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Management

Exploring how to coach
Young Business Professionals
in a business environment in Western Europe.

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September 2019

Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment for the
requirement for the degree of Master of Science in Coaching
and Personal Development

Word Count: 9996

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Submitted by: Joseph F. Drieman

Declaration: I, Joseph Drieman, declare that this project is the result of my own independent and original investigation and that all sources are duly acknowledged in the reference list. This is entirely my own original work. I confirm that, subject to final approval by the Board of Examiners of the Department Organisation Studies & Human Resource Management, a copy of this Dissertation may be placed upon the shelves of the Library of the University of Portsmouth and/or made available electronically in the Library Dissertation repository and may be circulated as required.

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1. Abstract

Millennials have entered the workforce and will be the largest group of business professionals in the years to come and they will require business coaching.

This group of Young Business Professionals are characterized as being different in terms of attitude, behavior, opinions on privacy, values and motivational drives, work-life balance , etc.

Given these difference, it is important to understand how Young Business Professionals, with higher education in Western Europe would like to be coached.

There are many different articles in the literature about sub-topics of coaching this cohort, but there is a little that describes their coaching preferences holistically.

This dissertation gives some new insights and fundamental answers to the research objective: Exploring how to coach Young Business Professionals in a business environment in Western Europe.

A survey (n=49) and interviews (n=14) gave the following indications:

Doing meaningful work and personal development are key values and motivators for this group. And so, they would like to be coached along these drivers. Top coaching topics include: Performance optimization, Cooperation with others, Goal Setting.

Young Business Professionals prefer discussion oriented coaching with a coach, that has business experience and is inspirational, in a non-directive, but challenging style. This group also wants opinions and advise from the coach when they do not know the answer.

Coaching should take place in a classic way. No digital or short sessions, but live 1on1 private session of about 90 minutes, because it is about their future and that should be taken seriously.

This cohort rather has an analytical oriented coach than a coach that is emotionally engaged.

2. Acknowledgement

Firstly, I would like to address a special thanks to my supervisor Dr Hazel Beadle. Without her advice, feedback and expertise I would not have been able complete my dissertation in this way. She has been a truly critical friend.

And I would like to extend my special thanks to Dr Michele Towell who has guided me successfully in previous years with my academic papers.

A deep thank you goes to my partner Veerle and my 3 children Thomas, Daan and Anne-Catrine, who gave me all the room and time to complete this master's degree. I know, I had less time available for them than they asked for, but don't worry: it will be compensated.

This dissertation is also the result of manifold contributions from my friends and family, namely Paula and Ad Leidner, Thomas and Daan Drieman, Douwe and Marieke van der Kooi, Jurgen and Annick Claes, Bruno Havermans, Leen Gysen and Jannes de Vries who have supported my ideas, provided suggestions, opinions, brought me into contact with the right people, asked critical questions and gave advice. I am more than grateful for that.

This project would not have been possible without the input from the interviewees and respondents of the survey. A big thank you to all of them for their time and honest answers and the HR executives/officers of several companies that helped me to find the interviewees.

And I am also grateful to three coaches who has experiences with coaching younger generations: Sylvia Bouwmeister, Manou van Eerten and Manny Moerman; you gave me additional insights and support.

Finally, I want to thank two of my fellow students: Dee Wilkinson and David Forde. It has been a great pleasure to study with them. And I wish them both a wonderful career in coaching.

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4. Introduction

Millennials belong to the cohort born between 1980 and 2000 (Wells, 2011; DeVaney 2015 Weber, 2017).

Espinoza et al (2010, pp 8-9) write, "There are six major value-shaping influences that impact every generation: family, education, morality, peers, spirituality, culture". Millennials have experienced all 6 influences. This results in the fact that Millennials are characterised as lazy, pampered, a bit delusional, narcissistic selfie-lovers and are jumping from job to job, having an unrealistic expectations of working life. Millennials want flexible work schedules, more 'me time' on the job. They are more civically and politically disengaged, more focused on materialistic values, and less concerned about helping the community (Berman et al 2011, Farrell & Hurt 2014, Williams et al 2017).

Besides that, they are less loyal to employers and rather have two or more jobs or being independent (gig-economy) and have different views on privacy (Capnary, et al, 2018).

Gorczyca & Hartman (2017) see that the trend is more of an emphasis on extrinsic values and motivation such as money and fame and less weight on intrinsic values like self-acceptance, group-affiliation and community.

However, this generation is well educated. They are technology savvy, always on and engaging with many people across the globe in a digital way. In general, they are seen as being more open-minded, and more supportive of equal rights for minorities. Other positives adjectives include: confident, self-expressive, liberal, upbeat and receptive to new ideas and ways of living (Derville, Curtin & Matthews 2012, Myers & Sadaghiani 2010, Stewart 2017, Jirasevijinda 2018).

This generation is entering the workforce and the younger millennials (age 25 to 30 in 2019), the "Young Business Professionals", do have their first jobs. According to the PwC survey (2011), Millennials will represent half of the global workforce, by 2020. Holm (2012) is of the opinion that for many of the Young Business Professionals the rise to leadership is coming faster. And these people will be selected for coaching (Chou 2012; Stewart 2017).

Smither (2011) describes coaching as a one-to-one learning and development intervention that uses a collaborative, reflective, goal-focused relationship to achieve professional outcomes that are valued by the coachee. Coaching is to aid the achievement of individual goals for improvement (Jones, Woods & Guillaume 2016).

Holmberg-Wright et al (2017) found that Millennials would like to be coached and Thompson & Gregory (2012) are of the opinion that coaching results in successful motivation and retention of Millennials. Gong et al (2018) argues that this generation is motivated by feedback. Hence, companies need to provide strong coaching. However, the coaching should not necessarily be done by managers within the company. Millennials also want external coaches.

Anderson et al (2017) show that today's workforce is different. This is driven by the increasing number of Millennials that start working, these Young Business Professionals are categorized differently to other generations.

4.1. The aim

The research objective of this project is to explore how to coach Young Business Professionals (age 25 – 30) in a business environment in Western Europe. Grant (2017) describes this as workplace coaching. Will the existing coaching techniques, methodologies and communication still apply or do coaches need to adapt, because of different behaviour, attitude and values of the Young Business Professionals? Should the profile of the coach change?

This research objective is important. Chinn et al (2015) have the meaning that it is intrinsically difficult to match coachees to coaches since there are so many variables to consider when selecting a coach for a specific need. Building a trusted relationship between coachee and coach is critical to achieving successful outcomes.

With the advent of a new cohort employees, with different views on the world and understand work differently (O'Connor & Raile, 2015), it may get even more difficult. Hence, getting more clarity and new insights on this topic adds value to the quality of coaching.

Holm (2012) argues that the coach must adapt to the Millennials. Gavatorra, (2012, p.62) writes: "Quit focusing on what not and start thinking about how to create the right atmosphere, one that capitalizes on their team building, trusting, tech-savvy nature".

The above would suggest that coaching needs to be adjusted.

4.2. The research questions

There are 4 supporting research questions that are answered with this project:

Question 1: What do Young Business Professionals value at work?

And how is this related to coaching? Is the purpose of coaching pure business oriented: career development, job changes, coping with corporate culture, building relationships, performance optimization etc.? Or beyond business: developing empathy, defeating insecurities, coping with challenges, work-life balance or social responsibility?

Question 2: What would be the purpose and preferred coaching topics for Young Business Professionals?

Are the topics only business related, or including work-life and personal development?

Question 3: How should coaching be done?

Understanding of format, location, coaching style, duration, frequency, use of coaching techniques, level of challenge, etc.

Question 4: What should be the profile of the coach and what is expected from coaching?

Meaning, what is the Millennials' opinion about the role of a coach? That would not necessarily be the same as what other generation expect. Could the coach be seen by Young Business Professionals as a sparring partner, sounding board or advisor. Also: what a coach should not do.

This question covers also features of the coach like age, gender, background, social profile.

4.3. Research value

The value of this project is that by understanding how Young Business Professionals would like to be coached, coaches, but also managers, can adapt their style and coaching techniques. By having this new knowledge, coaches are better prepared to provide more value in the development of the next generation leaders.

By providing additional insights via thorough and wide-reaching primary research, as well as critical and rigorous analysis, this project contributes to the understanding how this cohort would like to be coached in a business environment.

5. Literature Review

5.1. Value at work

The advent of Young Business Professionals to the work floor has changed the labor market rules (Jekabsone, 2018). This cohort sees the world differently than previous generations (Hall, 2011; Holm, 2012) and Twenge et al. (2010) observed that Young Business Professionals hold different attitudes towards work than older generations. The differences in attitude play across all professional aspects of work engagement. Work engagement is defined as “a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterized by vigor, dedication and absorption” (Schaufeli et al., 2002, p.74). A meta-analysis by Christian et al. (2011) has provided considerable evidence that engagement leads to positive employee work attitudes, performance and productivity. Morrell and Abston (2018) studied the differences for three main areas that are impacting engagement: work centrality and leisure, motivation, feedback/recognition.

These three areas include: doing meaningful work, flexibility and collaboration.

According to Fairlie (2011) the strongest relationships with engagement is doing meaningful work.

Coates (2017, p.50) writes: “Meaningful work was encapsulated in five ways: enjoying the work, being engaged in the work, being fulfilled and enriched by the work, feeling passionate about the work, and the work being important”.

In general, having a meaningful job is important (Lips-Wiersma & Morris 2009; Schullery 2013).

This is also valid for the Young Business Professionals. This cohort finds having meaningful job important; it is a driver for engagement. Weeks, Pledger & Schaffert (2019) observed that for Young Business Professionals a meaningful job is one that includes personal happiness and fulfillment, having nice coworkers, helping others and being challenged. However, meaningful also includes a reinforcement of autonomy and freedom (Perkune & Licite, 2019; Wong et al., 2017; Glazer, Mahoney & Randall, 2019). Forastero et al. (2018) add that job autonomy positively affects the engagement of Young Business Professionals.

Another motivational driver for Young Business Professionals is flexibility (Twenge et al. 2010). This workforce would like more flexibility in where, when, and how they work and a better work-life balance. Not only do they offer flexibility, but they also expect flexibility to be granted by superiors and colleagues (Fischerová & Půbalová, 2018; Perkune & Licite, 2019; Cort, Rachel & Hannes, 2018; Twenge 2010).

Although this generation is self-oriented (Twenge et al., 2010), cooperation with other people of the same age (Coates, 2017) or with previous generations (Hewlett, Sherbin, & Sumberg (2009) is preferred. Baum (2019) also argues that open communication between co-workers and managers is key.

Research done by Schullery (2013) shows that Young Business Professionals are significantly more interested in extrinsic rewards than other generations. Perkune & Licite (2019) found that the vast majority considers steady and regular remuneration an important motivator. However, Maxwell & Broadbridge (2017) and Gerard (2019) argue that financial compensation is not the most important. Intrinsic motivation is key. But praise is scoring neutral according to Perkune & Licite (2019).

Young Business Professionals are strongly emphasizing their personal development. They expect to learn through their whole life. Ongoing improvement of decision-making skills and mindfulness are of primary importance (Fischerová & Půbalová, 2018; Weeks et al., 2019; Maxwell & Broadbridge, 2017; De Hauw & De Vos 2010). Nevertheless, Glazer, Mahoney & Randall (2019) suggest that promoting professional development is not necessarily appealing to Young Business Professionals as a motivator for organizational commitment, but for personal enrichment.

Baum (2019) found that the higher level of education does not guarantee a successful career. Young Business Professionals must develop skills in order to cope with the demands at the workspace. This is because the ultimate aim of development is to optimize the effectiveness of employees (Ford, Kraiger, & Merritt, 2010) by improving individual performance.

Böhlich & Oleti (2017) asked Young Business Professionals to choose the best method of learning to grab their interest and attention. For 60% of the respondents, coaching is the most preferred method.

5.2. The coaching purpose and topics

There are many reasons to get coached. Studies have indicated that emotional and social competences positively influence job performance, general leadership effectiveness, which can be achieved through coaching (Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2016; Walter, Cole, & Humphrey, 2011; Hopkins & Bilimoria, 2008; Law, Wong, Huang, & Li, 2008). Franklin (2015) highlights that the purpose of coaching is to develop self-awareness and emotional intelligence. While Moyzes Sarsur & Parente (2019), Grant (2012) and Smither et al. (2003) argue that coaching should be used to set and achieve goals. This is related to the opinion of Sue-Chan, Wood & Latham (2012) and Whitmore (2010) who reveal that coaching is about actual/future performance.

Theeboom et al. (2014) has identified five categories of coaching outcomes: job performance and skills, well-being; coping, work and career attitudes, and goal-directed self-regulation. Nieminen et al. (2013) summarizes this as acceleration of professionals' development.

Gray, Ekinici & Goregaokar (2011) are indicating that coaching is for developing core management skills. This includes elements of mentoring.

Willyerd (2015) reports that in a global survey (conducted by SuccessFactors in 2014 in partnership with Oxford Economics) for 1,400 Young Business Professionals the preferred coaching topics include: performance improvement, personal development, managerial skills.

Both Bye (2018) and The Hartford's 2014 Millennial Leadership Survey also found that managerial skill development is a key coaching topic. Hamilton (2019) adds that to her opinion two other coaching topics are important: building new skill sets, and navigating through change. Lancer & Eatough (2018) report that Young Business Professionals would like to be coached on time management, stress, social relationships and confidence.

