NEGATIVE EFFECTS FOR COACHING CLIENTS AND COACHES AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THEIR PREVENTION

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a thesis by publication, which is based on four studies. The results have been published in international peer-reviewed journals or are submitted for publication. This work introduces the overarching background and goals of this dissertation, its core findings, and how they contribute to the dissertation goals. The full-length manuscripts are presented in the end.

Background: Coaching researchers and practitioners alike call for the need of evidence-based coaching. However, evidence-based coaching that acknowledges both positive and negative effects is largely lacking so far. Whilst positive effects of coaching have received much attention, researchers started only recently to examine negative effects.

Objectives: This dissertation pursues three goals. First, prior studies solely used the coaches' perspective. This dissertation strives to examine how clients themselves experience negative effects and if they relate to coaches' experiences. Second, negative effects can emerge not only for clients, but also for coaches. The second goal is to explore their relationship and the conditions under which their relationship may take place. Third and most importantly, this dissertation aims to identify antecedents of negative effects to support their prevention in coaching practice.

Methods: Surveys were used to measure negative effects for clients and for coaches, as well as their potential antecedents. The included studies employed a variety of research designs and samples. Specifically, Study I employed the clients' perspective and used a field sample of German clients ($N = 111$) in a time-lagged design. Again in a time-lagged design, Study II employed the coaches' perspective and used an international sample of professional coaches ($N = 275$). In bringing together the findings from both perspectives, Study III used a field experiment with matched dyads of clients and novice coaches ($N = 29$). Study IV used meta-analytical methods ($N = 26$ samples).

Findings: The studies showed that negative effects for clients and coaches occur frequently in coaching. Both clients and coaches reported that more than every second client experienced negative effects. In the matched sample of clients and novice coaches, negative effects occurred slightly more often and although clients and coaches reported similar frequencies, they did not agree when compared to each other. Nearly every coach reported negative effects for themselves across the different samples. The findings

showed that negative effects for clients are related to negative effects for coaches but only when coaches evaluated the negative effects for their clients. This relationship only emerged when coaches did not use supervision and was intensified when coaches were high in neuroticism. Coaches' perceived competence might explain why negative effects for clients are related to negative effects for coaches. The relationship quality between clients and coaches as well as coaches' competence seem to act as antecedents for negative effects for clients and coaches.

Limitations: To assess negative effects for clients and coaches, this dissertation employed subjective measures after coaching completion. Therefore, it depicts them as coaching outcomes and not their development over the course of the coaching processes. Causal assumptions cannot be made (except regarding coaching supervision). This dissertation investigated the number of negative effects and cannot predict specific effects that they comprise.

Contributions: This dissertation contributed three core aspects to the coaching literature. The findings showed that clients and coaches could differ in their evaluations of negative effects for clients and indicated that the employed perspective is crucial. Furthermore, this dissertation was the first to introduce the relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches and also contributed to its explanation and boundary conditions, which support the need for coaches' self-care. Most importantly, this dissertation took the conceptual leap from demonstrating that negative effects exist to explain why they occur. This knowledge can be used to prevent them in coaching practice.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Dissertation ist kumulativ angelegt und basiert auf vier Studien. Die vorliegende Arbeit führt die übergreifenden Fragestellungen und die Ziele der Dissertation ein, stellt ihre Kernergebnisse dar und wie diese zu den Dissertationszielen beitragen. Die Manuskripte der Studien werden in voller Länge am Ende der Arbeit präsentiert.

Hintergrund: Die Notwendigkeit von evidenzbasiertem Coaching wird immer häufiger von Wissenschaftlern und Praktikern gefordert. Evidenzbasiertes Coaching, das sowohl positive als auch negative Effekte anerkennt, fehlt bislang jedoch weitgehend. Während positive Effekte von Coaching viel Aufmerksamkeit erhalten haben, haben Forscher erst vor kurzem begonnen, negative Effekte von Coaching empirisch zu untersuchen.

Ziele: Diese Dissertation verfolgt drei Ziele. Erstens haben frühere Studien ausschließlich die Perspektive der Coaches betrachtet. Diese Dissertation untersucht, wie Klienten negative Effekte erleben und ob diese mit den Erfahrungen von Coaches übereinstimmen. Zweitens können sich negative Effekte nicht nur für Klienten, sondern auch für Coaches ergeben. Daher besteht das zweite Ziel darin, die Beziehung zwischen negativen Effekten für Klienten und für Coaches zu untersuchen sowie die Bedingungen, unter denen sie miteinander zusammenhängen. Drittens sollen Antezedenzien negativer Effekte identifiziert werden, um deren Prävention in der Coaching-Praxis zu unterstützen.

Methoden: Klienten und Coaches wurden zu negativen Effekten von Coaching sowie deren potentiellen Antezedenzien befragt. Diese Dissertation verwendete verschiedene Forschungsdesigns und Stichproben. Die erste Studie verwendete die Perspektive der Klienten und nutzte eine Feldstichprobe deutscher Klienten ($N = 111$) in einem zeitversetzten Design mit zwei Messzeitpunkten. Die zweite Studie beleuchtete die Perspektive der Coaches und verwendete eine internationale Stichprobe professioneller Coaches ($N = 275$). Um die Ergebnisse aus beiden Perspektiven zusammenzuführen, wurde in der dritten Studie ein Feldexperiment mit Coach-Klienten-Dyaden ($N = 29$) durchgeführt. Die vierte und letzte Studie setzte metaanalytische Methoden ein ($N = 26$ Stichproben).

Ergebnisse: Die Studien zeigten, dass negative Effekte für Klienten und Coaches häufig auftreten. Sowohl Klienten als auch Coaches berichteten, dass mehr als jeder zweite

Klient negative Effekte erlebte. In der Stichprobe mit Coach-Novizen traten negative Effekte etwas häufiger auf als in den anderen Stichproben. In dieser Stichprobe wurden sowohl Klienten als auch deren Coaches befragt. Obwohl Klienten und Coaches ähnliche Häufigkeiten berichteten, stimmte ihre Einschätzung der negativen Effekte nicht miteinander überein. Außerdem berichtete über die verschiedenen Stichproben hinweg fast jeder Coach über negative Effekte für sich selbst. Die Studien zeigten auch, dass negative Effekte für Klienten mit negativen Effekten für Coaches zusammen-hängen, aber nur, wenn Coaches die negativen Effekte für ihre Klienten selbst beurteilten. Diese Beziehung entstand erst dann, wenn die Coaches keine Supervision nutzten, und wurde intensiviert, wenn sie höhere Neurotizismus-Werte aufwiesen. Die wahrgenommene Kompetenz der Coaches könnte erklären, warum negative Effekte für Klienten mit negativen Effekten für Coaches zusammenhängen. Die Beziehungsqualität zwischen Klienten und Coaches sowie die Kompetenz der Coaches scheinen weitere Antezendenzien für negative Effekte für Klienten und Coaches zu sein.

Limitationen: Um negative Effekte für Klienten und Coaches zu erfassen, wurden in dieser Dissertation subjektive Einschätzungen nach Abschluss der Coachings verwendet. Sie werden daher als Coaching-Ergebnisse erfasst und bilden nicht deren Entwicklung im Coaching-Verlauf des Coachings ab. Kausale Annahmen können nicht getroffen werden (ausgenommen in Bezug auf Supervision). Diese Dissertation untersucht die Anzahl der negativen Effekte und nicht welche spezifischen Effekte vorhergesagt werden können.

