
STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES ON THE IMPACT OF THE COACHING COURSE

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Abstract

Feedback is essential in the communication process, at the organizational level, and therefore must be based on facts and not on their interpretation, that is why we believe that the university can create coaching programs for policy makers, for teachers and students.

The question we ask ourselves and to which we want to find an answer in the hereby article is related to the role of coaching in the academic world, and in particular, to the impact of the coaching course on the perception of students.

This study examines the social perception of the actors in the university system, establishes the positive and negative aspects of teaching coaching in the higher education system, all these from the students' perspective. The teaching of coaching courses will lead to the students' increase of awareness regarding their strengths and their needs of development. This research was conducted in ASE Bucharest, namely on the students attending the Business Coaching course.

Keywords: Coaching course, academic coaching, impact, students, awareness

JEL Classification: I20, I21, I29, I23

Literature review

Researches claim that, the best strategy in supporting students is the implementation of additional instruction and intervention strategies like coaching courses, which focus mainly on self-regulation and knowledge construction (Glenn, 2010). Recently, scholars started to study the impact and effectiveness of academic coaching in higher education institutions. According to researches, academic coaching courses increase students' awareness, engagement as well as performance (Katamei and Omwono, 2015). The model of academic coaching has as basis two theories: that of self-regulation (Boekaerts, 1999) and the constructivist theory (Piaget, 1953). The above mentioned theories provide the structure which outlines the procedure through which, students can increase their self-confidence and determination to succeed having as final goal the better administration of their knowledge construction process (Loyens et al. 2008). Through academic coaching, students can better control their knowledge with the help of their coach (Bettinger and Baker, 2013). The

partnership is complex, the coach assesses the student and offers feedback, at the same time, the student managing by themselves the learning experience (Procopie, Bumbac, Giușcă, Vasilcovschi, 2015). Also, according to Van Nieuwerburgh, (2012), the foundation of higher education coaching course implies a student-coach relationship built mainly on trust and confidentiality. Robinson and Gahagan (2010) consider that there are three major steps that higher education coaching courses imply: (1) goal setting, (2) self-assessment (regulation), and (c) reflection (to develop or improve skills).

Methodology

In order to assess the Business Coaching Course, between 15 to 30 March, a census type research was conducted on all students in the Master of Business Administration on Commerce, from the I-st and II-nd years of study, students who attended or are attending the above mentioned course. This research aims to identify the perceptions and attitudes of students towards the Business Coaching Course.

The objectives relate to:

- Measuring the impact of the course on students;
- Evaluating of course attendance usefulness for educational and personal goals of respondents;
- Identifying differences that students have experienced after attending the course;
- Quantification of the degree of importance given to the benefits obtained by students after completing the course.

The research started from the following assumptions/ hypothesis:

- There are significant differences among respondents about the impact that the course has on students.
- There are significant differences between respondents regarding the assessment of the usefulness of attending the course for educational and personal goals;
- There are differences between respondents on the degree of importance of the benefits obtained by students after completing the course.
- There are differences between respondents on the appreciation of the Business Coaching.

The research was based on a questionnaire with eight different types of questions: 3 matrix questions, a rating scale question, a closed one with several answers and 3 closed questions with one correct answer. The sample size was 110 persons, which is considered representative for the entire collective studied, taking into account the comprehensive approach in addressing the study. The sample structure is reflected in the table no. 1 below.

Tabel no. 1: Sample structure by genre

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	female	76	69.1	69.1	69.1
	male	34	30.9	30.9	100.0
	Total	110	100.0	100.0	

The data were processed using SPSS version 23 and for the analysis were used various methods: analysis of the frequencies and structures, medium, standard deviations,

correlation, analysis of variance (ANOVA) test F and T, as well as comparisons of averages by testing a sample.

Results and discussions

The questionnaire contained a single closed, multiple choice question, namely, interviewees were put in a position to choose several possible answers regarding the description of the differences they have experienced as a result of attending coaching courses. Respondents chose from the following 6 variants: 1. Improved confidence; 2. Improved organization, goal-setting, or priority-setting; 3. Improved emotional regulation, stress management; 4. The feeling of being supported; 5. Better learning strategies or information storage and 6. Better communication. Table No. 2, below, shows that most of the options are directed to the improvement of the organization, or goal setting priorities (24% of all responses), the improvement the communication (23.3% of all responses) and the increase of self-confidence (20.1% of all responses). Lower frequencies were registered by the feeling of being supported (6% of total responses) and emotional stress management (7.2% of all responses). Indeed, coaching course focuses on learning how to prioritize things, on the gain of perspective, on improving skills and better organizing and managing in general.

Table no. 2: Frequencies question with multiple answers

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Experienced differences ^a	1.00	64	20.1%	58.2%
	2.00	78	24.5%	70.9%
	3.00	23	7.2%	20.9%
	4.00	19	6.0%	17.3%
	5.00	60	18.9%	54.5%
	6.00	74	23.3%	67.3%
Total		318	100.0%	289.1%
a. Group				

Questions 1, 2 and 7 are of the matrix type. The first two have 7 variables and the last four variables. To check if their scale was correct was used Cronbach α coefficient and Fisher's exact test. All statistical reliability coefficient values indicate a higher scaling reliability, the values exceeding .700, as it can be seen in Table no. 3, below.