The above findings suggest personal development and managerial skills are most important coaching topics, because this is in direct relationship with doing meaningful work.

5.3. How to be coached

Young Business Professionals are motivated by feedback and constant learning. They do not so much want to fix their weaknesses; they want to develop their strengths.

Holmberg-Wright's (2017) opinion is that Young Business Professionals want a trusted relationship with an experienced coach who encourages them to reach their full potential. So, a coach must very well understand the coachee starting by being a good listener before giving feedback (De Haan et al. 2011). Young Business Professionals not only questions the validity of feedback offered by a coach with years of experience, but also if the feedback is given in the right way (sandwiching affirmations and criticisms). Feedback should preferably include praise (Holm 2012). In addition to this opinion De Haan et al. (2011) also suggest that summarizing, paraphrasing, interpretation and discovering links with other themes are useful indirective coaching techniques. Sarsur (2019) and Dutton (2017) suggest that the coach does not direct the coachee's decisions. These findings support the principle that coaching should take place at the non-directive side of Downing's (2014) coaching spectrum (Figure 2.1: Coaching Spectrum).

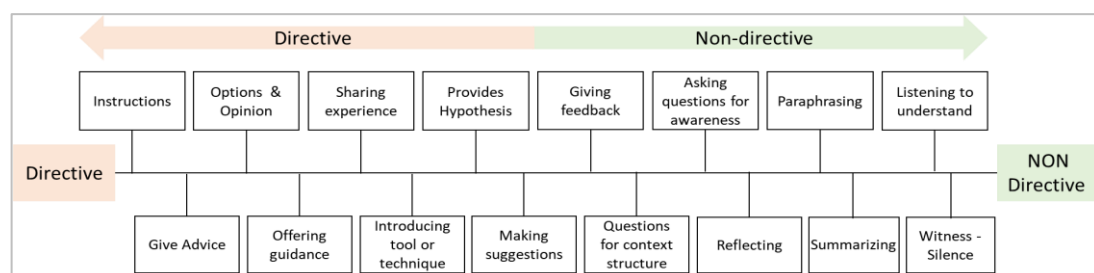


Figure 2.1: Coaching Spectrum

De Haan et al. (2011) argues that whether coaching sessions should be discussion or action oriented depends on the preference of the coachee. The survey of Vandaveer et al. (2016) revealed that in general, 82% of the coachees find a discussion more important than action learning. But Böhlich (2017) found that the majority of the Young Business Professionals seem to prefer actions like visual learning methods, as they grew up in an era of visual inducements. Most popular choice of the participants is learning through exercises and activities (33%), followed by a combination of pictures and exercises (21%). This indicates that this cohort prefers action-oriented coaching (Grant, 2017).

Challenging in an encouraging way is the 3rd most important quality of a coach (De Haan et al., 2011). Weeks, Pledger & Schaffert (2019) found that Young Business Professionals want to be challenged because it is important for their career. Tulgan, (2009, p.13): “They want to learn, to be challenged, and to understand the relationship between their work and the overall mission of the organization”. De Haan et al. (2011) explains that the level of the challenge (playing the devil’s advocate) has a bigger impact than the frequency of challenges. Schroth (2019) adds that this cohort needs to be challenged in their social, emotional, and intellectual development, in order to become autonomous adults. A coach should challenge to foster a growth mindset by asking questions rather than instructing what to do.

Coaching is most commonly conducted face-to-face. However, this cohort is used to work with digital communication. So, Dutton (2017) suggests that coaching conversations may not be face-to-face but that Twitter, Snapchat, and telephone/video-platforms are the preferred communication choice among Young Business Professionals. Brack & Kelly (2012) are quoting Spiegel (2012) that coaching can be as simple as a quick e-mail response, a text or a two-minute conversation. Bozer & Sarros (2012) explain that the format of the coaching may be a ‘blended’ format, combining telephone, digital and face-to-face.

In contrast, Jones, Woods & Guillaume (2016) argue that the relational nature of coaching is likely to be more effectively fostered in a face-to-face personal environment than in digital formats. This corresponds with the view of Otte, et al. (2014), who reason that coaches and clients might take a skeptical view toward the use of computer technology in coaching. They might fear that it undermines the relationship between coach and client.

Berry et al. (2011) have a neutral view through their survey, revealing that the coaches’ perceptions did not differ significantly between face-to-face and digital coaching practices.

Not much is written about the preferred location for a coaching session. Should that be at the office, at the coach or somewhere else? Franklin (2015) writes that if coaching takes place face-to-face many Young Business Professionals prefer a casual, public environment, like Starbucks, over their offices.

Millennials have grown up in a culture where the concept of privacy has changed. According to Arab and Díaz (2015), Young Business Professionals have no clear boundaries between what should be “public” and what should be “private” in their social networks. According to the survey in 2009 by the Ethics Resource Center, Young Business Professionals value confidentiality and privacy less than other generations, and reason that knowledge is meant to be shared rather than owned. Marangione (2019) revealed that Young Business Professionals tend to share everything, and have different ideas about privacy, observing that they are a generation of free information. Duffygroup (2018) suggests coaching to take place in a group setting and uses technology to help participants define what coaching means to them. With less privacy restrictions, Dutton (2017) suggests that coaching should be done in a group meeting to enable peer-to-peer insights. However, Sanchez (2019) found that this cohort is much more private than people believe. They only let you see what they want you to see. As coaching is more about private topics, the confidentiality is high. This is also the opinion of ALCN (2019) who writes that coaching should be a one-on-one connection. Group coaching makes sense within a leadership development program; it increases learning transfer and increases teams’ perception of leader trustworthiness and task orientation (Coates 2013; Vesso 2015). With respect to goals, O’Connor et al. (2017) suggests group coaching may benefit from ensuring there are clear yet broad organizational aims within which specific group and individual level goals can be autonomously developed.

Brack & Kelly (2012) found that coaching does not need to be time consuming. For Young Business Professionals the session can be short. This generation gets bored easily and has shorter attention spans (Tulgan, 2016). But sessions should not be too short. Lightfoot (2019) argues that coaching sessions should last between an hour and an hour and a half, because the moment of insight occurs around 25 minutes into the session. Nagy et al. (2018) show that the session duration has a significant positive correlation with the quality of the connection between coach and coachee.

There is a little information about the frequency of the sessions. Many Young Business Professionals would like to get instant coaching support (Brack & Kelly 2012). This is more feedback oriented and may be possible via a direct manager, but not with an external coach. Labrecque (2017) found once a month the right frequency. A study by Theeboom et al. (2014) revealed that a greater number of coaching sessions did not

significantly impact on outcomes. Coaching frequency and number of sessions depend on the coaching topic: skills, performance, personal development.

5.4. Profile of the coach

Matching Young Business Professionals to coaches is challenging, since there are many aspects to consider when selecting a coach for development. Matching correctly and developing a trusted relationship between a Young Business Professional and a coach is vital to achieving successful outcomes (Chinn, Richmond & Bennett, 2015). According to Underhill et al. (2013), the primary selection criteria for coach-client matching include the coach's ability to build rapport and trust, skills, experience with specific leadership challenges, congruence with the company's culture and business experience.

Feldman & Lankau (2005) stated that the background characteristics of the coach like age, education, and work experience influences both the credibility of the coach as well as the client's openness to being coached. Gray, Ekinici & Goregaokar (2011) found that although coach's ability to develop thinking, understanding, curiosity, and action are important for both male and female coachees, these qualities are more important for females.

Studies done by De Haan et al. (2011) and Chin et al. (2015) show that there is no statistically significant preference towards male or female coaches.

Although there are no statistically significant differences found between the age and the quality of the coach (Gray, Ekinici & Goregaokar, 2011; De Haan et al., 2011), the majority of coaches for Young Business Professionals belong to older generational cohorts like generation X or baby boomer (Franklin 2015). This corresponds with Chinn et al. (2015) who found that 62% of coaches for the Young Business Professionals are between 41 and 60 years old.

The background (education, experience) of a coach helps to be successful.

Olson & Tan (2018) revealed that a small group of coaches reasons that having credentials and a list of references is more important for getting business than being certified. However, the majority of coaches demonstrate that a certification is important. "Having a coaching qualification assures the organizations they are hiring coaches who are professionally trained to deliver the expected coaching services"

(Olson & Tan 2018, p.69). This quality level is essential for the coaching relationship and the effectiveness of the coaching outcomes (Baron & Morin, 2009; Boyce et al., 2010; Ely et al., 2010; Gregory & Levy, 2011). Vandaveer et al. (2016) and Bozer et al. (2014) argue that a coach with a background as psychologist brings a significantly deeper level of knowledge about human behavior, learning, and group dynamics than other coaches, which is key for successful coaching.

Rettinger (2011) identifies four main competence-domains for a coach: professional knowledge/expertise, knowledge of procedure, empathy, and experience. The combination of being a professional coach and having business experience is important (Berman 2019; Kreuz 2015). In addition to this, Newsom & Dent (2011) found that coaches with business-related educations rated their work significantly higher than those with counseling-related educations. Lombardo (2018) adds that there is evidence that a business coach must be skilled in leadership. In contrast, Chinn et al. (2015) argued that the coach's professional experience is more important than understanding the business and industry experience of the coachee. Palmer and McDowall (2010, p.1) pointed out: "Regardless of which techniques, frameworks or psychological underpinnings a coach might draw on, basic coaching processes all rest on interpersonal interaction in some way or another". This is in-line with Van Oosten et al. (2019) and De Haan et al. (2011) who showed that the quality of the coaching relationship is more important than the demonstrated set of competencies. The relationship coach-coachee should be mutually trusted for the Young Business Professionals (Boyson et al. 2018; Zahid et al. 2018). The best way to create a trusted relationship is to be empathic. Emotional competences like listening, motivating, enable Young Business Professionals to become more open leading to beneficial individual and organizational outcomes (Boyatzis & Jack, 2018; Boyatzis et al., 2015; Passarelli, 2015). Though, De Haan et al. (2011) have a contrasting opinion: empathy and warmth are less important than listening and understanding in a logic manner. They argue that a coach should have an analytical mindset. Gray et al. (2011) supported this by stating that a coach should have the ability to develop a coachee in a critical way. Cunningham (2008) is of the opinion that a coach should be instructive when needed. Especially when it is about problem coaching. No need to reinvent the wheel. Whitmore (2009) suggested to be directive (give instructions) in case of an immediate crisis. Smith (2017) is of the opinion that a coach should mix different

coaching styles: empathic, analytical, inspirational and directive. The coaching style may depend on the topic, the maturity and the preference of the Young Business Professionals (Law 2007).

The literature discusses many aspects of coaching in general and specifically for the cohort of Young Business Professionals in separate articles, but not a holistic overview of how Young Business Professionals would like to be coached in terms of style, format and profile of the coach. Besides that, little research was found about the link between work value and coaching topics for Young Business Professionals. This project further investigates how the cohort would like to be coached.

6. Methodology

6.1. Research philosophy

Bhaskar & Manjuladevi (2016, p38) state “research is a systematic process, which uses scientific methods to generate new knowledge that can be used to solve a query or improve on the existing system”. This is exactly the aim of the project.

The research objective of this project has an investigative nature, because it explored how Young Business Professionals in Western Europe would like to be coached in a work environment. This would mean that Positivism, as research philosophy, would not be the right choice. With Positivism knowledge is obtained by observation and finding event regularities, which are based on causal, law-like and functional relations (Melnikovas, 2018). Meyers (2008) shows that Interpretivism is a philosophy based on subjectivist ontological assumptions that entities are constituted of discourse. Reality is socially constructed and constantly evolving; therefore, knowledge is relative and subjective. This project does not contain any hypotheses and suggestions will only emerge when the data is analysed (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2012). This would mean that Interpretivism is the preferred philosophy.

The approach would be inductive, as deductive leaves little room for discovery. Within the entire domain of hypothetico-deductive confirmatory studies, the theory is specified a priori (Jebb, 2017). Known as Modus Ponens in propositional logic. While an inductive approach (inductive reasoning), starts with the search for pattern from observation, and theories are projected towards the end of the research process as a result of observations (Bernard 2018). The drawback is outlined by Evans (2018) who indicates that inductive inferences are not logically valid and therefore cannot necessarily preserve truth and can never be sure of the conclusions. At best it is possible hold conclusions only with a degree of confidence or subjective probability.

6.2. Research strategy and design

The challenge of this project is getting enough relevant information for an analysis. Hence, the best strategy to get quality answers on this interpretivist research project is through a combination of secondary and primary research, covering both quantitative

and qualitative data via an extensive literature review, a survey and semi-structured interviews. The survey would make it possible to have a large group of 49 respondents answering the questions. However, the answers provided by the survey maybe limited and not providing deeper grounded insight. Therefore, the decision was taken to conduct also 14 semi-structured interviews. The interview is a qualitative approach to get a more detailed, individualized, and grounded insight into the topic by a small group of respondents and the literature review. Levitan, Mahfouz & Schussler (2018) argue that qualitative interview technique can complement quantitative studies to enhance contextual understandings of identity.

The research design contained three elements: Literature review (90+ articles reviewed), survey (n=49) and semi-structured interviews (n=14). And, as such, it is a mixed-method, combining elements of qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Schoonenboom & Johnson 2017).