Beiträge: Diese Dissertation trägt zu drei Kernaspekten in der Coaching-Literatur bei. Die Ergebnisse zeigten, dass sich Klienten und Coaches in ihrer Einschätzung der negativen Effekte für Klienten unterscheiden können und dass die verwendete Perspektive entscheidend ist. Darüber hinaus führte diese Dissertation zum ersten Mal die Beziehung zwischen negativen Effekten für Klienten und für Coaches ein, welche die Bedeutung der Selbstfürsorge von Coaches verdeutlicht. Der wohl wichtigste Beitrag dieser Dissertation ist der konzeptionelle Sprung von der Demonstration negativer Effekte hin zu einer Erklärung warum diese auftreten. Dieses Wissen kann genutzt werden, um negative Effekte in der Coaching-Praxis zu verhindern.

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1   GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Organizations strive for high performance and, at the same time, employees strive for meaningful and satisfactory jobs. Both organizations and employees use coaching to deal with these multifaceted challenges (Kilburg, 1996). A strong and growing coaching market underlines its widespread use and popularity. Approximately 53,300 external and internal coaches are in business worldwide (ICF, 2016), an increase of eleven percent in four years (ICF, 2012). Ninety percent of them stated that they had at least one client at the time of the survey (ICF, 2016). This means that at least 48,000 clients were actively using coaching at that time, previously completed coaching processes not included. The coaching industry's growing importance also shows in their annual revenue of more than 2.3 billion dollars, which represents an increase of 19% over an estimate in 2011 (ICF, 2016). This matches the predictions of Human Resource experts, who estimated that coaching will be among the personnel development tools that will have gained the most importance in 2020 (Schermuly, Schröder, Nachtwei, Kauffeld, & Gläs, 2012).

Coaching can be defined in many ways (see Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011, for an overview). Following the definition of Grant and Stober (2006), I consider coaching as an egalitarian relationship between a client and a professional coach, which involves a systematic process that focuses on collaborative goal setting, constructing solutions, and fostering clients' self-directed learning and personal growth. This definition best captures the dyadic character of coaching, includes employees without managerial responsibility as potential clients, and centers around clients' goal attainment as the main coaching purpose. Specifically, coaching in this dissertation focuses on goals that relate to the clients' workplaces and distinguishes itself from other applications of coaching, such as health coaching (Palmer, Tubbs, & Whybrow, 2003; Wolever et al., 2013) or life coaching (Grant, 2003). Moreover, coaching does not cover clinical issues (Grant, 2006) and the coach does not need to be a domain-specific specialist (Grant & Stober, 2006).

Research supports the assumption that coaching is effective: Meta-analyses reveal medium-sized positive effects for clients (for a critical discussion of the current meta-analyses in coaching see Kotte, Hinn, Oellerich, & Möller, 2016). Theeboom and colleagues (2014) have shown that coaching acts strongest on the clients' self-regulatory abilities and their job performance, but it is also effective in changing job attitudes, well-being, and coping abilities. Another meta-analysis (Sonesh et al., 2015) indicates that the effects on behavior are stronger than on attitudes, though the difference was small. Jones

and colleagues (2015) focused solely on coaching in the workplace and added that coaching has positive effects on organizational outcomes as well, but the effects for clients were stronger. Although the outcomes of coaching are hard to quantify financially, executives estimated that the return on investment was 5.7 times higher than the initial coaching investment (McGovern et al., 2001).

These findings underline the conventional believe that coaching provokes a wide range of positive effects for clients. Although these are empirically supported as outlined above, this picture is yet incomplete. Evolving research instead introduced that clients and coaches can experience negative effects as a consequence of coaching, such as clients who feel less satisfied, motivated, or experience less meaning in their work (Schermuly, Schermuly-Haupt, Schölmerich, & Rauterberg, 2014) and coaches who feel disappointed, personally affected, or scared (Schermuly, 2014). Negative effects are all harmful and unwanted effects for clients (or coaches respectively) that are directly caused by coaching and occur parallel to or following coaching (Schermuly et al., 2014; Schermuly, 2014). While negative effects for clients (Schermuly et al., 2014) and coaches (Schermuly, 2014) have been introduced to the literature, only one study each investigated them empirically and only from the coaches' perspectives. Little is known about how clients experience negative effects, if negative effects for clients and coaches may be related to each other, and foremost, why they occur. This dissertation strives to answer these gaps by using both clients' and coaches' perspectives in a diverse range of samples, analyzing the relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches, and investigating their antecedents. This is important to finally prevent negative effects in coaching practice. The consequences of neglecting negative effects might be costly: "By deluding themselves about the quality of their work, coaches might fail to develop the coaching engagement appropriately" (Bachkirova, 2015, p. 5). Thus, coaches need to know how to cope and discuss issues with fellow professionals in a non-judgmental atmosphere (Gray, 2011). Moreover, coaching has reached a level of maturity where coaches are increasingly aware of the need for professionalization and evidence-based coaching (Fietze, 2014; Grant & Cavanagh, 2004). Scholars should not only prove that coaching is effective but should also help to understand the limits of these claims (Grant, 2017). Research on negative effects is one way of getting towards these limits, as it acknowledges that coaching can exhibit a variety of positive outcomes *and* a variety of negative outcomes.

In particular, this dissertation contributes three key points. Firstly, it is unlikely that coaching only provokes purely positive outcomes and too little is known about how

frequently and intense negative effects occur. Consensus is needed on the frequency and intensity of negative effects from both clients' and coaches' perspectives. This is important to enrich the expectation of what coaching can do for clients and coaches. For this purpose, this dissertation illuminates both clients' and coaches' perspectives across different samples. Secondly, prior research introduced negative effects for clients and coaches, but it is not known if and how they are related to each other. On the contrary: Some coaching practitioners neglect that clients could affect their coaches (Schermuly & Graßmann, 2016). This dissertation challenges this assumption by being the first to introduce the relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches and studying why and when it emerges. Thirdly and most importantly, prior studies have fallen short in clearly explaining why negative effects occur. The major goal of this dissertation is therefore to investigate their potential antecedents – to make the conceptual leap from looking at whether they occur to why they occur. It is important to understand why, how, and when negative effects emerge and this dissertation offers first suggestions on how to prevent them in practice.

2   NEGATIVE EFFECTS IN COACHING

Coaching has three peculiarities that fuel the importance of studying negative effects. Firstly, the entry regulations to coaching are not restricted: "Because coaching is an industry and not a profession, there are no barriers to entry, no regulation, no government-sanctioned accreditation or qualification process and no clear authority to be a coach" (Grant, 2006, p. 14). Coaching is particularly vulnerable to this lack of regulation because of its commercial possibilities (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007). This leads to diverse educational backgrounds of coaches, with only a fifth of them being trained as psychologists (Liljenstrand & Nebeker, 2008), which raises concern if all coaches are properly equipped to work with their clients. Secondly, evaluation of coaching is not required, although clients might face serious work-related and personal challenges (Kilburg, 2002). The lack of monitoring and evaluation makes it difficult to assess coaching quality and adherence to ethical conducts, which also includes negative effects for clients. Thirdly, discourses of coaching are strongly influenced by positive psychology and investigating undesirable phenomena may seem judgmental (Bachkirova, 2015, in regard of coaches' self-deception). This impedes coaching practitioners' openness to negative effects, which contributes to their status as a taboo topic (Kilburg, 2002).