Table no. 3: Statistical reliability

Question	α Cronbach value	Items no.
1	.878	7
2	.892	7
7	.818	4

The use of the analysis of variance (Analysis of variance - ANOVA) (Table no. 4) allowed the identification of significant differences within the groups only for questions 2 and 7. With regard to Question 1, the value of F test for six degrees indicates that there are no significant differences between groups or within. The first question concerns the impact of the course of business coaching had on respondents, by 6 point rating scales, where 1 means

very poor and 6 very strong. The average of seven variables allowed the assessment of a strong impact on respondents. The second question concerns the usefulness of attending the course for educational and personal goals. Also, the responses were scored on 6 point rating scales, with the same meaning as question 1. The average of the seven variables allowed the assessment of the usefulness of participation in Business Coaching course for educational and personal goals as relatively strong on respondents. Question 7 refers to benefits obtained by students participating in the Business Coaching courses responses being ranked on 6 point rating scales, where 1 meant strongly disagree and 6, total agreement. The average of the four variables indicates the respondents' agreement to the four benefits mentioned by the question. Therefore, there is a consistency of responses from the investigated people.

Table no. 4: The values of the analysis of variance

ANOVA question 1		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between People		331.538	109	3.042		
Within People	Between Items	3.673	6	.612	1.648	.131
	Residual	242.899	654	.371		
	Total	246.571	660	.374		
Total		578.109	769	.752		
Grand Mean = 4.7455						
ANOVA question 2		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between People		418.151	109	3.836		
Within People	Between Items	26.977	6	4.496	10.827	.000
	Residual	271.595	654	.415		
	Total	298.571	660	.452		
Total		716.722	769	.932		
Grand Mean = 4.4519						
ANOVA question 7		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Between People		176.818	109	1.622		
Within People	Between Items	9.100	3	3.033	10.289	.000
	Residual	96.400	327	.295		
	Total	105.500	330	.320		
Total		282.318	439	.643		
Grand Mean = 5.1136						

To illustrate relationships between the variables of the three questions the authors decided to calculate the correlation of coefficients between them. Thus, for the variables from Question 1, outlined in Table no. 5 below, it is found that they are all directly correlated and with higher intensity at a significance level of 1%. There is an exception regarding the relationship between providing some effective strategies for goals achieving and the improvement of communication skills, among which there is a direct link, but weak ($r = 0,241$ at a significance level of 5%). Greater values than the coefficient of correlation are registered between the variables: decreased stress, a greater sense of confidence and support and increased motivation, confidence, self-esteem ($r = 0,701$, at a significance level of 1%) between the improvement of structure, organization or time management and increased motivation, confidence, self-esteem ($r = 0,645$ at a significance level of 1%) between the

improvement of structure, organization or time management and decreased stress, felt reassured or supported ($r = 0,632$, at a significance level of 1%), between improved communication skills and improved ability to focus on tasks ($r = 0,605$, at a significance level of 1%), between increased motivation, confidence, self-esteem and clarified goals or provided support for goals ($r = 0,629$, at a significance level of 1%), and between improved ability to focus on tasks and clarified goals or provided support for goals ($r = 0,634$, at a significance level of 1%).

Table no. 5: Correlations between variables regarding the impact of the course

Variables	Coefficient value						
Time management	1						
Decreased stress	.632**	1					
Increased motivation	.645**	.701**	1				
Objectives	.535**	.455**	.537**	1			
Communication	.241*	.400**	.417**	.329**	1		
Focus on tasks	.430**	.510**	.543**	.596**	.605**	1	
Support for goals	.558**	.573**	.629**	.387**	.429**	.634**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Regarding variables concerning the usefulness of participating in the Business Coaching course in achieving educational or personal goals, can be noted some direct and intense correlations between them at a significance level of 1%, according to Table no. 6 below. For example, the correlation between improved goal setting, prioritization of goals, or goal advancement and increased confidence or decreased self-criticism/negativity ($r = 0,644$, at a significance level of 1%), between increased confidence or decreased self-criticism/negativity and increased concentration and organization of future career ($r = 0,655$ at a significance level of 1%), between improved study skills, or information retention and reduced stress and better stress management ($r = 0,604$, at a significance level of 1%), between improved study skills or information retention and improved awareness / strategies to overcome the barriers ($r = 0,623$ at a significance level of 1%) and especially between reduced stress or better stress management and improved awareness to overcome barriers ($r = 0,765$, at a significance level of 1%).