The survey, semi-structured interviews and literature reviews took place between January 31 and April 30, 2019.

6.2.1. Survey

The survey was a mixture of both qualitative and quantitative questions (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

The questions were written in a way that it would be clear what is meant, quick to answer, keeping the respondents engaged and easy to code (Leung, 2001).

The survey existed of 4 categories of questions: (1) motivation and value at work, (2) coaching purpose and preferred topics, (3) format and style of coaching and (4) profile and expectations of the coach; in total 20 questions. Average completing time: 14m38s.

SurveyMonkey was the preferred tool for research due to its low cost, the anonymous and withdrawal options, analysis capabilities and time efficiency.

6.2.2. Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were the chosen pragmatic method for this research in order to discover the in-depth views and opinions about the research topic by a small group of key respondents.

According to Hancock et al. (1998), semi-structured interviews consist of open-ended questions based on the topics the researcher wants to cover. They suggest that the open-ended structure of the interview allow to discuss the topics in much more detail. They also highlight that if the interviewee only provides a brief response or finds it difficult to answer, the interviewer can easily encourage the interviewee to elaborate.

The interview consisted of 22 questions, divided into 5 categories: (1) previous coaching experiences, (2) value and motivation at work, (3) coaching purpose and topics, (4) format and style of coaching and (5) profile and expectations of the coach.

The interview lasted about 40 minutes.

The complete list of the survey and interview questions can be found in Appendix 3.

6.2.3. Literature review

In conducting the literature review, all data that became available to the researcher in grounded theory came from data sources like paper-based and electronic articles, and included peer reviewed journal articles, academic journals, books, research reports and magazines. Search for literature followed the same structure as the survey and interviews: (1) value and motivation at work, (2) purpose and coaching topics (3) format and style and (4) profile and expectations of the coach.

90+ articles have been reviewed.

6.3. Sample design and size

The representative sample (Bryman, 2012) of the cohort Young Business Professionals is a person with the age between 25 and 30, having a higher education (Bachelors or Masters) and being professional active in Belgium, Netherlands,

Germany, France or the UK. Because of anonymity of the respondents, numbers of respondents by country are not available.

For this project 49 Young Business Professionals were selected for the survey of which 14 have been interviewed. Selection took place with the assistance of HR professionals of large international companies and through the network of the researcher. See Appendix 2: **Overview demographics respondents** for complete list.

The composition of the sample size is as follows:

Survey: 36 Masters, 13 Bachelors

Of which:

- 17 technical education (engineering, ICT, etc.),
- 21 business education (economy, business administration, supply chain, etc.)
- 11 others (medicine, psychology, law, art, etc.)

Interviews: 11 masters, 3 Bachelors

Of which:

- 5 technical education (engineering, ICT, etc.),
- 5 business education (economy, business administration, supply chain, etc.)
- 4 others (medicine, psychology, law, art, etc.)

Gender

- Survey: 25 female, 24 male
- Interviews: 6 female, 8 male

Figure 3.1 summarizes the demographic composition of the respondents. The number of Masters and Bachelors is on balance for technical education, but 82% is male. Business education is masters heavy (85%) and Others is women only.

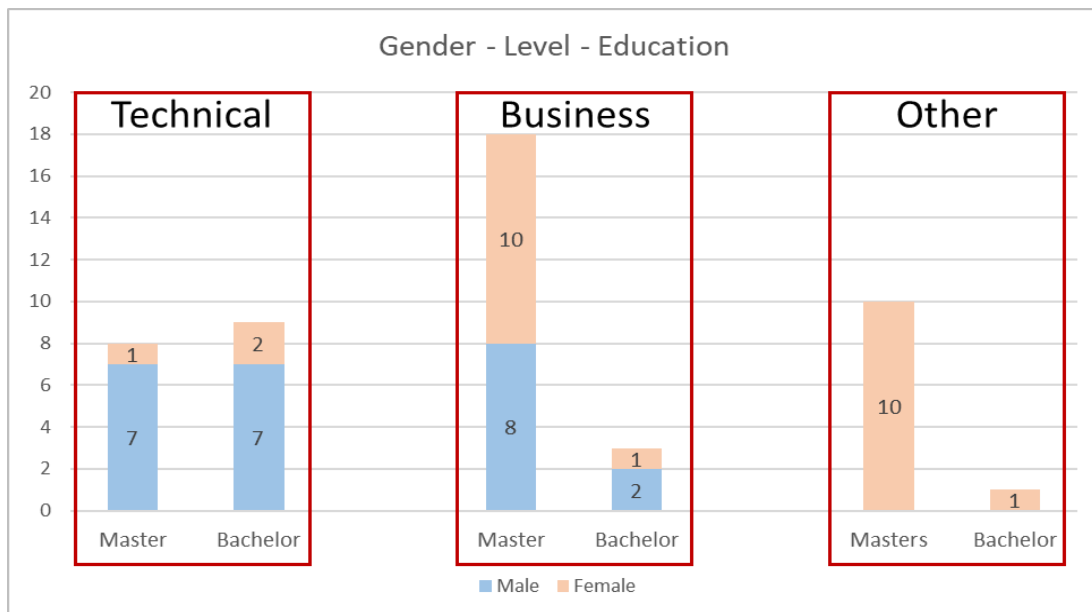


Figure 3.1: Sample composition

6.3.1. Justification of the sample strategy

Just over 3% of the EU28 population of 513M in 2016 is between 25 and 29 years old (Eurostat 2018). That is over 15M people. Dragoescu (2014) estimated that every year between 35% and 40% will attain a higher education level, which would be around 6M Young Business Professionals for 2019 alone.

The sample size is not based on the population, as the requirement would too exhaustive to stratify. The sample size of 49 respondents and 14 interviewees is small, but is based on a power analysis which is useful for quantifying the sample size needed for trend detection (Weiser et al, 2019; Pek & Park 2019). However, effect size has considerations. At a theoretical level, the researcher needs to review other studies that examined the same type of constructs or the same instruments, then see what effect size was found. That is what has been done with the literature review. The practical aspect of justifying the sample size is money and time needed to collect data. Doing only 14 interviews would not have given quality results. However, interviewing 49 people would have been too time consuming. To get a level of consistency, the sample

design was strict to the following criteria: age between 25 and 30, higher education, 1st or 2nd job, living in Western Europe.

6.4. Data analysis process

For the interviews and survey thematic analysis coding was used. It is part of a broader exploratory data analysis, which is best described as an overarching analytic attitude characterized as “detective work designed to reveal the structure or patterns in the data” (Haig, 2005, p.375) and is the statistical embodiment of inductive research (Jebb, 2017).

The interviews were analysed by an in-depth reading of the transcripts and assigning initial codes. Secondly, the codes were compared with each other to identify probable patterns which later produced the themes.

The survey analysis followed a similar structure. Many questions in the survey had multiple choice options: respondents were asked to tick the top 5 favourite answers. Analysis was mainly counting and calculating the frequency of answers to understand the themes. This analysis was helpful to understand the core thematic questions: Values and motivation at work, coaching purpose and topics, the coaching style/format and the profile of the coach.

Findings were extensively compared with the literature findings (see Chapter 5).

6.5. Ethical issues, approval and practical implementation

When designing the online survey, three ethical issues were considered. (1) consent, (2) right to withdrawal and (3) privacy of the respondents.

Knussen & McFadyen (2010) advises that the researcher should obtain consent from all respondents prior to the questionnaire. This becomes a challenge when the survey is online and the researcher cannot get oral consent. Mahon (2013) recommends to make the first page an information page of the online survey including the rights of the respondents and researchers, including contact details. Each respondent must check a box to agree before starting the survey (Roberts & Allen, 2015). Warrell & Jacobsen (2014) suggest the term: Implying consent. However, Vehovar & Manfreda

(2008) argue that it is difficult to verify if the respondent has actually read the details carefully, whether there are any misunderstandings in comprehension, and if the person who is giving the consent is the authentic respondent.

Hughes (2012) highlights that the ability to withdraw from the survey at any point is a central rule of informed consent. This right must show also on the consent information page.

There has always been a concern with regards to ability of ensuring privacy and confidentiality of all of its respondents (The British Psychological Society, 2007). Robert & Allen (2015, p100) write: "Privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality are key ethical considerations in online survey research. Educational researchers must act to minimise intrusions on the privacy of research participants (AERA, 2011, Clause 12.07) at every stage of the research process." The minimization depends on the integrity of the researcher when designing the survey. Not collecting the respondents IP addresses helps to protect the privacy and the confidentiality.

6.5.1. In practice

For interviews Gupta (2017) highlights that a key element for the researcher is to pay attention to the participants' expectations, perceptions, and awareness about privacy. Strandberg (2019) suggests that anonymization is an important part of interview ethics. But he also includes other ethical principles: beneficence (the welfare of participants, and the greater good for society), scientific value (research should yield fruitful results for the society), researcher skill, justice (it is unjust to let one group carry the burden of research while another gets the benefits of research) and respect for law.

Prior to conducting any primary research, the student was required to obtain ethical approval from the University of Portsmouth. A document, including an ethical review form with information regarding the study, the questionnaire, participant information and confidentiality sheets, was signed by the supervisor and peer reviewer in January 2019 (see appendix 1).

Before the interviews, interviewees got a letter, explaining why they were invited to participate, the purpose of the interview and all the confidentiality and privacy rules

that were applied. And before the start of the interview-session, respondents were asked to sign the Dissertation Information and Consent Form. All interviewees got code symbols (e.g. Interviewee 2 = Int-2). Names were not written down, and are not mentioned in this dissertation.

The online survey started with the first page containing all required ethics information: consent, withdrawal rights and privacy/confidentiality. And information about storage and accessibility of the obtained information.

The survey did not include questions about name, address, profession, employer. The two personal related questions were about gender and education.

6.6. Critique of the data collection method, acknowledging limitations

The data collection method is a mixed method, which makes the collection and analysis more difficult. The sample size is small but has been justified in paragraph 6.6.3.1.

Only Young Business Professionals have been studied. There are many more people between 25 and 30, that would like to be coached. And maybe they have different criteria about coaching topics, format and style and profile of the coach.

Another limitation is the geographical coverage. Young Business Professionals are entering the workforce all over the world and this research project focusses on Western Europe.

7. Presentation and analysis of the data

7.1. Introduction

The collected and analysed data is grouped by the research question themes as presented in the introduction.

1. What do Young Business Professionals value and motivate them at work?
2. What is the purpose and the preferred coaching topics?
3. How should the coaching be done?
4. What should be the profile of the coach and what are the expectations?

The analysis of the survey data and interviews was firstly done separately and secondly the two sets of analysis were combined to get unified findings and compared with the selected literature (see Chapter 5). For surveys, n was always 49, for interviews n was always 14.

There is a clear logic behind the sequence of the questions. Firstly, it is important to understand what drives Young Business Professionals at work: values and motivation. These findings are connected to coaching topics that are important to them.

Followed by collecting and analysing information about the coaching style and format, coaching techniques, location, duration, engagement, etc. And lastly, the profile of the coach, including, age, gender, social style, etc. was analysed. This order leads to getting a complete holistic overview.

7.2. Value and motivation at work

The question: “What do you value most in your work / at your company?” generated 30 different reasons in the survey. Participants were asked to mention the 5 most important values. Figure 4.1 shows the table ranked by popularity.

