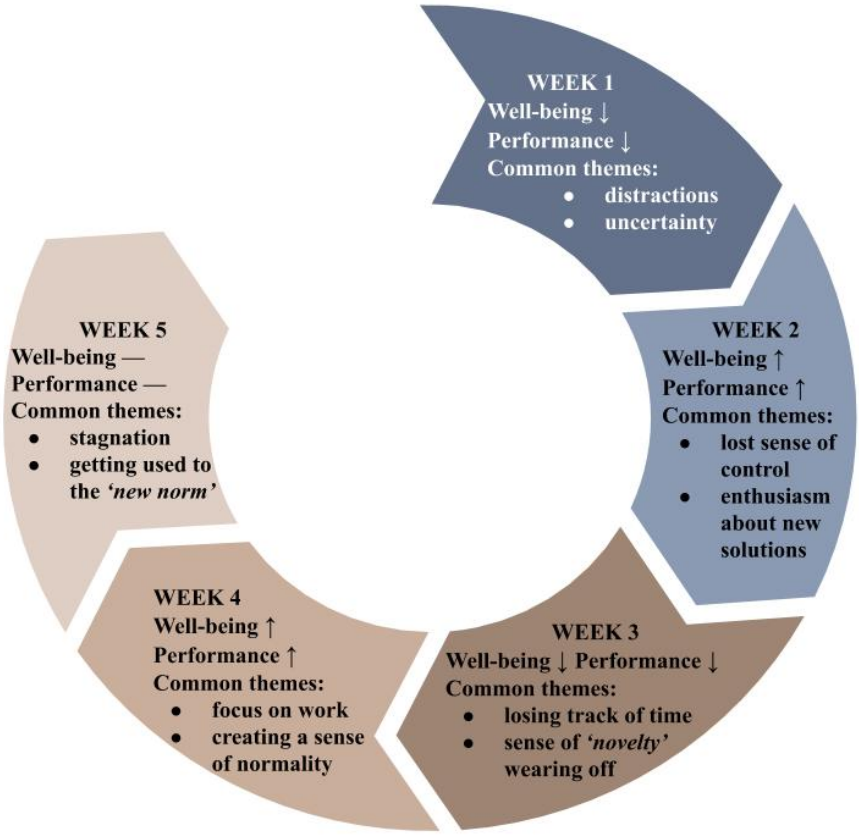
5) On a scale below, how would you rate your performance this week?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

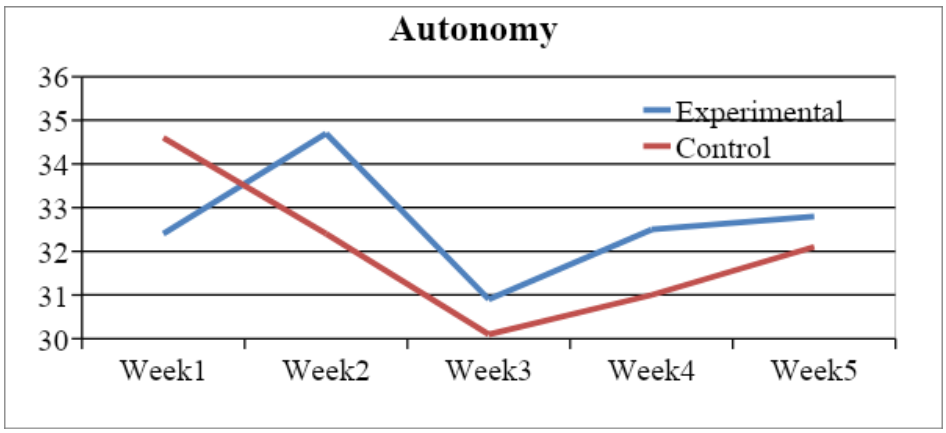
6) On a scale below, how would you rate your team's performance this week?