Studying negative effects in coaching is a young line of research, whose first theoretical idea emerged less than two decades ago (e.g., Kilburg, 2002). Sparse empirical examinations followed only recently (Schermuly et al., 2014; Schermuly, 2014). Their historical emergence in research and their body of knowledge are presented in the following. Notably, negative effects can arise for clients, coaches, and organizations. Table 1 at the end of this chapter distinguishes these negative effects from each other, along the focal actors and which perspective to use for research, as well as examples of the most frequent negative effects.

2.1   NEGATIVE EFFECTS FOR CLIENTS

Close dyadic relationships are complex and two-faced, offering both positive and negative experiences (Duck & Wood, 1995). Social exchange theory (SET) grounds the natural occurrence of negative effects in close relationships, which assumes that relationships evolve over time into trusting, loyal, and mutual commitments based on reciprocity and negotiated rules for the exchange of resources (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). These resources can be love, status, information, money, goods, or services (Foa

& Foa, 1980). The crucial idea is that this exchange includes relationship benefits *and* costs. The mention of costs constitutes the phenomenon of negative experiences, like frustration and grief (Duck & Wood, 1995). One important premise of SET is that positive and negative experiences are distinct aspects of a relationship rather than negative experiences simply being the absence of benefits (Eby, Durley, Evans, & Ragins, 2008). Research largely supported that positive and negative experiences are distinct concepts (Eby, Butts, Lockwood, & Simon, 2004; Taylor, 1991). However, SET is a broad theory that does not clearly cover the specific negative experiences in specific relationships.

In the early 2000s, a few scholars started to discuss negative effects in coaching theoretically (Berglas, 2002; Hodgetts, 2002; Kilburg, 2002). Berglas (2002) stated that coaches may misjudge the situation of their clients or may unintentionally use their power for influencing their clients and organizations. Hodgetts (2002) employed an organizational perspective and discussed how the management of an organization may harm both the client and the organization when they use coaching. He addressed the lack of an appropriate assessment, diagnoses, and strategy, the selection of a coach who does not suit the needs of the client, and the disturbance of confidentiality, amongst others (Hodgetts, 2002). Kilburg (2002) added a list of possible negative effects for clients, such as family problems, mental and physical problems, or reduced well-being and motivation losses. He stated though that this list needs to be proved carefully (Kilburg, 2002).

Following this call to extend and prove the list of potential negative effects in coaching and more than a decade later, Schermuly and colleagues (2014) contributed the first empirical move into that direction. They first framed negative effects for clients as side effects[1] that established the conceptual basement for further analysis. They defined them as all harmful and unwanted results that occur for clients and are directly caused by coaching (Schermuly et al., 2014). Negative effects may be easily, but mistakenly, treated as equal to coaching failure because both link to undesirable outcomes. However, negative effects can also occur in successful coaching processes and are not equal to coaching failure (Schermuly et al., 2014). Coaching failure means that the clients did not achieve the goals that coaching has been contracted for (Kilburg, 2002). Coaching success lies on the other side of this continuum (Kilburg, 2002) and is commonly specified as goal attainment (Greif, 2013; Spence, 2007). Nevertheless, coaching failure only refers to a zero effect of coaching, meaning that clients did not achieve their goals.

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[1] Negative side effects of coaching are abbreviated in this dissertation to negative effects.

Adverse effects extend this continuum. Adverse effects mean that not only the goals in coaching are not met; coaching may make it even worse than before (which is described in psychotherapy by Dimidjian & Hollon, 2010, and in the deterioration effect by Bergin, 1966). Negative effects can occur when coaching failed but also when it was successful and are thus neither equal to coaching failure nor to adverse effects. These two continuums are depicted in Figure 1.

Coaching success:
Typically specified as goal attainment (Greif, 2013; Spence, 2007)

Intended effects

Negative (side) effects:
Unwanted and harmful effects caused directly by coaching (Schermuly et al., 2014); Problems beyond or in addition to the desired effect (Kirch, 2008)

Coaching failure:
No substantial improvement in goal attainment (Kilburg, 2002); Treatment was unhelpful (Dimidjan & Hollon, 2010)

Unintended effects

Positive (side) effects:
Not yet defined, see research agenda in chapter 4.4.

Adverse effects:
Treatment is harmful (Dimidjan & Hollon, 2010);
Deterioration effect (Berglas, 1967)

Figure 1. Negative Effects and Conceptually Related Outcomes

Using qualitative interviews with 21 coaches, Schermuly and colleagues (2014) developed a list of 30 potential negative effects for clients that may occur according to their definition (the complete list can be found in the full-length manuscript of Study I). They then provided a quantitative analysis, where 123 coaches evaluated the occurrence of those negative effects in their last completed coaching process. For instance, coaches frequently reported that in-depth problems were triggered that could not be dealt with, that their clients' original goals were modified without the clients' approval, or that the clients' experienced their work as less meaningful (Schermuly et al., 2014). While solely

generated from the coaches' perspective, their overall results indicated the following: Negative effects for clients occur in every second coaching process (57%), with low intensity, and with about two negative effects at once (Schermuly et al., 2014). Not only clients experience these effects, but coaches can also evaluate them. Therefore, two perspectives on negative effects for clients must be distinguished: how clients perceive negative effects and how coaches perceive them. As Schermuly and colleagues (2014) employed solely the coaches' perspective, little is known about how clients may perceive negative effects for themselves. This dissertation employs the clients' perspective to gain knowledge on how frequent and intense the clients themselves perceive negative effects, which aims to contribute a more accurate estimation.

Although SET grounds the occurrence of negative effects, it does not clearly specify why they occur, which is necessary to understand how they can be prevented. Therefore, additional theories are needed to explain the antecedents of negative effects. Schermuly and colleagues (2014) suggested a framework for future research (see Figure 2), which proposes an input-process-output-model. Yet no empirical research existed to enrich this framework with specific input, process, and moderator variables. Only the list and frequency of negative effects for clients existed to that time. The challenge was to examine which factors predict negative effects to understand theoretically why they emerge and how to prevent them in practice. This dissertation strives to develop this potential model by investigating specific antecedents that can be included in this framework.

Figure 2. Research Model for Negative Effects of Coaching (Schermuly et al., 2014)

2.2   NEGATIVE EFFECTS FOR COACHES

Shortly thereafter, the concept of negative effects for coaches emerged in the literature