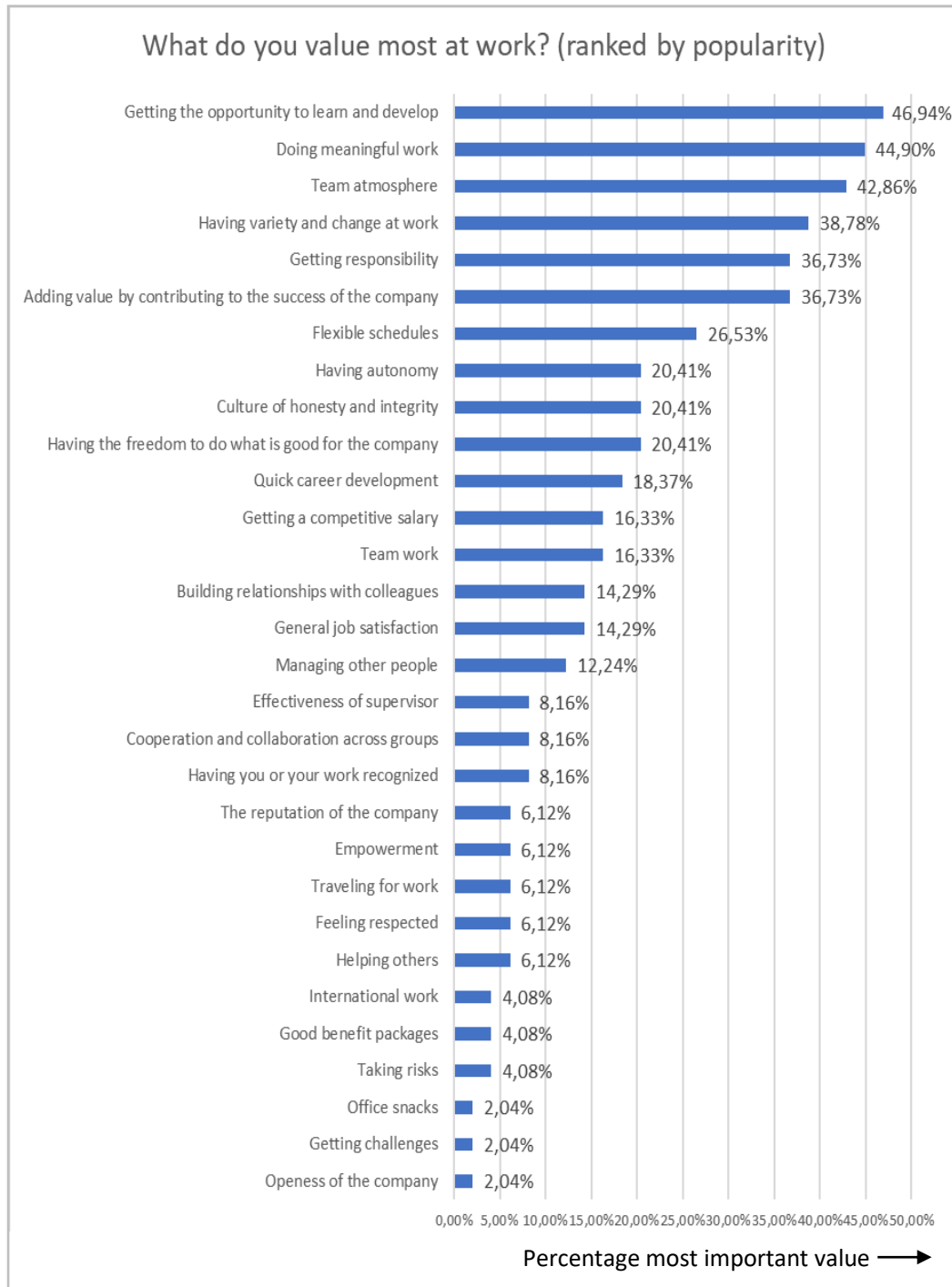


Figure 4.1: Value and motivation topics at work

Getting the opportunity to learn and develop is most preferred.

Int-6: *“Personal development is the key value”*.

The importance of personal development of this cohort is only briefly mentioned in the literature by Weeks, Pledger & Schaffert (2019), Fischerová & Půbalová (2018), Maxwell & Broadbridge (2017) and De Hauw & De Vos (2010).

When the 30 values/motivator (Figure 4.1) are grouped into 9 themes (Figure 2.2: Value and motivation themes.2), meaningful work (which includes contribution to the success of the company and getting responsibility, etc.) scores highest.

Int-8: *“I have tangible impact on the business, contribute to the success of the company”*.

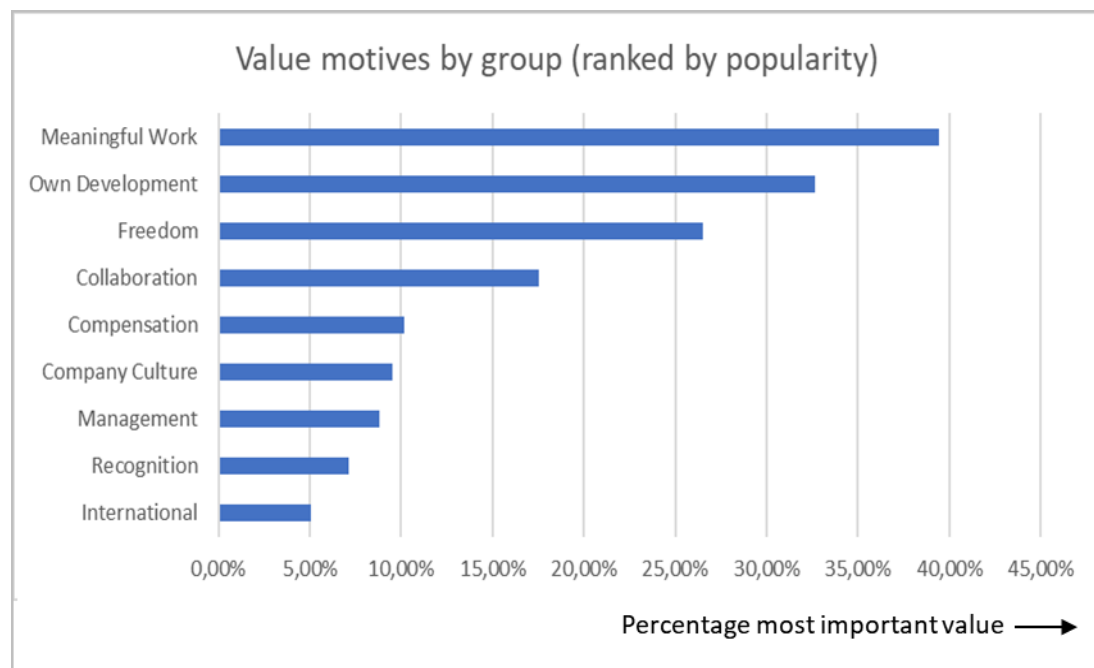


Figure 2.2: Value and motivation themes

The literature indicates that, in general, doing meaningful work is seen as the most important value for employees (Lips-Wiersma & Morris 2009; Schullery 2013). This leads to performance and productivity. This is also valid for Young Business Professionals, but this cohort put much more emphasis on personal development.

Although Meaningful work is most popular theme, Figure 4.2 shows also that having Freedom, including flexibility and autonomy, gets the 3rd place of importance. Freedom includes the possibility to take initiatives.

Int-7: *“I can share opinions, initiatives are appreciated”*.

Only Twenge et al. (2010) see that flexibility is a motivational driver for Young Business Professionals. The research indicates that Freedom is more important than the literature suggests.

While team atmosphere is scoring high, working with and managing other people scores lower. This could mean that individual contribution is preferred over teamwork and pointing to an individualized behaviour, which is in contrast with the literature: Coates (2017) & Baum (2019) suggest that Young Business Professionals would like to work in teams.

External rewards like Compensation and Recognition gets a low score by the respondents (5th place) compared to Meaningful Work and Personal Development.

The literature shows mixed opinions. Research done by Schullery (2013) shows that Young Business Professionals are significantly more interested in extrinsic rewards than other generations. However, Maxwell & Broadbridge (2017) and Gerard (2019) argue that financial compensation is not the most important. Intrinsic motivation is key. And praise is scoring neutral according to Perkune & Licite (2019).

7.3. Purpose of coaching and coaching topics

The research showed that the following coaching themes are preferred by Young Business Professionals (Figure 4.3: Coaching Purpose):

- Personal Development
- Performance optimization
- Cooperation with others
- Goal Setting

This corresponds with what this cohort would value at work. Meaningful Work is most important, which includes Performance Optimization, Cooperation with Others and Goal Setting. And secondly Personal Development. However, the order of importance has changed.

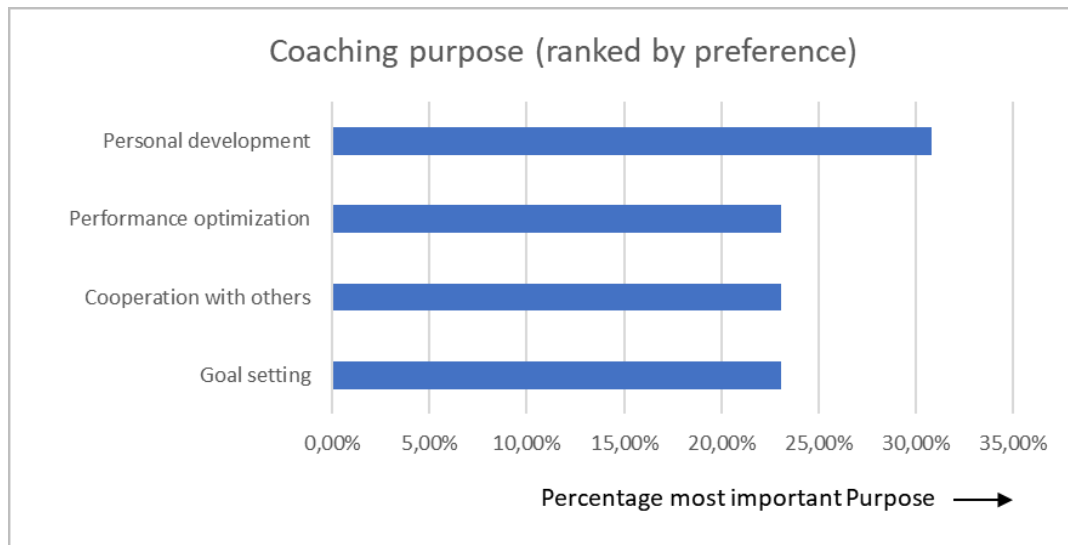


Figure 4.3: Coaching Purpose

Int-4: *“Coaching for my personal career development. Advise where to improve in relation to my ambition”.*

Int-7: *“Grow personally”.*

The literature demonstrates that coaching of emotional and social competences is important (Miao, Humphrey, & Qian, 2016; Walter, Cole, & Humphrey, 2011; Hopkins & Bilimoria, 2008; Law, Wong, Huang, & Li, 2008). That is not, as such, a finding of the research analysis.

When analysing the coaching topics within the five coaching purposes 30 different topics were mentioned. These findings (Figure 4.4: Coaching topics) are consistent with the top ranked coaching purpose: Personal Development. However, leadership ranked on the second place (38.78%) and people management was 3rd (30.61%). This was not mentioned as coaching purpose and scored low in the findings on “Value and motivation”. Where the literature is more generic in describing coaching topics like managerial skills, goal setting and performance, the research findings show that these topics are also favourite by Young Business Professionals. This corresponds with a report by Willyerd (2015), but this research demonstrates that these coaching topics are still preferred.

The interviews revealed that the personal development is threefold: Firstly, being able to do a better job and grow professionally in terms of experience and competences, including leadership and management capabilities.

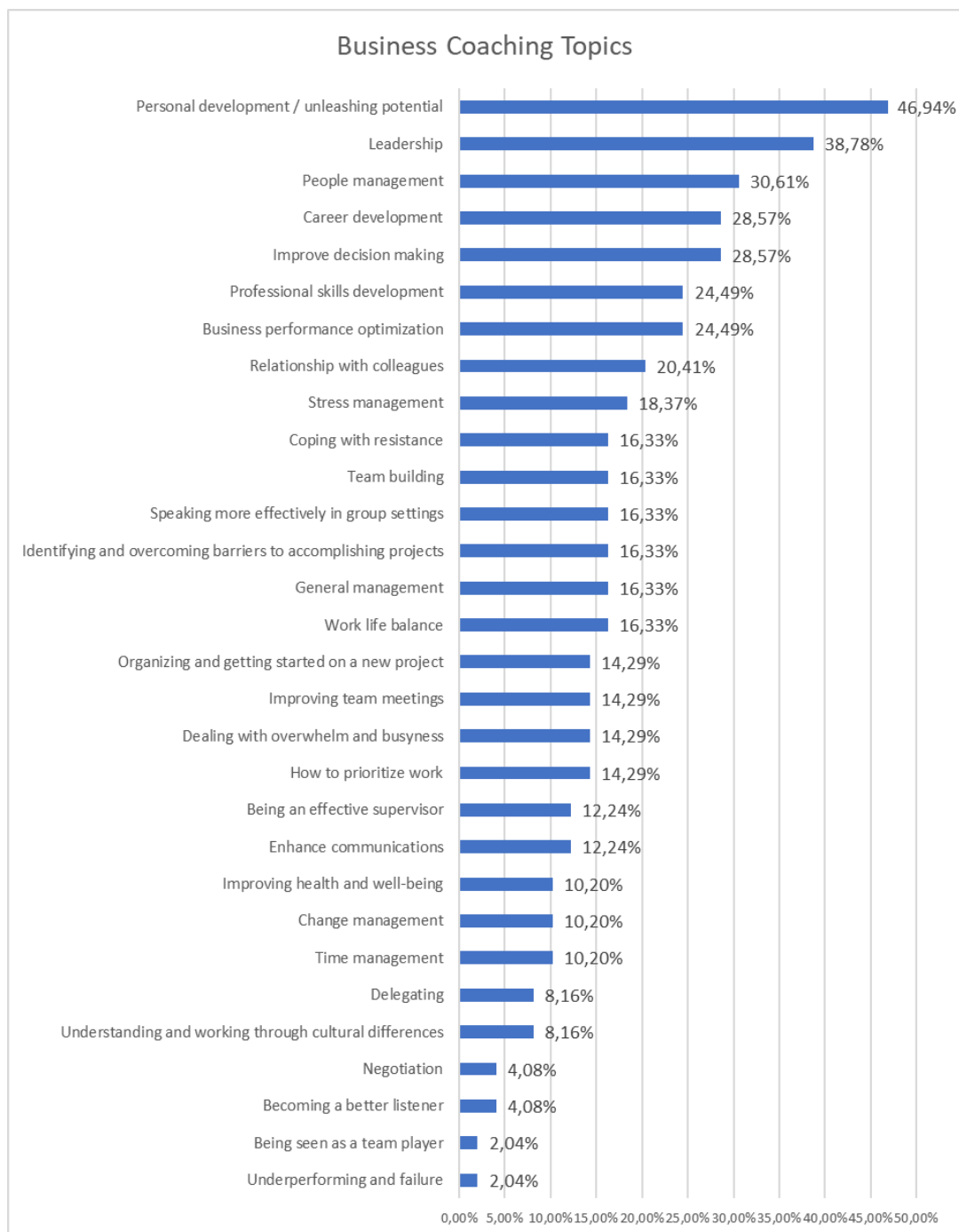


Figure 4.4: Coaching topics

Secondly it is about the human being. Coaching helps to get more visibility, and being known throughout the organization.