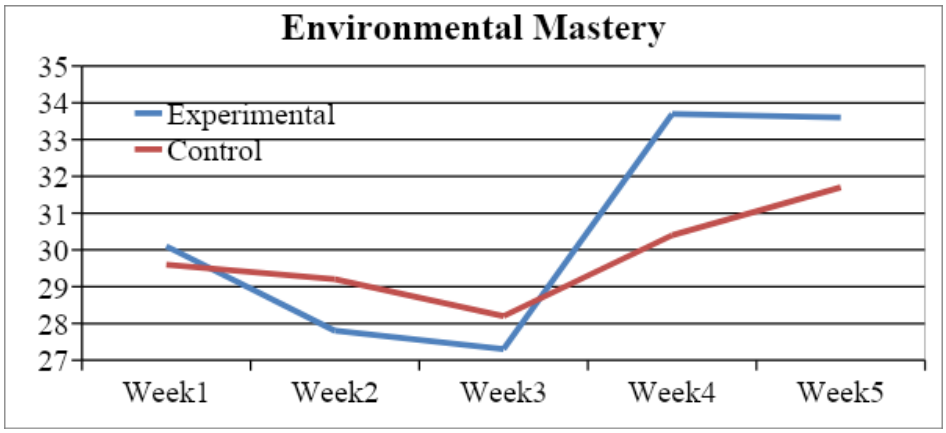
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

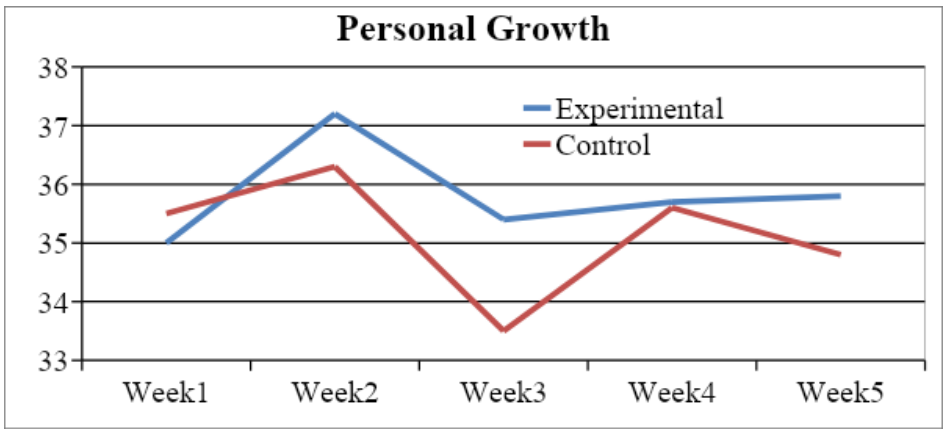
Appendix B: Weekly dynamics of well-being and performance levels observed amongst participants