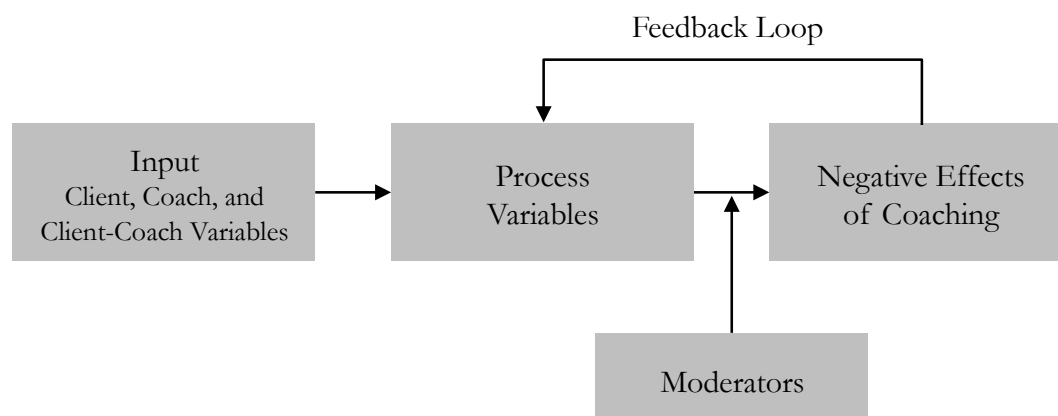(Schermuly & Bohnhardt, 2014; Schermuly, 2014). In line with SET, both coaches and clients are likely to be affected by their work, as both exchange resources (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Workers in other helping relationships do experience negative effects, such as mentors (Eby & McManus, 2004) and therapists (Linley & Joseph, 2007), but little was known about how coaches can be affected by their work to that time. Similar to the procedure for negative effects for clients, Schermuly (2014) first defined negative effects for coaches as "all harmful and unwanted results for coaches directly caused by coaching that occur parallel to or following coaching" (p. 169). He interviewed 20 coaches to identify possible negative effects for coaches, and let 104 coaches evaluate their occurrence during the last completed coaching process and during their career as a coach. The most frequent negative effects were that coaches were disappointed about not observing the long-term influences of coaching, followed by being personally affected by topics discussed during coaching, and that they were scared that they would not fulfill their role as a coach (Schermuly, 2014). As these effects concentrate on the coach and clients may not be aware of them, coaches are best suited to evaluate negative effects for themselves. The findings indicated that at least one negative effect was present in 94% of coaching processes and in 99% of careers, with on average six negative effects per coaching process (Schermuly, 2014). Moreover, the number of negative effects in this study was negatively related to coaches' psychological empowerment and positively related to their emotional exhaustion and perceived stress. This highlights the importance of negative effects for coaches and the potential need for their self-care. Building up on these first explorative findings, this dissertation takes the next leap and investigates the antecedents and consequences of negative effects for coaches more thoroughly and introduces their association with negative effects for clients.

2.3   NEGATIVE EFFECTS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

While this dissertation focuses solely on negative effects for clients and coaches because they are partners of every coaching relationship, negative effects may also occur for the clients' organizations if they use coaching within their personnel development program. Although negative effects for organizations have not been introduced prior to the beginning of this dissertation, they need to be introduced to fully capture the range of negative effects in coachng and how they can be distinguished from each other.

Negative effects for organizations can be defined as unwanted or unintended results that occur parallel to or following coaching and can occur for clients and other

organizational actors or entities (Oellerich, 2016). Oellerich (2016) surveyed Human Resource experts and supervisors whose employees have used coaching and found that 17% of them reported negative effects according to this definition. According to her study, they occurred only seldom, but often included that clients developed into a direction that their organizations did not appreciate, that the clients questioned too much, or that they had problems with their supervisors. As these effects focus on organizations, research may want to use the organizations' perspective to study them. Nonetheless, clients are part of these effects and might also be suited to evaluate them.

Table 1. Negative Effects for Coaching Clients, Coaches, and Organizations

	Negative effects for clients	**Negative effects for coaches**	**Negative effects for organizations**
Definition: How are negative effects defined?	Harmful and unwanted results that occur for clients that are directly caused by coaching and occur parallel to or following coaching (Schermuly, 2014)	Harmful and unwanted results for coaches that are directly caused by coaching and occur parallel to or following coaching (Schermuly et al., 2014)	Unwanted or unintended results that occur parallel to or following coaching; negative effects can occur for clients but also for other organizational actors or entities (Oellerich, 2016)
Coaching actor: For whom are they negative?	Clients	Coaches	At least some members of the organization
Reporting perspective: Who reports them?	Clients and/or coaches	Coaches	Members of the organization (Human Resource experts and supervisors) and potentially clients
Examples: Which negative effects are most frequent?	1. In-depth problems were triggered that could not be dealt with 2. The clients' original goals were modified without his/her approval 3. The client experienced his/her work as less meaningful (Schermuly et al., 2014)	1. Disappointment about not observing the long-term influences 2. Being personally affected by the topics discussed during coaching 3. Being scared to not fulfill the role as a coach (Schermuly, 2014)	1. The client's development did not fit the organizational framework 2. The client put too much into question after coaching 3. Problems with supervisors (Oellerich, 2016)

Note. In favor of brevity, the complete lists of negative effects are not presented here. The complete lists for negative effects for clients and coaches, including their frequencies, are shown in the full-length manuscripts.

2.4 GOALS OF THIS DISSERTATION

This dissertation builds directly upon the research outlined above and seeks to achieve three goals. Firstly, it aims to validate the previous findings on the frequency and intensity of negative effects from both clients' and coaches' perspectives. Prior to this dissertation, negative effects for clients and coaches were examined empirically only by one study each and solely from the coaches' perspectives (Schermuly et al., 2014; Schermuly, 2014). This dissertation strives to gain more insight on their respective frequencies and intensities across diverse samples and perspectives. This includes not only German coaches (as surveyed before), but also an international sample of coaches, novice coaches, and most notably their clients. Coaches are partly involved in negative effects for their clients (e.g., in the case of a dependency to the coach) and trained in monitoring and evaluating their clients' progress (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016). Yet coaches' threatened self-worth might bias their evaluation (Schermuly, 2014). To acknowledge this potential bias, both clients' and coaches' perspectives must be taken into account. This dissertation surveys clients directly and compares their evaluations with the coaches' perspectives.

Secondly, this dissertation aims to illuminate a potential relationship between negative effects for clients and negative effects for coaches. Based on SET (as outlined above), coaches are likely affected by their work with clients. If clients experience negative effects that are caused by coaching, this may lead the coach to experience negative effects themselves (e.g., being frustrated or scared to not fulfill the role as a coach). This would enhance coaches' need for self-care, as it would show that they could be affected from working with clients. However, this dissertation does not only aim to demonstrate that coaches are affected by their work, which has already been shown (Schermuly, 2014). For the first time, this dissertation aims to introduce the relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches and seeks to explain why and when this may emerge. To explain this potential relationship, this dissertation uses the joint predictions of social cognitive theory (SCT; Bandura, 1977, 1995) and the job demands-resources model (JD-R; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). One critical premise of SCT is that past performance accomplishment alter the feeling of competence (Bandura, 1977, 1995). To understand why negative effects for clients may relate to negative effects for coaches, this dissertation examines if coaches' competence may explain this relationship. Based on the idea that beneficial resources can buffer the impact of job demands on job

strain as proposed by the JD-R (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014), this dissertation examines two resources for the coaching-specific context: coaching supervision and coaches' low neuroticism (see the full-length manuscripts for detailed theoretical reasoning).

Thirdly, this dissertation attempts to create knowledge on the antecedents of negative effects. While prior studies have introduced the concept of negative effects for clients and coaches (Schermuly et al., 2014; Schermuly, 2014), they did not clearly explain why they occur. This dissertation project aims to make the leap from looking at whether negative effects occur, which had been demonstrated before, to investigating their antecedents. This is important to better understand why, how, and when negative effects emerge to finally prevent them in coaching practice. Therefore, this dissertation strives to propose potential antecedents of negative effects for clients and coaches to suggest implications for their prevention. The proposed research model of Schermuly and colleagues guided the investigation of potential antecedents (see again Figure 2). Besides coaches' neuroticism and the use of coaching supervision (as outlined above), this dissertation examines the relationship quality between clients and coaches, clients' motivation to change, and coaches' competence as potential antecedents.

Summing up, this dissertation pursues three goals (see Table 2). The first goal is to understand negative effects in coaching in more depth, including their frequency and intensity from coaches' and clients' perspectives. As both partners can experience negative effects, the second goal is to explore their relationship and the conditions under which it may take place. Thirdly, this dissertation aims to identify antecedents of negative effects to support their prevention. As a single study almost never provides sufficient evidence for or against a relationship (Open Science Collaboration, 2015), this dissertation strives to replicate the found relationships that evolve over the course of studies. To increase additional confidence in the findings, this dissertation uses different methodological approaches (time-lagged surveys, field experiment, and meta-analysis) across a variety of samples (clients, professional and novice coaches, German and international samples).