Int-11: “I have difficulties with internal politics. It is a man's world here, and I find that difficult to deal with. How do I cope with that in a way that I can still be myself and function in a good way, navigating through this world of big egos”?

Thirdly: perform stronger. They want to get tips about negotiation, manage conflicts, communicate better, financial knowledge, time management, etc.

Young Business Professionals would like a combination of coaching and mentoring.

Making a cross analysis of work value/motivation, coaching purpose and topics the following interrelation becomes visible. (Figure 4.5: Cross analysis: value, purpose and topics).

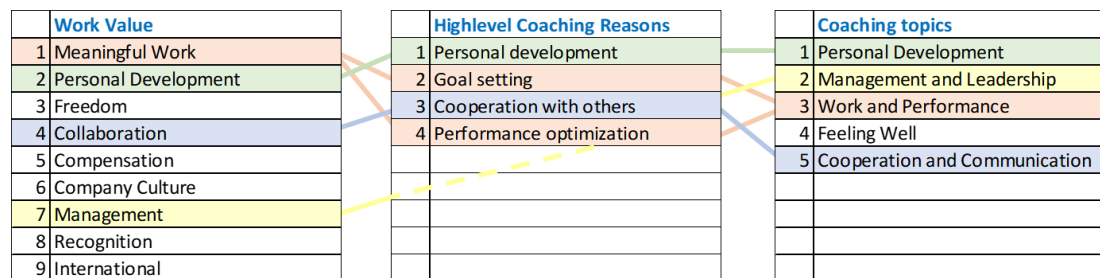


Figure 4.5: Cross analysis: value, purpose and topics

Better management and leadership with better cooperation and communication helps to optimize work performance.

Personal Development scores high on Work Value, Coaching Reasons and Coaching topics. Meaningful work is a top work value and this cohort sees it as coaching topic. The inconsistency sits in Management and leadership, with a “low” score on value, not mentioned as coaching purpose, but scoring high as coaching topic.

7.4. Coaching style, format and set-up

This section covers the analysis about the coaching style, coaching techniques, format, location, duration/frequency and engagement.

7.4.1. Coaching style

The coaching spectrum (Downing 2014) defines the different levels of directiveness and non-directiveness. Respondents were asked to tick the 5 preferred coaching styles. (Figure 4.6: Coaching spectrum) shows that the preference sits on two levels: (1) on the “active” side of non-directive and (2) they also want tools, options and advice, which is much more a directive mentoring style. Interviewees are unanimous: they want the

coach to ask questions, listen and make the coachee to find the answer, but if that does not work, the coach should tell.

Int-6: “If I don't have the knowledge, the coach should be more directive. So, instructive and when we move on and I know more, than moving to the non-directive part.”

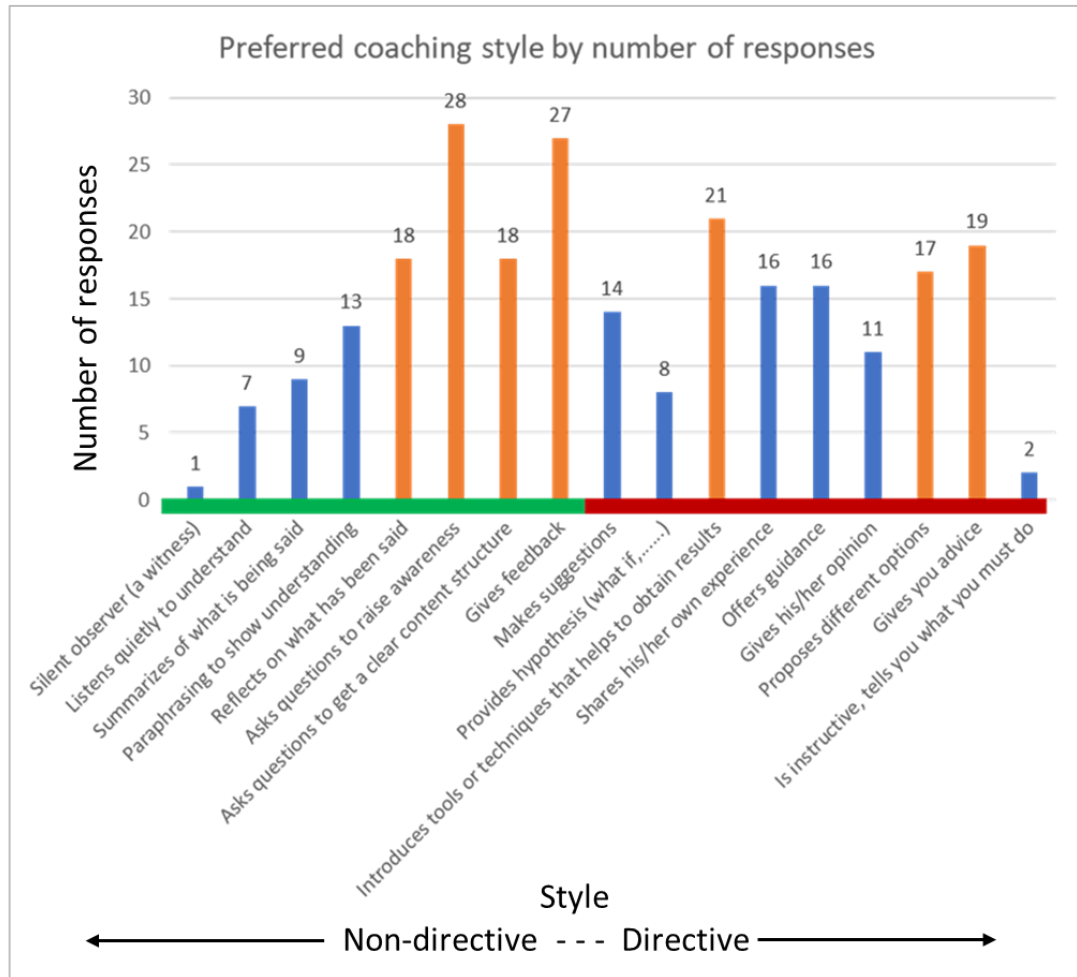


Figure 4.6: Coaching spectrum

Although the literature is similar to the research findings in terms of active listening and giving feedback (De Haan et al. 2011), the difference is in the directive part. The research analysis reveals that if the coachee does not know the answer and the coach is knowledgeable (i.e. understanding the coachee, the wider system and issue), trusted/respected, then the Young Business Professional also expects the coach to be directive and give advice.

3 interviewees argue that pure directive is better, faster and easier.

7.4.2. Coaching dynamic

Coaching can be discussion based or action oriented. Figure 4.7: Action or discussion shows that almost 2/3rd of the Young Business Professionals rather talk about the coaching topic, than doing action-oriented coaching

Int-14: *“I don't like these action-oriented tasks. Just discuss”*.

However, 6 interviewees see the value of actions: it makes thoughts more explicit; it gives more insights, it is easier to remember.

Coach should focus on discussion-based coaching, but need to apply action-based coaching when needed.



Figure 4.7: Action or discussion

This is opposite with the literature. Böhlich (2017) and Grant (2017) demonstrate that the majority of this cohort wants actioned based coaching: learning through exercises.

7.4.3. Level of challenge

Young Business Professionals would like to be challenged because it gives a better understanding of the coaching topic and so it helps to stimulate/encourage to take next steps and develop.

Int-6: *“That is a way to encourage”*.

Also, the literature highlights the importance of challenge. De Haan et al (2011) argues that the more challenge, the better the impact.

However, the research findings indicate that if the challenges are too hard (or too often) it will backfire, making coachees unhappy, or blocks further conversations and making the session not constructive.

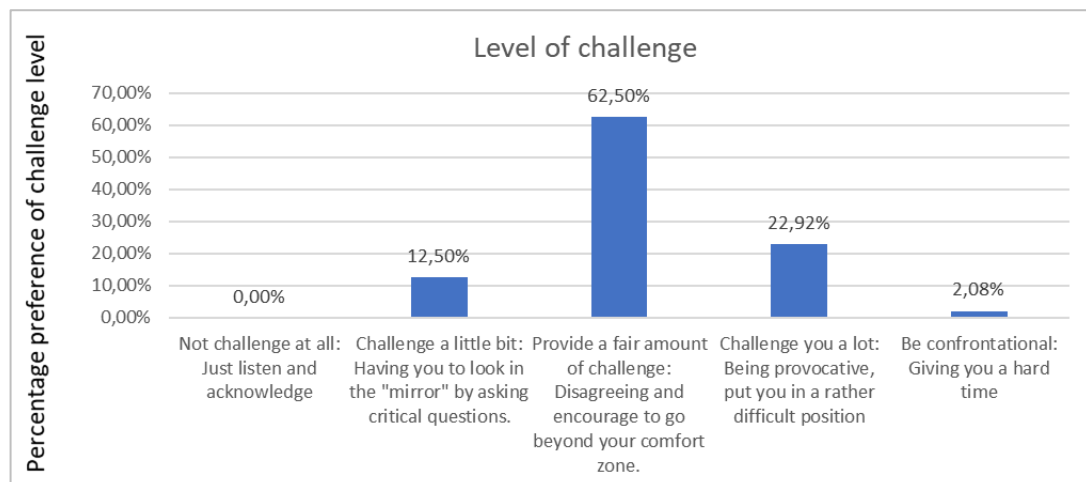


Figure 4.8: Level of challenge

Int-11: “Challenge a lot that puts me in a rather difficult position and the confrontational level are too hard. That would not work for me. That is not constructive”

Figure 4.8: Level of challenge shows that the levels of challenge follow a normal distribution Bell-curve by clustering in the middle of the range (provide a fair amount of challenge is 62.50%).

7.4.4. Format

Millennials are used to digital communications and so the literature suggests that coaches should be prepared to use social media (e.g. Twitter, Linked-In, Skype) for facilitating coaching sessions and not necessarily face-to-face sessions (Brack & Kelly, 2012; Bozer & Sarros, 2012).

The research reveals a different view: 97.96% of the respondents wants face-to-face coaching (Figure 4.9: Session Format Preference). Young Business Professionals find coaching so important that they want a live session. Interviewees argue that it is more intense, the attention by the coach is better, see his/her reaction. Face-to-face builds

better personal relationships and gives the possibility to better elaborate and express feelings.

Int-13: *“Building relationship is better, that does not work with digital media”*.

Analysis showed that coaching is sensitive and emotionally, hence Young Business Professionals would like to have a good relationship with a coach.

Video calls are seen as next best. Some respondents are okay with short phone calls in between the sessions.

1 person finds video conferences acceptable.

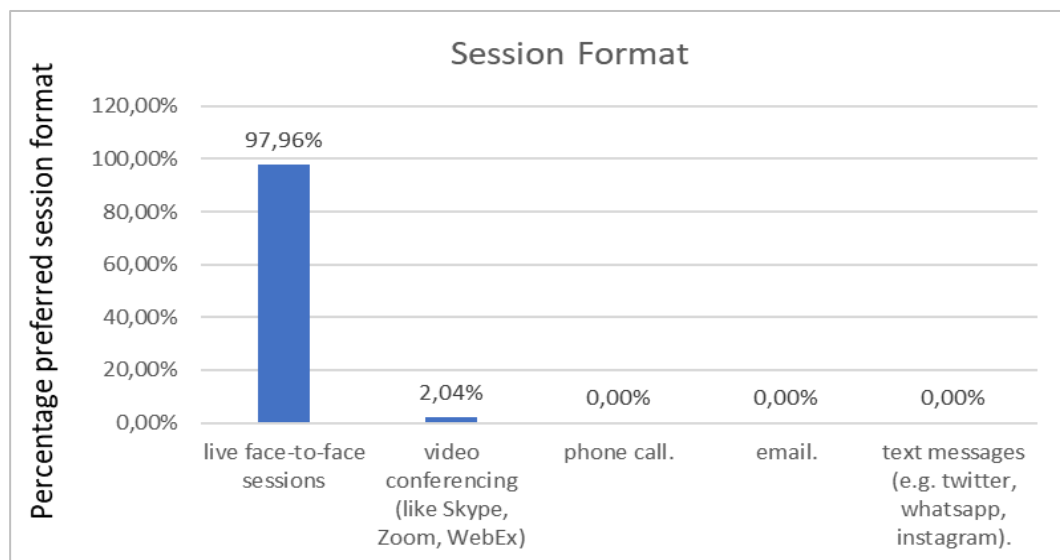
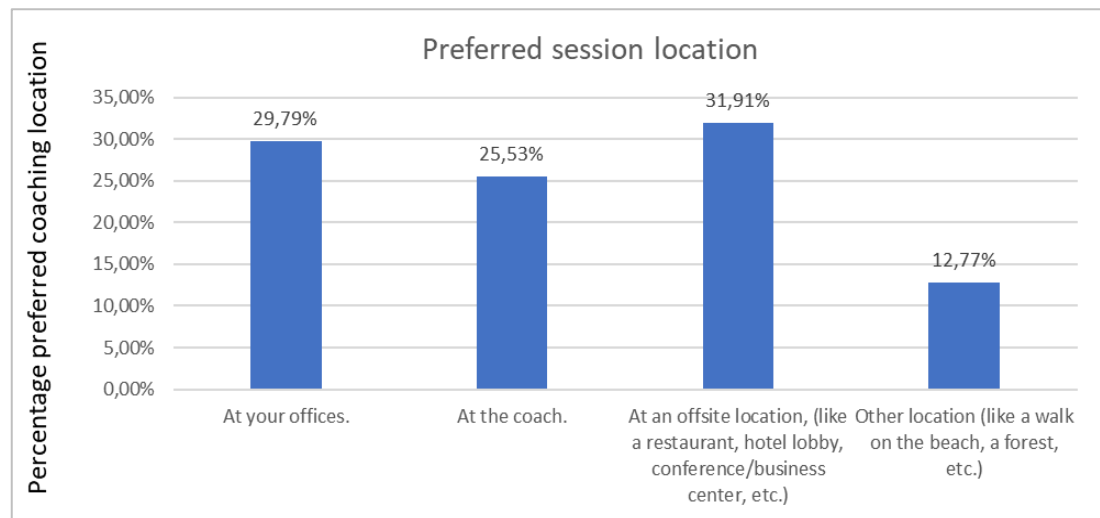


Figure 4.9: Session Format Preference

7.4.5. Location

According to the research, there is no obvious preference for a coaching location. The place can differ, depending on the coachee wish (Figure 4.10: *Session location*). More



important is that *Figure 4.10: Session location*

the location is convenient/comfortable and provides privacy, so that there will be a bigger focus on the coaching topics and opens the mind of the coachee.