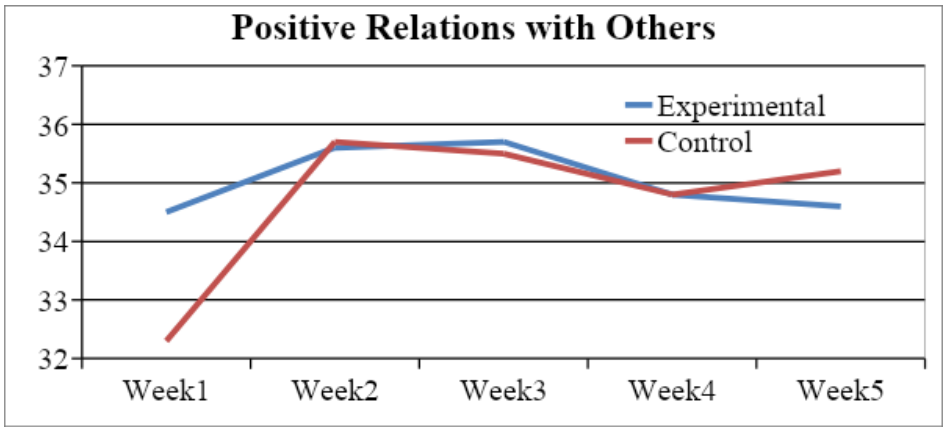


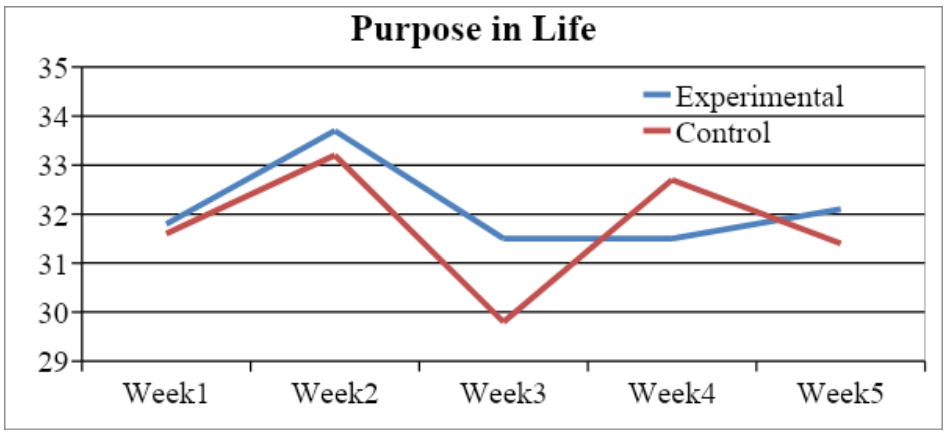
Appendix C: Changes in scores across the study period for the Experimental and Control groups