Table 2. Goals of the Dissertation

Goal 1	Explore negative effects from clients' and coaches' perspectives
Goal 2	Understand the relationship of negative effects for clients and coaches
Goal 3	Identify antecedents of negative effects for clients and coaches

3 OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

This dissertation includes four studies (see Table 3), which are briefly presented in the following. This chapter focuses on the core findings and how they contribute to the dissertation goals to allow their general discussion afterwards. The full-length manuscripts, including the theoretical development of the hypotheses and research questions, are presented in Chapter 7.

Table 3. Overview of Studies

Nr.	Manuscripts	Corresponding Conference Presentations
Study I	Graßmann, C., & Schermuly, C. C. (2016). Side effects of business coaching and their predictors from the coachees' perspective. *Journal of Personnel Psychology*, *15,* 152–163.	Graßmann, C. (2016, September). *Nebenwirkungen von Coaching und deren Wirkfaktoren*. Vortrag auf dem 13. Nachwuchsworkshop der DGPs-Fachgruppe Arbeits-, Organisations- und Wirtschaftspsychologie, Aachen.
		Graßmann, C. & Schermuly, C. C. (2015, September). *Negative Effekte von Coaching für den Klienten und deren Wirkfaktoren*. Vortrag auf der 9. Fachgruppentagung Arbeits-, Organisations- und Wirtschaftspsychologie, Mainz.
Study II	Graßmann, C., Schermuly, C. C., & Wach, D. (2017). *Coaches need to take care of themselves: Antecedents and consequences of negative effects for coaches*. Manuscript submitted for publication.	Graßmann, C., & Schermuly, C. C. (2017, August). *The antecedents and consequences of side effects for coaches*. Paper presented at the 77th Annual Meeting of the Academy of Management, Atlanta, Georgia, USA. doi: 10.5465/AMBPP.2017.11165abstract.
Study III	Graßmann, C., & Schermuly, C. C. (2017). The role of neuroticism and supervision in the relationship between negative effects for clients and novice coaches. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*. Advance online publication.	Graßmann, C., & Schermuly, C. C. (2017, May). *Side effects in coaching: The role of neuroticism and supervision*. Presentation at the 18th Congress of the European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology, Dublin, Ireland.
Study IV	Graßmann, C., Schölmerich, F., & Schermuly, C. C. (2017). *The relationship between working alliance and client outcomes in coaching: A meta-analysis*. Manuscript submitted for publication.	Graßmann, C., Schölmerich, F., & Schermuly, C. C. (2017, October). *The relationship between working alliance and client outcomes in coaching: A meta-analytic review*. Poster presentation at the 10th Annual Coaching in Leadership and Healthcare Conference of the Institute of Coaching, Harvard Medical School, Boston, Massachusetts, USA. **[Honored with the Best Poster Award]**
		Graßmann, C., Schölmerich, F., & Schermuly, C. C. (2017, September). *Beziehungsqualität im Coaching: Eine Meta-Analyse.* Vortrag auf der 10. Fachgruppentagung Arbeits-, Organisations- und Wirtschaftspsychologie der Deutschen Gesellschaft für Psychologie, Dresden.

3.1 STUDY I: ANTECEDENTS OF NEGATIVE EFFECTS FOR CLIENTS

The first study focuses on negative effects for clients. While Schermuly and colleagues (2014) offered a list of possible negative effects for clients, they did not survey clients directly. This study builds up directly on their work and is the first to analyze negative effects for clients from the clients' perspective. Moreover, the first study tests the relationship quality between clients and coaches, coaches' perceived competence, and clients' motivation to change as potential antecedents.

This study surveyed a field sample of clients who completed coaching within the last 12 months. A total of 111 German clients completed the survey, of which 42 clients took part in the follow-up survey eight weeks later.

The results demonstrated that 67.6% of the clients experienced at least one negative effect. On average, they reported 3.46 ($SD = 4.23$) negative effects. In this sample, the frequency and intensity was slightly higher compared to the prior results from the coaches' perspective (Schermuly et al., 2014). Nonetheless, the order of frequencies of the specific negative effects was comparable. This shows that clients and coaches, in independent samples, reported the same negative effects to be frequent. Concerning the proposed antecedents, the number of negative effects was associated with the relationship quality between clients and coaches and perceived competence of the coach. The number of negative effects was not related to clients' motivation to change. The antecedents explained 29.5% of the variance of the number of negative effects for clients (including gender and age as control variables). Eight weeks later, only relationship quality predicted the number of negative effects.

This study was the first to suggest antecedents for negative effects for clients, namely relationship quality and coaches' competence. Clients' motivation to change did not appear to be an antecedent, at least not from the clients' perspective. As this is the first study to suggest antecedents of negative effects for clients, it remained unclear if this is replicable from the coaches' perspective.

3.2   STUDY II: ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE
EFFECTS FOR COACHES

While the first study only focused on negative effects for clients, Study II investigates the antecedents and consequences of negative effects for coaches as well as the relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches. Prior studies used a German sample of coaches (Schermuly & Bohnhardt, 2014; Schermuly, 2014). This study contributes by analyzing negative effects for coaches in an international sample of coaches. It further contributes by exploring low relationship quality, negative effects for clients, low goal attainment, and coaches' perceived competence as potential antecedents. Beyond the main goals of this dissertation, coaches evaluated their health and well-being to determine the importance of negative effects for coaches.

An international sample of 275 professional coaches took part in the survey. Most coaches worked in the United States (34.2%), Australia (13.8%), and Great Britain (13.1%). The coaches evaluated their last completed coaching process in a time-lagged design. Negative effects for coaches and their potential antecedents were assessed at the first measurement time point and the consequences for coaches' health and well-being eight weeks later ($N = 96$).

The majority of coaches (94.9%) reported at least one negative effect regarding their last completed coaching process. On average, they experienced 7.04 (SD = 4.78) negative effects for themselves. These findings match the prior results of Schermuly (2014) in a German sample of coaches. The potential antecedents have been analyzed with structural equation modeling, which exhibited a good model fit (see the full-length manuscript for the statistical details). Low relationship quality was not only related to a higher number of negative effects for clients, but also to a higher number of negative effects for coaches – replicating the finding of Study I and extending it to negative effects for coaches. Furthermore, low goal attainment and a higher number of negative effects for clients were related to lower perceived competence as a coach, which was in turn related to a higher number of negative effects for coaches. These antecedents accounted for 38% of the variance of the number of negative effects for coaches. Furthermore, a higher number of negative effects for coaches was related to coaches' perceived stress and sleep disturbance eight weeks later. Negative effects for coaches explained 28% of the variance of perceived stress and 5% of the variance of sleep disruption.

This study contributed a first examination of antecedents for negative effects for coaches, from the coaches' perspective. Thereby, it also replicated the findings of Study I for explaining negative effects for clients from a new perspective. This study is the first to integrate the concepts of negative effects for clients and negative effects for coaches and suggests that they are related to each other. The questions remained if the relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches holds true when examined from the clients' perspective and under which circumstances this relationship emerges.

3.3   STUDY III: NEGATIVE EFFECTS FOR CLIENTS AND NOVICE COACHES

Building on the results of Study I and II, the third study investigates the relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches in more detail. In particular, it directly compares both clients' and coaches' perspectives on negative effects for clients. In analyzing the whole group of participants, this study did not allow for a potential overestimation of their frequency, which attenuates a potential selection bias in prior studies. A sample of novice coaches enabled insight into a new subgroup of coaches and how this may change the prevalence of negative effects. Furthermore, this study investigates coaches' neuroticism and the use of supervision as two intervening variables. It also allows a discussion in the light of antecedents for negative effects for coaches.