The literature is very limited. Franklin (2015) reports that Starbucks is a preferred location.

Some advantages:

- at the coachee's office: *"Coach can see my environment."*
- at coach consultancy bureau: *"Feels the best."*
- At an offsite location: *"Better when it is outside of the office, to free the mind a bit."*
- At another location: *"Going to another place, gives a different feeling (freedom) and that helps".*

7.4.6. 1on1 or group

Figure 4.11: Number of session participants shows that 1on1 coaching is the favorite coaching format by 81.63% of the respondents. Interviewees report that it is because of the private character of coaching.

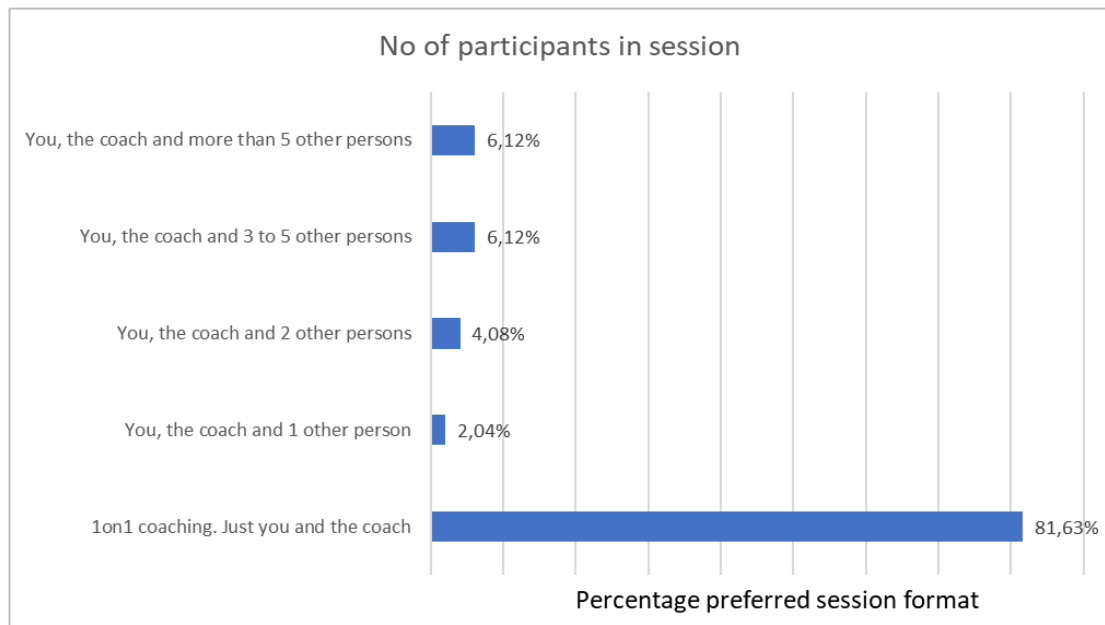


Figure 4.11: Number of session participants

Coaching is about personal development. They want to discuss that freely and openly with a coach only.

Int-1: *“1 on 1 makes for a more personal, intimate setting where you can share your thoughts freely”.*

3 interviewees are OK if there are some other people in the session if they are similar.

Group coaching is seen as useful when it is about team development, to share ideas/opinions or improve relationships.

Int-12: *“If I cannot cope with my colleagues, then I would rather have them in the session”.*

The literature seems more in favor of group-coaching and having peers attending a coaching session (Dutton 2017). Reason for this that Young Business Professionals tend to share everything, and have different ideas about privacy Marangione (2019). But this cohort really insists on privacy because of the confidentiality of personal development.

7.4.7. Session duration

Although Millennials are known for their short attention span, the research reveals (Figure 4.12: Session time) that for 47% of the respondents the best session duration is 90 minutes, followed by an hour (24.29%). The interviewees reason that they need enough time to concentrate on the topic and go as deep as needed. But if the session is too long, they fear loss of concentration. So, rather more shorter sessions, than one larger one.

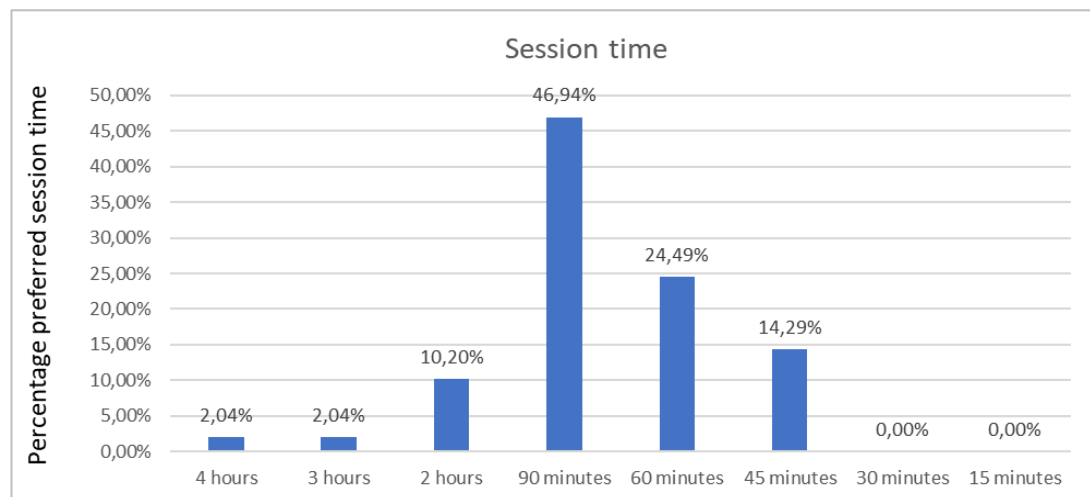


Figure 4.12: Session time

Int-2: “is long enough to reflect on. If it is longer than we may lose concentration. If it is shorter (like 30 minutes) I doubt if we get deep enough”.

In contrast, in the literature, Brack & Kelly (2012) explain that coaching sessions should be short because of the low attention span of Young Business Professionals. The research indicates a different opinion.

7.4.8. Frequency

45% would like to have the sessions on a monthly basis. Figure 4.13: Frequency shows rather more time in between the sessions, than less time, because a lower frequency allows more time to try-out/apply/implement things they have discussed during the session.

Some suggest to have telephone calls in the meantime.

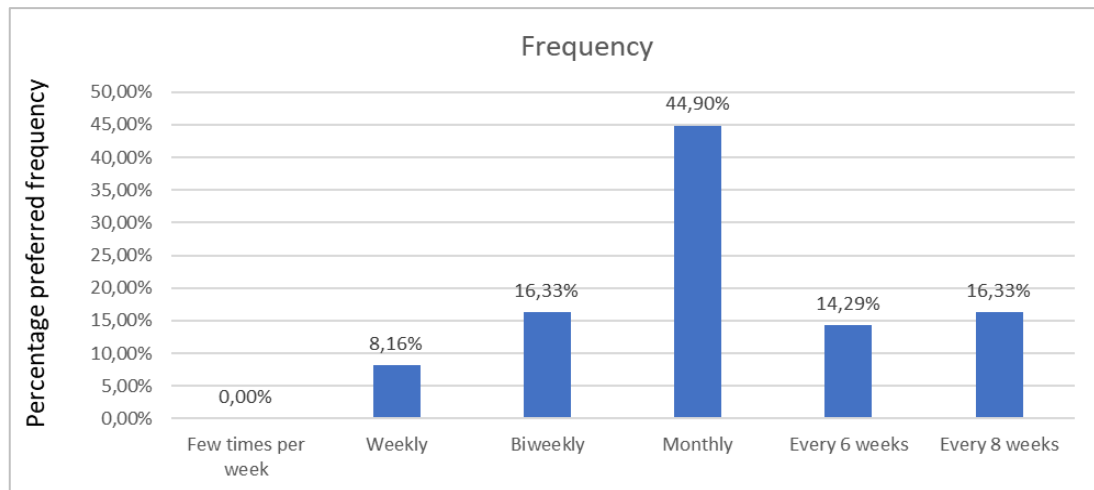


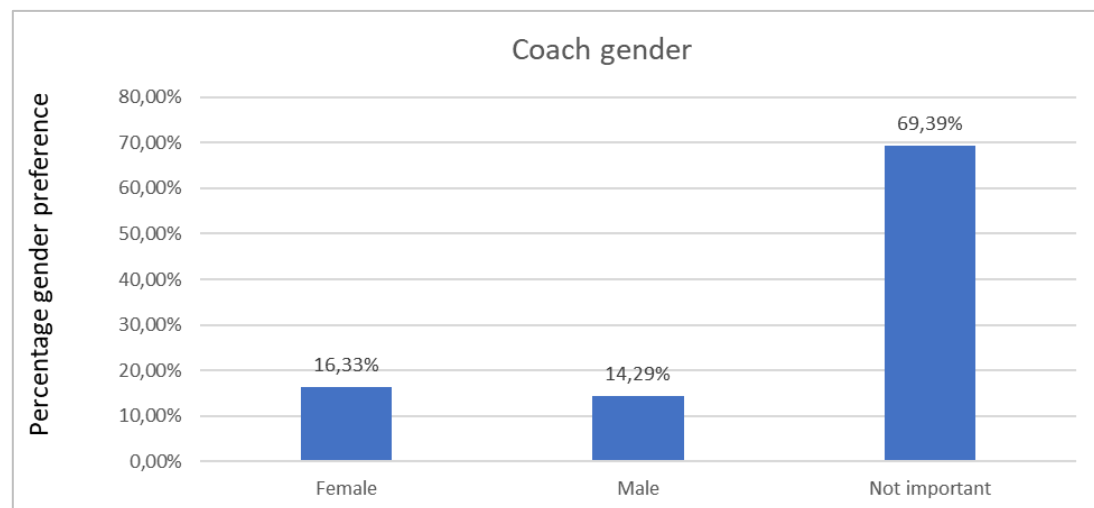
Figure 4.13: Frequency

Int-9: “Time in between the sessions is needed to reflect, implement, try out, etc.”

7.5. Profile and expectations of a coach

7.5.1. Gender

For the majority of the participants (69.39%) gender of the coach is not important (Figure 4.14: Gender of the coach). It is about knowledge, skills, professionalism and



personality.

Figure 4.14: Gender of the coach

This finding is in correlation with the literature: De Haan et al. (2011) and Chin et al. (2015) show that there is no statistically significant preference towards male or female coaches.

	Male Coach	Female Coach
Male Respondent	3	2
Female Respondent	2	2

Figure 4.15: Correlation on gender preference

Nevertheless, the research findings show that 30% of the respondents do express a preference for a male or female coach. But there is no correlation found between gender of coach and coachee. 3 male coachees like a male coach, and 2 male coachees like a female coach (Figure 4.15: Correlation on gender preference).

Int-1(female respondent): *“As a woman, I feel more comfortable talking to a woman”*.

Int-9 (male respondent): *“in general, woman listen better”*.

Hence, gender selection seems more important than suggested.