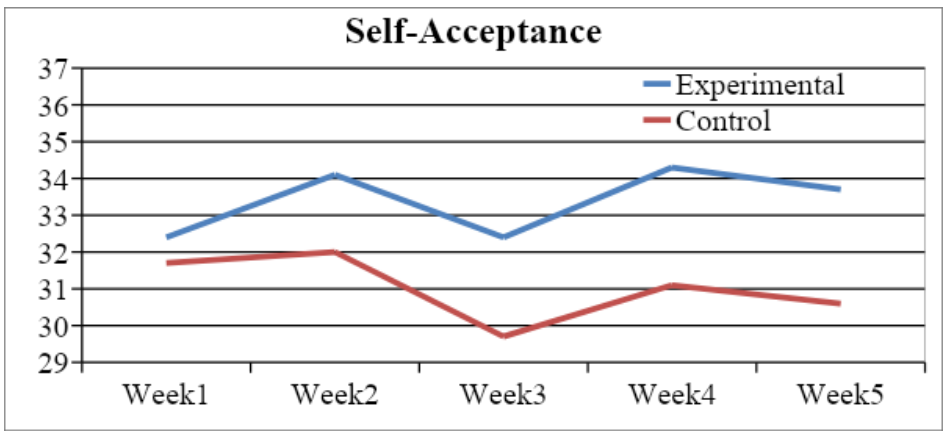


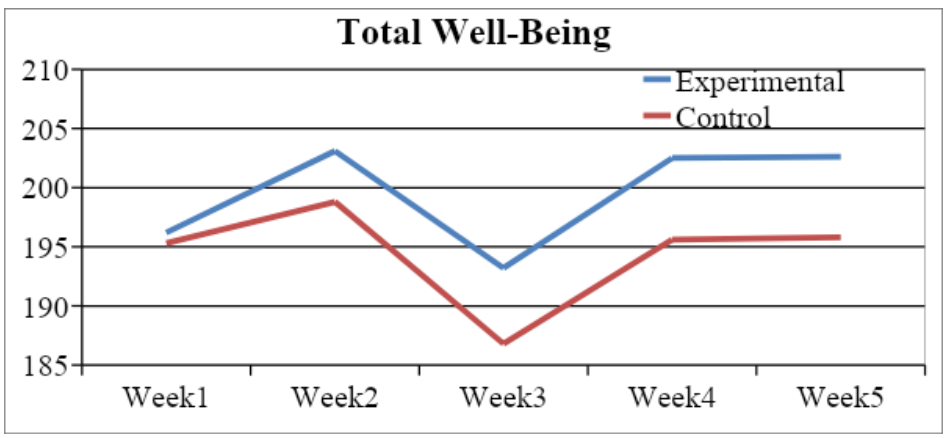


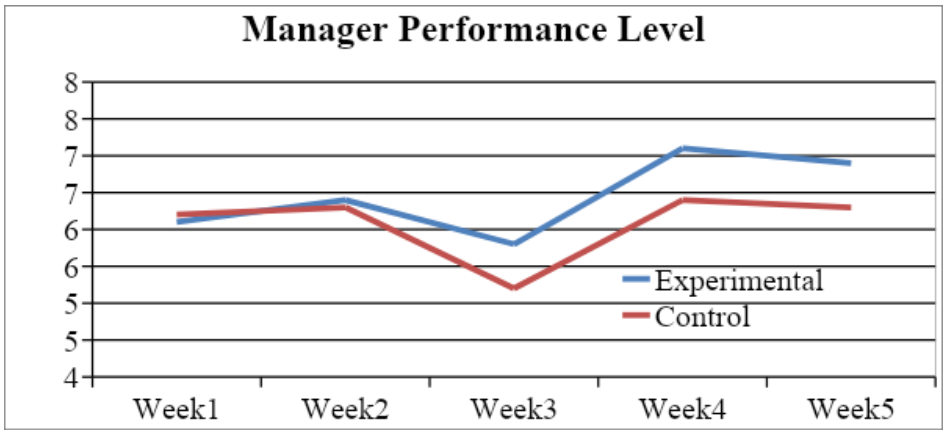


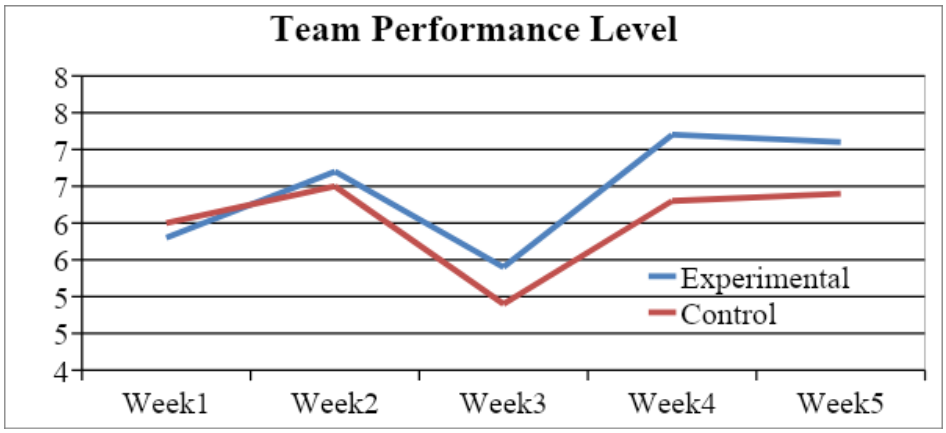

Positive Relations with Others
37
36
35
34
33
32
Experimental
Control
Week1
Week2
Week3
Week4
Week5


Purpose in Life
35
34
33
32
31
30
29
Experimental
Control
Week1
Week2
Week3
Week4
Week5


Self-Acceptance
37
36
35
34
33
32
31
30
29
Experimental
Control
Week1
Week2
Week3
Week4
Week5


Total Well-Being
210
205
200
195
190
185
Experimental
Control
Week1
Week2
Week3
Week4
Week5


Manager Performance Level
8
8
7
7
6
6
5
5
4
Week1
Week2
Week3
Week4
Week5
Experimental
Control


Team Performance Level
8
8
7
7
6
6
5
5
4
Week1
Week2
Week3
Week4
Week5
Experimental
Control