Table no. 6: Correlations between variables regarding the usefulness of attending the coaching sessions for goal achieving

Variables	Coefficient value						
Goal setting	1						
Confidence	.644**	1					
Carrier	.521**	.655**	1				
Information retention	.523**	.459**	.586**	1			
Reduced stress	.588**	.565**	.505**	.604**	1		
Awareness	.452**	.564**	.556**	.623**	.765**	1	
Overcome barriers	.571**	.484**	.338**	.476**	.570**	.472**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

A similar situation is encountered on correlations between variables on the benefits of business coaching course for students. Thus, there are direct and strong correlation at a significance level of 1% between all four variables, according to Table no. 7 below. For example, the correlation between personal development and better self-knowledge ($r = 0,645$ at a significance level of 1%) and between a better self-knowledge and the permanent development process ($r = 0,608$, a threshold the significance of 1%).

Table no. 7: Correlations between variables regarding course benefits

Variables	Coefficient value			
Personal development	1			
Self-knowledge	.645**	1		
Permanent development	.608**	.490**	1	
Expression	.542**	.531**	.430**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Another question of rating scale type, asked respondents to give grades from 1 (very poor) to 10 (very strong) for 6 strategies or skills learned from participating in coaching courses. The obtained averages of the six variables is around 8, with the mention that time management ability showed a slightly lower value (table no. 8). Even if the minimum of variability were 4 or 5, there is a small standard deviation, which means that these values were rather exceptions. Moreover, this is confirmed by the answer to the question of attending the Business Coaching course for making a difference in respondents' personal development, where all research participants answered yes.

Table no. 8: Statistics of learned strategies or skills

		Time management	Goal setting	Learning abilities	Study abilities	Project fragmentation	Resource use
N	Valid	110	110	110	110	110	110
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		7.9636	8.2909	8.2545	8.2000	8.1273	8.4000
Std. Deviation		1.19577	1.18357	1.30234	1.41292	1.37547	1.36939
Minimum		5.00	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00
Maximum		10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	10.00

In order to verify the consistency of answers to this question, the coefficients of correlation between the six variables were also calculated. The results, listed in the Table 9 below indicate the existence of direct and strong correlations between all the six variables. For example, it may show correlations between time management and organization skills and goal setting ($r = 0,701$ at a significance level of 1%) between time management and organization skills and strategies to improve learning skills ($r = 0,713$ at a significance level of 1%), between setting objectives and strategies for improving learning skills ($r = 0,743$ at a significance level of 1%) and between the fragmentation of projects into more components and use of existing resources ($r = 0,743$ at a significance level of 1%).

Table no. 9: Correlations between variables regarding strategies or learning skills

Variables	Coefficient value					
	1					
Time management	1					
Goal setting	.701**	1				
Learning skills	.713**	.743**	1			
Study skills	.661**	.656**	.650**	1		
Fragmentation of projects	.483**	.597**	.489**	.652**	1	
Use of existing resources	.664**	.607**	.657**	.660**	.747**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The question regarding the appreciation of the Business Coaching courses led to the answer that most respondents consider it to be good, on a scale 6 point rating scales, where 1 meant very poor, and six very good, which revealed an average of 5,5273 (tables no. 10 and 11). Also, the method of comparing averages by one-sample test, concluded that there are significant differences between respondents who evaluate the course as good (the t test being 9,439, for 109 degrees of freedom, the Sig. Value Being 0.000) and those who considered it very good (the t test being -8,462, for 109 degrees of freedom, the Sig. Value being 0,000), according to table 12 below.

Table no. 10: One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Course appreciation	110	5.5273	.58591	.05586

Table no. 11: One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 5					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Course appreciation	9.439	109	.000	.52727	.4166	.6380

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 6					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Course appreciation	-8.462	109	.000	-.47273	-.5834	-.3620

To see the orientation of answers about the rate of appreciation of Business Coaching course by gender of respondents the Association Table no. 12 below was developed. It notes some differences in terms of gender affiliation. Thus, male respondents rated the course as good (20% of respondents) and very good (10.9% of all respondents). Female respondents had three options, respectively: rather good (4.5% of all respondents), good (18.2% of all respondents) and very good (46.4% of all respondents). Therefore, we can say

that most male respondents consider the course as good, while most female persons appreciated it as very good.

Table no. 12: Cross tabulation course appreciation and genre of respondents

			gen		Total
			female	male	
Course appreciation	Rather good	Count	5	0	5
		% within Course appreciation	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	4.5%	0.0%	4.5%
	good	Count	20	22	42
		% within Course appreciation	47.6%	52.4%	100.0%
		% of Total	18.2%	20.0%	38.2%
	Very good	Count	51	12	63
		% within Course appreciation	81.0%	19.0%	100.0%
		% of Total	46.4%	10.9%	57.3%
Total		Count	76	34	110
		% within Course appreciation	69.1%	30.9%	100.0%
		% of Total	69.1%	30.9%	100.0%

Conclusions

The literature concerning coaching courses and their impact on students suggests that students benefit from coaching courses. The participants completing the survey found that coaching courses positively impacted their life. Thus, students reported that Business coaching course helped them. In conclusion, the first research hypothesis has been invalidated, while the other three were confirmed. Overall, it can be concluded that the assessment rate is positive in all directions investigated.

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