7.5.2. Age

The literature shows that there are no statistically significant differences found between the age and the quality of the coach (Gray, Ekinci & Goregaokar, 2011; De Haan et al., 2011). And although 19% of the respondents say that age does not matter,

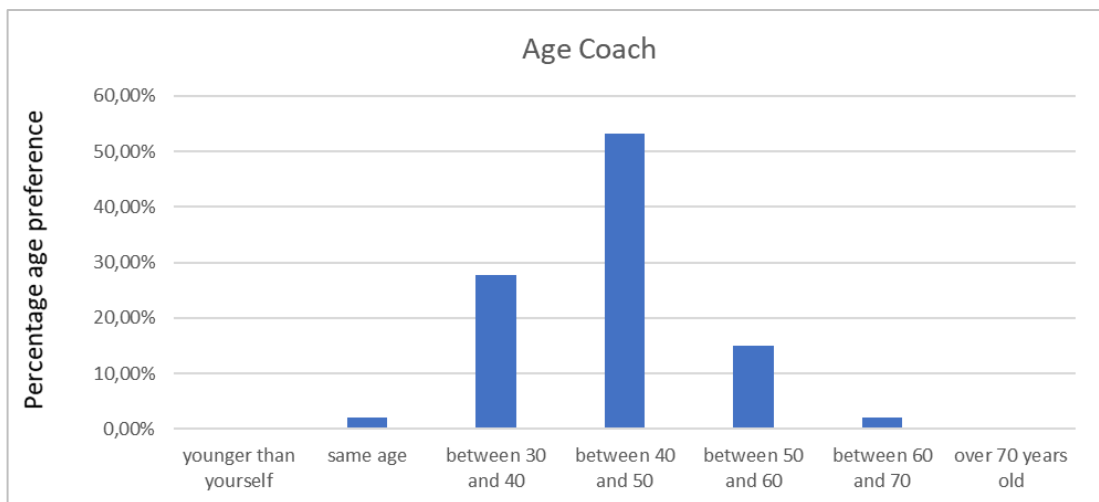


Figure 4.16: Preferred age of a coach

as it is competence, knowledge and professionalism that counts, Figure 4.16: Preferred age of a coach shows none of the respondents like to have a coach younger than themselves.

The preferred coach should be older because of his/her experience. Young Business Professionals want to learn something from a more experienced person.

Int-10: “I think I will respect someone more if someone has learned more life lessons than me but can still relate to my problems. For me ideally this would be someone who is about 10 years older.”

The research also indicates that the age gap should not be too big. If the coach is “too old”, there is a fear that they are not up to date with today’s business world. That is why the favorite age is between 40 and 50.

Int-5: “But not someone that does not know the latest trends and developments”.

7.5.3. Background and experience

The analysis suggests that the background of the coach depends on the topic. Many respondents would like to have a combination of different backgrounds. Most favorable is a coach with a business background, but the coach should also be inspirational (Figure 4.17: Background coach).

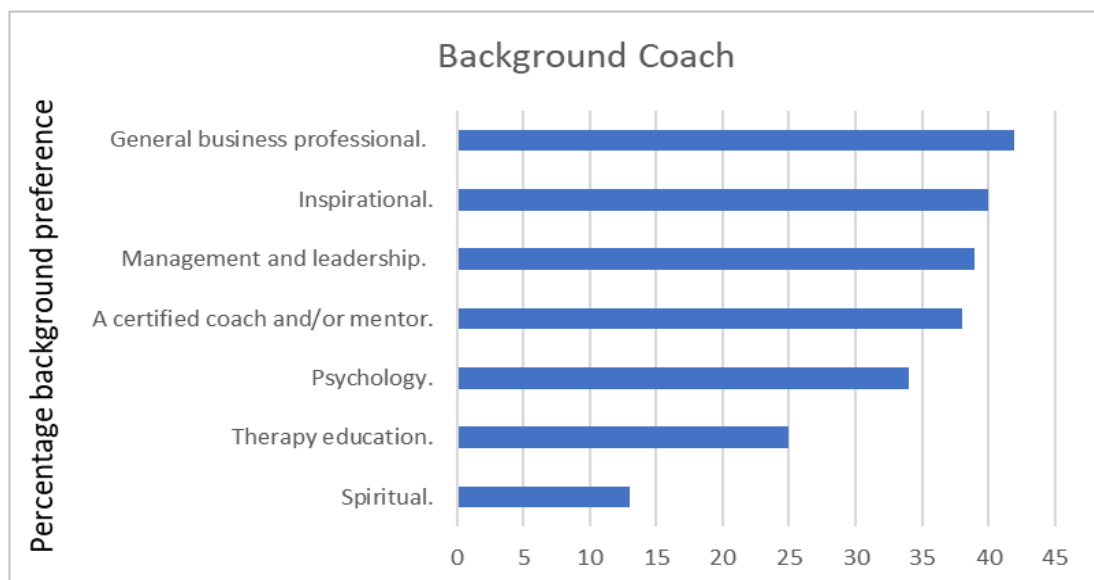


Figure 4.17: Background coach

However, asking specifically what experience is important 42% wants a coaching background.

Int-4: “relations between people are more important than the business”.

57% of the interviewees find it important that the coach has both coaching and business experiences.

A background in psychology and being a certified coach are not the main criteria. Being a certified coach has the 4th place and psychology on the 5th place.

The literature shows a different opinion. Olson & Tan (2018) explain that being certified is a quality label. Vandaveer et al. (2016) and Bozer et al. (2014) argue that a coach with a background as psychologist brings a significantly deeper level of knowledge. The respondents rather have a business professional.

Interviewees gave the following reasons for

- A business professional: “A coach with a business background, because he should know how the business works, when coaching me”.
- Inspirational: “To make me think bigger, to get me out of the box”.
- Manager/leader: “I rather have a team leader/manager who has a lot of experience. Because that plays an important role. I would like to get examples”.
- Psychologist: “Because he has knowledge about the human side and the brains”
- Certified Coach: I need someone who understand the human being, and not the business.

7.5.4. Social profile

Bolton & Grover Bolton (2009) distinguish four types of social styles: Analytical, Amiable, Expressive and Driver.

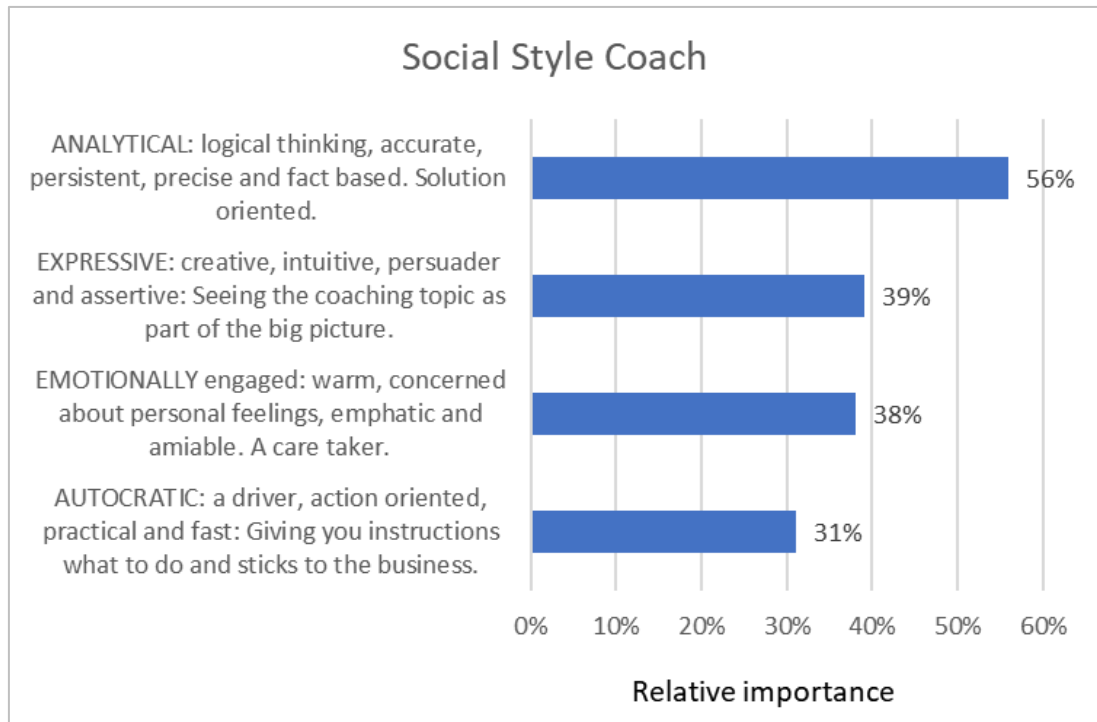


Figure 4.18: Social Style

A coach that is fact based and analyses the topic in a logic way is the preferred style (Figure 4.18: Social Style) But coaches must also be expressive and emotionally engaged.

Int-8: *“I appreciate empathy, but it is not a must for me. An analytical coach can help to solve the issue in a pragmatic way”.*

This cohort would like to have a coach with a mixture of styles. Young Business Professionals also want autocratic style when needed.

Int-5: *“A coach should only be autocratic if I don't know the answer”.*

The literature has different opinions. Either an emotional oriented coach (Boyatzis & Jack, 2018; Boyatzis et al., 2015; Passarelli, 2015), or an analytical person as coach (De Haan et al., 2011)

7.5.5. Expectations

This group of respondents expects to have a trusted relationship. The coach should be a good listener and asking the right question to understand well the coachee and the related topics/issues. This should be combined with business knowledge.

The coach should help to improve self-awareness and personal development, by getting the coachee out of a comfort zone, giving new insights, provide feedback/guidance and some challenge. And, if needed, give advice.

8. Conclusions

The aim of this dissertation was to explore how Young Business Professionals in Western Europe would like to be coached in business environment.

The reason for this is that Young Business Professionals will be the largest group of business professionals (PWC, 2011).

As Young Business Professionals are characterized as being different (Stewart et al., 2017; O'Connor & Raile, 2015), the rationale of the dissertation is to explore how this cohort would like to be coached. The broad range of sources and results of the rigorous analysis of the survey as well as the interviews has led to new insights contributing to the current knowledge on this topic.

8.1. Conclusions of the research objective and questions

8.1.1. Value and motivation

The research indicates that doing meaningful work is the most important a value driver for Young Business Professionals, followed by personal development, which seems more important for Young Business professionals than other generations.

This cohort also gives the impression that they want more freedom, flexibility and is less eager to collaborate. Although they prefer a good team atmosphere, they appear more self-oriented than other generations.

Compensation and recognition show less important and intrinsic rewarding (meaningful work, opportunities for personal development) looks preferred.

8.1.2. Purpose and topics

There is evidence that Young Business Professionals would like to be coached. The purpose of coaching points in the direction of Personal Development, Performance

Optimization, Goal Setting and Cooperation with others. Performance Optimization and Goal Setting are parts of Doing Meaningful work. Although collaboration does not score high as value/motivator for work (they have the tendency to work more individually), the research analysis suggests that Young Business Professionals have an interest in being coached about cooperation with others. This is also noticed when studying the list of preferred coaching topics. Items like people management, relationship with colleagues and team building score relatively high. Another finding is that topics like Leadership and People Management are favorite for coaching.

8.1.3. Style and format

With regards to coaching style, the analysis reveals that Young Business Professionals prefer discussion-based sessions, rather than action oriented. The coaching discussion should be, in first instance, in a non-directive style. It is suggested that the coach reflects on what has been said, asks questions to raise awareness or get more structure and gives feedback. This discussion may include a fair level of challenge to encourage the coachee. However, the analysis shows that Young Business Professionals would like to get introduced to new tools or techniques and that the coach gives her/his opinion and advise, when the coachee does not know the answer. It is suggested that a coach should balance the non-directive style with a directive style depending on the response of the coachee.

There is evidence that Young Business Professionals would favor a classic way of being coached. Despite their preference of digital communication, their short attention span and their different attitude towards privacy, they find live 1on1 coaching at a private location with enough time (around 90 minutes per session) to discuss. The reason for this is that coaching is seen as an important topic about the future of the coachee. That requires time and dedication.

8.1.4. Profile of the coach

The research analysis suggests that the choice of gender of the coach maybe more important than is assumed. It also shows that none of the Young Business Professionals would like to have a coach that younger than them. They prefer a coach

that is older and has experience in business, but is also inspirational and has leadership capabilities.

The research analysis shows that this cohort rather has an analytical oriented coach than a coach that is emotionally engaged. However, many respondents welcome a mixture of social styles and see the benefit of an autocratic coach who gives instructions in case the coachee does not know the answer.

8.1.5. In general

When it comes to coaching, there is evidence that Young Business Professionals are fundamentally not different than other generations. Like other human beings, they want attention and time to discuss their future thoroughly with an experienced coach.

8.2. Generalization of findings

Generalization in terms of transferability (Polit & back, 2010) for this research topic is possible. The number of Young Business Professionals is growing and they need to be coached and managed. This will not only be done by professional coaches, but also managers and peers play a role here. Besides this, the dissertation includes some general coaching principles, applicable for coaching other people.

8.3. Originality/Value

This project is one of the first of its kind to study holistically the preferences of Young Business Professionals with regards to coaching, by looking at how work value and motivation are related to the purpose of coaching and related coaching topics, linked to the format and style of coaching and profile of the coach.

8.4. Limitations

This project focused on Young Business Professionals between 25 and 30, with higher education in Western Europe, which is a cultural subset of the entire global cohort.

The scope of the project was big, because of the holistic approach. The limitation of 10000 words made it not possible to analysis all aspects in great detail which has led to a number of basic, yet relevant findings.

8.5. Suggestions for coaches

This dissertation can be used as an initial guidance to keep coaching relevant for this cohort, as it contains a lot of scientifically supported practical information.