A student sample was used to achieve a randomized controlled experiment, where Master's students were trained as coaches. Bachelor's students were their clients. A total of 29 dyads of matched clients and coaches took part in this study. Half of the coaches used supervision during coaching and the other half after coaching completion. Coaches' neuroticism was assessed after the first coaching session and negative effects for clients and coaches were assessed after coaching completion.

The results show that 72.4% of the clients reported at least one negative effect ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 4.32$). The same percentage of coaches reported at least one negative effect for their client ($M = 1.72$, $SD = 1.69$). Every coach reported at least one negative effect for themselves ($M = 9.21$, $SD = 5.09$). Strikingly, the clients' evaluations were not associated with their coaches' evaluation of negative effects for clients. From the clients' perspective, the number of negative effects for clients was not related to the number of negative effects for coaches – but there was a relationship from the coaches' perspective. From the coaches' perspective and for coaches who used supervision only after coaching completion, the negative effects for coaches were related to negative effects for clients and coaches' neuroticism. Moreover, coaches' neuroticism moderated the relation

between negative effects for clients and for coaches, in such that coaches experienced more negative effects when they perceive more negative effects for their clients and were high in neuroticism. The model explained 66.5% of the variance of negative effects for coaches who used supervision only after coaching completion. For coaches instead who used supervision already during coaching, negative effects for clients were not related to negative effects for coaches. Although coaches' neuroticism was still related to negative effects for coaches, it did not moderate the relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches. The model explained 26.7% of the variance of negative effects for coaches who used supervision during coaching.

This study contributed a more thorough analysis of the relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches that has been found in Study II. By using matched dyads of clients and coaches for the first time, this study showed that this relationship only occurs when coaches evaluate negative effects for their clients, which draws further attention to the significance of the employed perspective (coach vs. client). Furthermore, it suggests that coaching supervision may be useful to prevent this relationship, in particular for coaches who are high in neuroticism.

3.4   STUDY IV: A META-ANALYSIS ON THE WORKING ALLIANCE IN COACHING

The first and second study within this dissertation suggested that the working alliance[2] between clients and coaches acts as an antecedent for negative effects. The fourth study complements them by meta-analytically studying the relationship between working alliance and coaching outcomes for clients. This study further explores the role of clients' and coaches' perspectives.

A meta-analysis was used to determine the strength and heterogeneity of the relationship between working alliance and coaching outcomes for clients. Synthesizing 26 samples ($N = 3{,}510$ coaching processes), this meta-analysis considers a wide range of coaching outcomes for clients: coaching satisfaction, self-reflection and insight, self-efficacy, effectiveness, goal attainment, and negative effects for clients.

The findings suggest a robust, medium-sized overall relationship between working alliance and coaching outcomes for clients. However, the heterogeneity of this effect size was large. Working alliance was related to all considered coaching outcome

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[2] The terms working alliance and relationship quality are seen as equivalent in this dissertation.

categories. The relationships were strongest to coaching satisfaction, coaching effectiveness, and self-reflection and insight. Furthermore, working alliance was related to higher goal attainment and self-efficacy. Moreover, working alliance was negatively related to negative effects for clients. Most notably, there was still a medium-sized effect when coaches evaluated working alliance and their clients evaluated coaching outcomes. This suggests that common method variance cannot be the sole explanation for this relationship, which lends support to the robustness of the findings.

This study contributed by suggesting that the working alliance between clients and coaches is a meaningful antecedent for coaching outcomes for clients, which includes not only a beneficial relationship to positive outcomes, but also for negative effects for clients. Future studies need to put more work into how coaches can foster a high quality working alliance towards their clients to capitalize on these beneficial relationships.

4   GENERAL DISCUSSION

4.1   THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS FOR NEGATIVE EFFECTS IN COACHING

This dissertation pursued three goals (see Chapter 2.4): exploring negative effects in coaching from both the clients' and coaches' perspectives, understanding the relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches, and identifying their antecedents for their prevention. Accordingly, the included studies yield theoretical implications for these three dissertation goals.

4.1.1   Negative Effects in Coaching From Clients' and Coaches' Perspectives

The first goal was to determine the frequency and intensity of negative effects for clients and coaches. For this purpose, Study I used a client sample, Study II used an international sample of professional coaches, and Study III employed a student sample of matched client-coach dyads. Table 4 delineates the core findings on this first goal.

Throughout a diverse range of samples, the frequencies and intensities of negative effects for both coaches and clients exhibited a comparable pattern (see Table 4). The prevalence of negative effects seems to be high: More than half of the clients experienced negative effects in coaching (regardless of if measured from their own perspective or from the coaches' perspective) and nearly every coach experienced negative effects for themselves. Intensities were between low and medium-sized. It is important to mention here that Study III attenuated a potential selection bias, because it analyzed the whole group of participants. Thus, there is no indication for an overestimation of the assumed mean frequency and intensity. These findings align well with first empirical findings of Schermuly and colleagues (2014) for clients and Schermuly (2014) for coaches. It suggests that novice coaches may perceive more negative effects for their clients (Study III) than more experienced coaches do (Study I-II), but more studies are needed for a direct comparison. Taking together the diverse samples, the attenuation of selection bias in Study III, and the consistent pattern, the high frequency and low to medium-sized intensity of negative effects seem to be a robust phenomenon. Therefore, these findings might be generalizable across diverse samples.

The difference in perspective can only be examined for negative effects for clients, where both coaches and clients could be asked to evaluate negative effects for clients. The findings are contradictory. In independent field samples (Study I and II),

clients and coaches reported frequencies, numbers, and intensities that do not deviate strongly from each other (see Table 4). However, these studies did not use dyad samples, where clients and coaches were matched to each other. The findings must thus be interpreted with caution. In a matched sample of clients and novice coaches (Study III), results revealed a thought-provoking pattern. Clients and coaches reported strikingly similar frequencies, numbers, and intensities of negative effects for clients. However, coaches who reported many negative effects for their clients were not necessarily the ones where clients actually experienced many negative effects. This lends support for the assumption that the employed perspective is crucial for evaluating negative effects for clients and that research should discriminate between clients' and coaches' perspectives.

In sum, the studies included in this dissertation support the high prevalence of negative effects for clients (with more than every second client) and the even higher prevalence for coaches (with nearly every coach). Furthermore, they draw attention to the likely difference in clients' and coaches' perspectives on this phenomenon. Future studies are needed to determine not only if clients and (experienced) coaches agree in their evaluations, but also when they disagree and how this may impact coaching processes and outcomes.

Table 4. Core Findings on the Frequencies and Intensities of Negative Effects for Clients and Coaches

Study characteristics			Negative effects for clients			Negative effects for coaches		
Study	Perspective	Sample	Frequency	Number	Intensity	Frequency	Number	Intensity
Studies included in this dissertation								
Study I	Clients	Field	67.6%	3.5 (4.2)	1.7 (0.9)	-	-	-
Study II	Coaches	Field	47.6%[a]	3.0 (3.0)[a]	2.7 (0.9)[a]	94.9%	7.0 (4.8)	2.5 (0.8)
Study III	Clients	Students	72.4%	2.4 (4.3)	2.7 (0.7)	-	-	-
	Coaches	(matched)	72.4%	1.7 (1.7)	2.3 (0.6)	100.0%	9.2 (5.1)	2.6 (0.9)
Studies prior to this dissertation								
Schermuly et al. (2014)	Coaches	Field	57.4%	2.1 (2.7)	1.3 (0.4)	-	-	-
Schermuly (2014)	Coaches	Field	-	-	-	94.2%	5.9 (4.7)	1.5 (0.3)

Note. The meta-analysis (Study IV) is not presented here. Intensity was measured on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = *strongly disagree*, 1 = *somewhat agree*, 2 = *moderately agree*, 3 = *strongly agree*, 4 = *completely agree*). Frequencies refer to at least one negative effect regarding the last completed coaching process (being evaluated with at least 1 = *somewhat agree*). The number and intensity of negative effects are presented as the mean, with standard deviations in parenthesis.

[a] based on a shortened list of 12 negative effects for clients (see the manuscript for more information).

4.1.2   The Relationship Between Negative Effects for Clients and Coaches

The second goal of this dissertation examined a potential relationship between negative effects for clients and negative effects for coaches. Figure 3 depicts its core findings, which have been generated by Study II and III. Study II introduced negative effects for clients as an antecedent for negative effects for coaches in a sample of professional coaches. Study III took up the evidence for this relationship and investigated it more thoroughly in a sample of matched dyads of clients and coaches. The latter let both clients and coaches evaluate negative effects for clients and examined the role of coaches' neuroticism and use of supervision as potential moderators of this relationship.

Explanatory Mechanism

Coaches' Perceived
Competence as a Coach

Negative Effects for Clients

Negative Effects for Clients
(Perceived by Clients)

Negative Effects for Clients
(Perceived by Coaches)

Negative Effects for Coaches

Negative Effects for Coaches
(Perceived by Coaches)

Boundary Conditions
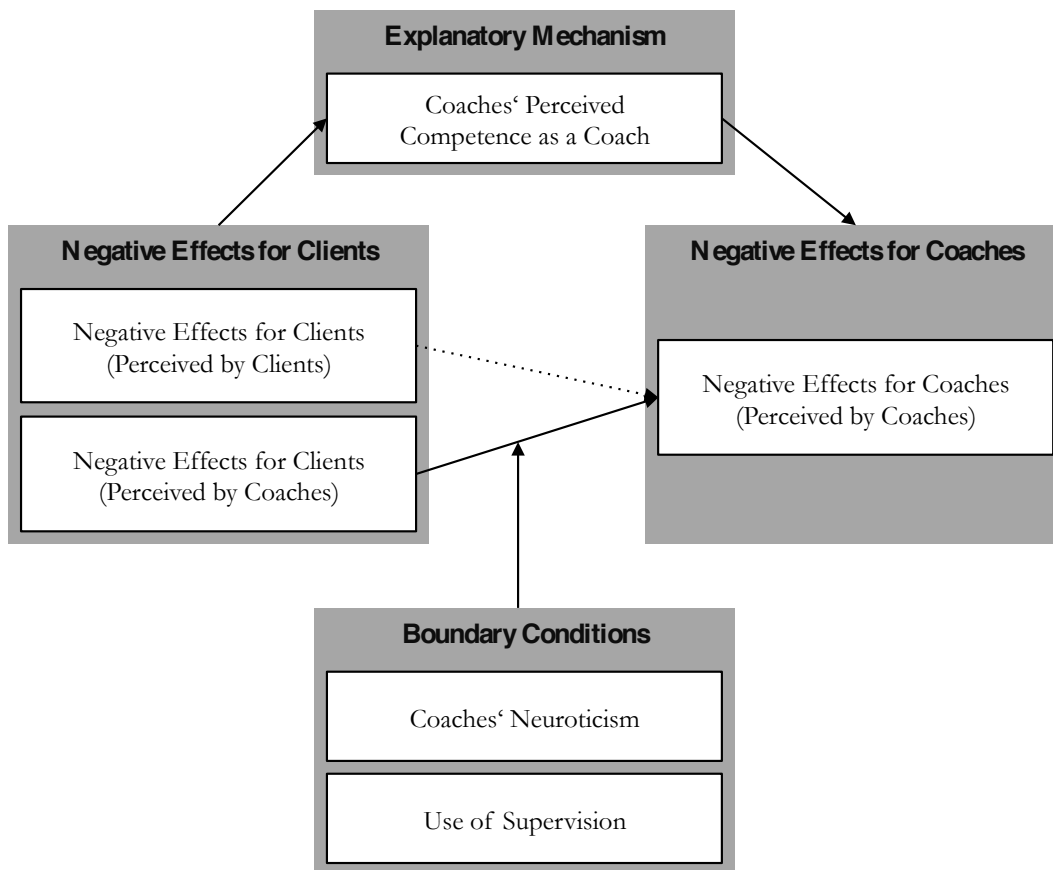
Coaches' Neuroticism

Use of Supervision

Figure 3. Core Findings on the Relationship Between Negative Effects for Clients and Coaches

Explanatory mechanism. Negative effects for clients may act as an antecedent for negative effects for coaches, because they function as a coaching-specific job demand for coaches. The job-demands-resources model (JD-R model, see Study II and III for

more details) may explain this relationship. The JD-R model assumes that job demands drain mental resources and thereby exhibit job strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). In line with this theoretical framework, coaches reported more negative effects for themselves when they experienced more negative effects for their clients. Above and beyond this connection, Study II indicates that the explanatory mechanism involves coaches' perceived competence as a mediator in this relationship. Coaches who experienced negative effects for their clients, felt less competent as a coach, and experienced more negative effects for themselves. This aligns well with the prediction of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1995) that assumes that self-perceived competence mediates the relationship between past performance accomplishments (in this case negative effects for clients) and outcomes for the individual (in this case negative effects for coaches).

Boundary conditions. There seem to be strong boundary conditions on the relationship between negative effects for clients and negative effects for coaches. First and foremost, Study II and III indicated a relationship only from the coaches' perspective. Negative effects for clients, as evaluated from the clients' perspective, were not associated with negative effects for coaches. This indicates that this relationship exists only from the coaches' perspective and fuels the debate if subjective demands are better predictors of job strain than objective job demands (Cohen & Williamson, 1988; Rau & Henkel, 2013). However, these findings are based on two studies, where only one study examined the clients' perspective (Study III). It is likely that coaching experience shapes this relationship, especially given that coaches' perceived competence explains why this relationship occurs. Future research is needed to replicate the relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches from both perspectives, especially in a professional sample of coaches.

Coaches' neuroticism intensified the relationship between negative effects for clients and negative effects for coaches (Study III), in such that this relationship was stronger when coaches were high in neuroticism and did not use supervision during coaching. This matches the predictions of the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), which assumes that resources (such as low neuroticism and the use of supervision) can buffer the relationship between job strain (negative effects for clients) and negative outcomes for the individual (negative effects for coaches). The joint predictions of the use of coaching supervision and coaches' neuroticism were able to explain the conditions under which this relationship takes place. Study III showed that the relationship between

negative effects for clients and coaches did not occur when coaches used supervision during coaching and remedied the detrimental influence of coaches' neuroticism. This is interesting, because the use of supervision did not prevent negative effects in the first place, neither negative effects for clients nor for coaches. The use of supervision remedied though the relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches, which demonstrates beneficial indirect effects of supervision rather than direct effects. Little is known about how supervision helps to prevent this relationship. Future research may wish to investigate the specific mechanism how supervision unfolds its beneficial influence in coaching, such as via providing feedback or social support.