8.6. Recommendations for future research

This project was a first step in exploring how Young Business Professionals would like to be coached. It generated new, but basic insights. Each research question in this dissertation asks for more answers and deeper analysis. More work needs to be done with cross references: e.g. how do education and gender impact the choice of the coach. What is the effect of coaching on leadership styles? Besides that, it would be good to look at geographical and cultural differences. To what extent are these findings valid for other continents.

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10. Appendix 2: Overview demographics respondents

	Education	Gender	Level	Type	Interview
1	Bachelor ICT	M	Bachelor	Technical	
2	Bachelor of Business Administration	M	Bachelor	Business	
3	Bachelor of Business Administration	F	Bachelor	Business	
4	Bachelor SME Management	M	Bachelor	Business	
5	Bsc Biomedical Science	F	Bachelor	Technical	
6	BSc Chemical Engineering	M	Bachelor	Technical	Yes
7	BSc Computer Science	F	Bachelor	Technical	
8	BSc Computer Science	M	Bachelor	Technical	
9	BSc Forensic Psychiatry	F	Bachelor	Other	
10	BSc Industrial Design	M	Bachelor	Technical	Yes
11	BSc Software Engineer	M	Bachelor	Technical	
12	BSc Software Engineer	M	Bachelor	Technical	
13	BSc Software Engineer	M	Bachelor	Technical	
14	Master Painting Conservation-Restoration	F	Master	Other	
15	Master Linguistics	F	Master	Other	Yes
16	Master of Architecture	F	Master	Other	Yes
17	Master Politics	F	Master	Other	Yes
18	Masters in Business Administration	M	Master	Business	
19	MSc Applied Economic Sciences	M	Master	Business	
20	MSc Applied Economic Sciences	F	Master	Business	
21	MSc Business	F	Master	Business	
22	MSc Business Analytics	F	Master	Business	
23	MSc Business Economics	M	Master	Business	
24	MSc Business economics	M	Master	Business	Yes
25	MSc Chemical Engineering	M	Master	Technical	
26	MSc Chemical Engineering	M	Master	Technical	Yes
27	MSc Communication	F	Master	Business	
28	MSc Communication	F	Master	Business	
29	MSc Competitive Intelligence	F	Master	Business	
30	MSc Economics	M	Master	Business	
31	MSc Economics	M	Master	Business	
32	MSc Electromechanical Engineering	M	Master	Technical	Yes
33	MSc Environmental Engineering	F	Master	Technical	
34	MSc Healthy Ageing	F	Master	Other	
35	MSc Healthy Ageing	F	Master	Other	
36	MSc HR	F	Master	Other	
37	MSc Industrial Engineering	M	Master	Technical	Yes
38	MSC Industrial Science	M	Master	Technical	Yes
39	MSc International Development Studies	F	Master	Business	
40	MSc International Relations	F	Master	Business	
41	MSc Law	F	Master	Other	
42	MSc Mathematics	M	Master	Technical	
43	MSc Mechanical Engineering	M	Master	Technical	
44	MSc Medicine	F	Master	Other	
45	MSc Operations Management / Logistics	F	Master	Business	Yes
46	MSc Organization Studies	M	Master	Business	
47	MSc Psychology	F	Master	Other	Yes
48	MSc Supply Chain Management	M	Master	Business	Yes
49	MSc Supply Chain Management	F	Master	Business	Yes

11. Appendix 3: Research questions (Interview and survey)

		Survey	Interview
Q1	What is your education?	Open question	Open question
Q2	What is your gender?	Select the answer	Not asked (answer by observation)
	<i>Male</i>		
	<i>Female</i>		
	<i>Other</i>		
Q3	Have you ever been coached in a business context?	Not asked	Open question
	<i>If so, can you describe your experience?</i>		
	<i>What did you appreciate?</i>		
	<i>What could the coach have done more of?</i>		
Q4	What do you value most in your work / at your company?	Select 5 answers	Asked this as open question and WHY
	<i>Adding value and contribute to the success of the company</i>		
	<i>Building relationships with colleagues</i>		
	<i>Cooperation and collaboration across groups</i>		
	<i>Culture of honesty and integrity</i>		
	<i>Doing meaningful work</i>		
	<i>Effectiveness of Supervisor</i>		
	<i>Empowerment</i>		
	<i>Feeling respected</i>		
	<i>Flexible schedules</i>		
	<i>General job satisfaction</i>		
	<i>Getting a competitive salary</i>		
	<i>Getting responsibility</i>		
	<i>Getting the opportunity to learn and develop</i>		
	<i>Good benefit packages</i>		
	<i>Having autonomy</i>		
	<i>Having the freedom to do what is good for the company</i>		
	<i>Having variety and change at work</i>		
	<i>Having you or your work recognized</i>		
	<i>Helping others</i>		
	<i>Managing other people</i>		
	<i>Quick career development</i>		
	<i>Taking risks</i>		
	<i>Team atmosphere</i>		
	<i>Team work</i>		
	<i>The reputation of the company</i>		
	<i>Traveling for work</i>		
	<i>Other (please specify)</i>		
Q5	If you need coaching, why would you need it?	Not asked	Open question

		Survey	Interview
Q6	What would be your top 5 business topics you would like to be coached on?		
	<i>Becoming a better listener</i>		
	<i>Being an effective supervisor</i>		
	<i>Being seen as a team player</i>		
	<i>Business performance optimization</i>		
	<i>Career development</i>		
	<i>Change management</i>		
	<i>Conflict resolution</i>		
	<i>Coping with resistance</i>		
	<i>Dealing with overwhelm and busyness</i>		
	<i>Delegating</i>		
	<i>Enhance communications</i>		
	<i>General management</i>		
	<i>How to prioritize work</i>		
	<i>Identifying and overcoming barriers to accomplishing projects</i>		
	<i>Improve decision making</i>		
	<i>Improving health and well-being</i>		
	<i>Improving team meetings</i>		
	<i>Leadership</i>		
	<i>Organizing and getting started on a new project</i>		
	<i>People management</i>		
	<i>Personal development / unleashing potential</i>		
	<i>Professional skills development</i>		
	<i>Relationship with colleagues</i>		
	<i>Speaking more effectively in group settings</i>		
	<i>Stress management</i>		
	<i>Team building</i>		
	<i>Time management</i>		
	<i>Underperforming and failure</i>		
	<i>Understanding and working through cultural differences</i>		
	<i>Work life balance</i>		
	<i>Other (please specify)</i>		
		Select 5 answers	Asked this as open question and WHY
Q7	What would be the preferred coaching style? WHY?		
	<i>Whitness - silence</i>		
	<i>Listening quietly to understand</i>		
	<i>Summerizing</i>		
	<i>Paraphrasing to show understanding</i>		
	<i>Reflecting on what is being said</i>		
	<i>Ask questions to raise awareness</i>		
	<i>Questions for content structure</i>		
	<i>Giving feedback</i>		
	<i>Making suggestions</i>		
	<i>Hypothesis (what-if)</i>		
	<i>Introducing tool or technique that helps to obtain results</i>		
	<i>Sharing experience</i>		
	<i>Offering guidance</i>		
	<i>give opinion</i>		
	<i>Provide options</i>		
	<i>Give advice</i>		
	<i>Instructions</i>		
		Select 5 answers	Asked this as open question and WHY

		Survey	Interview
Q8	What would be the preferred coaching dynamic? WHY?		
	<i>The coaching session should be...</i>		
	<i>... action oriented. Making use of hands-on activities like: making drawings, simulation, role play, etc.</i>	Give percentage for action and discussion (total is 100%)	Asked
	<i>... discussion based. Talk about the topic, brainstorming, philosophic, etc</i>		
	Where would you put the emphasis? What are the criteria? Is this topic related?	Not asked	Asked
Q9	What would be level of challenge during the session? WHY?		
	<i>The coach should...</i>		
	<i>not challenge at all: Just listen and acknowledge.</i>	Select the answer	Asked this as open question and WHY
	<i>challenge a little bit: Ask critical questions.</i>		
	<i>provide a fair amount of challenge: Disagreeing and encourage to go</i>		
	<i>challenge you a lot: Being provocative, put you in a rather difficult be confrontational: Giving you a hard time.</i>		
Q10	What coaching format would you prefer most? WHY?		
	<i>live face-to-face sessions.</i>	Select the answer	Asked this as open question and WHY
	<i>video conferencing, like Skype, Zoom, Webex, etc.</i>		
	<i>phone call.</i>		
	<i>email.</i>		
	<i>text messages (e.g. twitter, whatsapp).</i>		
	<i>Other</i>		
Q11	If the coaching session is face-to-face, where should the session take place? WHY?		
	<i>at your offices.</i>	Select the answer	Asked this as open question and WHY
	<i>at the coach.</i>		
	<i>at an offsite location, (like a restaurant, hotel lobby,</i>		
	<i>other location (like a walk on the beach, a forest, etc)</i>		
Q12	Would rather do 1on1 coaching or group coaching? WHY?		
	<i>1on1 coaching. Just you and the coach</i>	Select the answer	Asked this as open question and WHY
	<i>You, the coach and 1 other person</i>		
	<i>You, the coach and 2 other persons</i>		
	<i>You, the coach and 3 to 5 other persons</i>		
	<i>You, the coach and more than 5 other persons</i>		
Q13	How long should one coaching session last? WHY?		
	<i>4 hours</i>	Select the answer	Asked this as open question and WHY
	<i>3 hours</i>		
	<i>2 hours</i>		
	<i>1,5 hours (90 minutes)</i>		
	<i>60 minutes</i>		
	<i>45 minutes</i>		
	<i>30 minutes</i>		
	<i>15 minutes</i>		

		Survey	Interview
Q14	What should the frequency of coaching sessions be? On what depends that?		
	<i>Every 8 weeks.</i>	Select the answer	Asked this as open question and WHY
	<i>Every 6 weeks</i>		
	<i>Monthly</i>		
	<i>Biweekly</i>		
	<i>Weekly</i>		
	<i>Few times per week</i>		
	<i>Other</i>		
Q15	Would you rather have a man or a woman as coach? WHY?		
	<i>man</i>	Select the answer	Asked this as open question and WHY
	<i>woman</i>		
	<i>not relevant</i>		
Q16	What age range for a coach would you prefer? WHY?		
	<i>younger than yourself</i>	Select the answer	Asked this as open question and WHY
	<i>same age</i>		
	<i>between 35 and 40</i>		
	<i>between 40 and 50</i>		
	<i>between 50 and 60</i>		
	<i>between 60 and 70</i>		
	<i>over 70</i>		
Q17	What kind of background should your preferred coach profile have? WHY?		
	<i>business professional</i>	Give percentage for each profile (total is 100%)	Asked this as open question and WHY
	<i>management and leadership background</i>		
	<i>spiritual</i>		
	<i>psychology</i>		
	<i>therapist</i>		
	<i>be a certified coach or mentor</i>		
	<i>inspirational</i>		
	<i>other</i>		
Q18	What is more important for you? WHY?		
	<i>Lots of experience in coaching</i>	Select the answer	Asked this as open question and WHY
	<i>Lots of experience in business</i>		
Q19	What should be the (emotional) style of the preferred coach? WHY?		
	<i>The coach to be ...</i>	Give percentage for each style (total is 100%)	Asked this as open question and WHY
	<i>... emotionally engaged , warm, concerned about personal feelings and amiable</i>		
	<i>... analytical , logical thinking, accurate, persistent and fact based and solution oriented</i>		
	<i>... expressive , creative, intuitive, persuader and assertive</i>		
	<i>... a driver , action oriented, practical, a leader that gives advise or instructions and sticks to the business</i>		
Q20	What is your view on “pop-up” coaching. Once a month a “coaching-café” for short coaching sessions on easy topics?		
	<i>It will never work</i>	Select the answer	Asked this as open question and WHY
	<i>Doubtful, it may work fro some coaching topics</i>		
	<i>Is there real value by doing this?</i>		
	<i>Pretty good idea, I see the benefits</i>		
	<i>A very good idea</i>		
Q21	What would you expect from a coach?	Open question	Open question
Q22	What else would like to share with regards to coaching in a business environment	Open question	Open question

12. Appendix 4: Quotes

“The young business professionals, like every other, are a product of a societal system”.

“Every generation has their weird quirks, social movements, and fads, and millennials are no exception”.

“Instead of trying to find a path to follow, today's most successful professionals seek to acquire the right skills to set themselves up for advancement”. - Terri Tierney Clark

“... the Gen Y paradox: an entire generation of employees with the attitude that they know how to communicate with anybody, anytime, anywhere, and have the tools to back them up, but who need more help with critical thinking than prior generations in pulling meaning and value from all those communications.” - Bill Jensen

“Get out of your comfort zone and explore your potential.” – Kimmy Xiao

“Success is about being able to shut out all the noise in life and honestly listen to yourself.” – Ben Barry

“You can do everything on your bucket list, but you can't do it all at once. Prioritize and focus on one career path or business opportunity at a time.” – Eric Janssen

“You have an idea, a dream? Go for it, don't settle and don't let anyone tell you that you can't – opportunity is everywhere.” – Chrissy Sgourakis

“Make sure you have a mentor in your industry; someone who is objective and can offer honest feedback. Don't rely on family and friends for this.” – Mark Gatto

“Focus your time on building meaningful relationships. You can be the smartest person in the room, but if nobody wants to work with you, that doesn't matter.” – Mogo