4.1.3 Antecedents of Negative Effects for Clients and Coaches

This dissertation investigated potential antecedents of negative effects for both clients and coaches: Relationship quality, coaches' competence, coaches' neuroticism, and the use of coaching supervision. Figure 4 depicts the core findings on these potential antecedents. These findings contribute the first empirically supported factors that can be integrated into the proposed research model by Schermuly and colleagues (2014).

Relationship quality. The relationship quality between clients and coaches is related to less negative effects for clients (Study I, II, and IV), and less negative effects for coaches (Study II). These findings fuel the importance of relationship quality as a critical success factor in coaching (Bluckert, 2005) and introduce its additional importance as an antecedent for negative effects. Study IV demonstrates meta-analytically that the relationship quality has a broad spectrum of effects: from overall satisfaction with coaching, over goal attainment, up to negative effects for clients. Although the effects were highest for client satisfaction, the relation to goal attainment and negative effects was still medium-sized and robust against sensitivity analysis. Moreover and in line with social exchange theory, the relationship quality between clients and coaches seems to affect both partners of the relationship (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Duck & Wood, 1995). Both clients and coaches appear to benefit from high quality relationships for preventing negative effects.
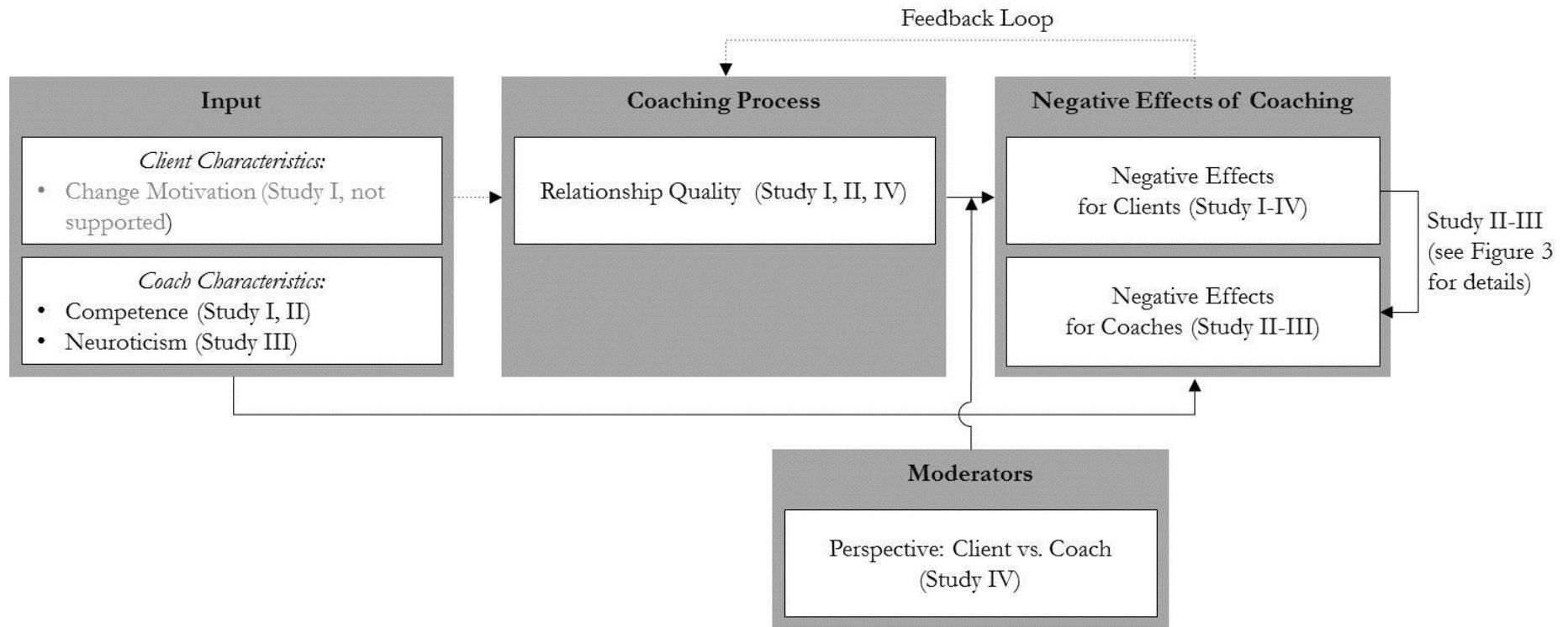
Figure 4. Core Findings on the Antecedents of Negative Effects.

Note. Dashed lines indicate links that have not been covered by this dissertation and are up to future research. The relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches is an extension of this framework and is not depicted here in favor of simplicity.

Competence of the coach. Coaches can perceive themselves as more or less competent as a coach, and clients may perceive their coaches as more or less competent for their topic in coaching. Both seem to be related to negative effects in coaching (Study I-II). Study I demonstrated that clients perceived more negative effects when they felt their coaches were less competent for their coaching topic. Study II presented, from the coaches' perspective, that coaches' perceived competence as a coach mediated the relationship between negative effects for clients and goal attainment on negative effects for coaches. This finding aligns well with the predictions of social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1995) by showing the importance of feelings of competence for clients and coaches. This implies that fostering coaches' competence, as perceived by clients, may prevent negative effects for clients (Study I) and, as perceived by coaches, for coaches (Study II). However, research is scarce on this antecedent of negative effects. Future research should investigate the quality of coaching education programs and coaching experience as potentially less subjective measures of coaches' competence. This would allow determining if objective coaching competence better predicts negative effects for clients and coaches than perceived competence of the coaches. This would add suggestions for coaching education and how clients and organizations select their coaches.

Coaches' neuroticism. According to the JD-R model, low neuroticism represents a personal resource that can lower job strain and buffer the negative effects of job demands (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Individuals who are high in neuroticism are more likely to worry, focus on what can go wrong, and experience less self-worth, which lessens their ability to deal with challenging situations (McCrae & Costa, 2006). Study III showed that coaches who are high in neuroticism reported more negative effects for themselves, their clients, and were more affected by them. However, coaches' neuroticism did not inflate the experience of negative effects for coaches in a professional sample of coaches (Study II). This may be due to prior coaching experience that may lessen the effect of coaches' neuroticism, because experienced coaches might perceive themselves as more competent as a coach than novice coaches. Future research should investigate in more depth if and how coaching experience and neuroticism jointly predict negative effects for clients and coaches.

Coaching supervision. The findings of this dissertation are also relevant to the current debate over coaching supervision. There is a community of coaches who believe all coaches should use supervision regularly as good practice (Hawkins, 2008). But this is

not a universally held view (Lawrence & Whyte, 2014) and there is still no clear evidence that supervision enhances actual outcomes (Möller & Kotte, 2015). This dissertation scratches this debate, as Study III tests if coaching supervision can prevent the relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches. The results imply that the use of supervision seems to prevent this relationship for coaches who are high in neuroticism. But supervision did not decrease the number of negative effects for clients and coaches per se, which indicates a complex pattern of indirect effects. More research is needed on the question if coaches should use supervision to prevent negative effects. It remains largely unclear which coaches profit the most of supervision (Joseph, 2016), but novice coaches who are high in neuroticism may be among those coaches.

4.2   IMPLICATIONS FOR COACHING PRACTICE

This dissertation yields implications for evidence-based coaching, which is important for clients, coaches, organizations, and coaching education. These implications for coaching practice are derived from the theoretical implications outlined above. Detailed implications per study can be found in the full-length manuscripts.

First of all, *clients* should be informed that, besides positive outcomes, negative effects can emerge during or after coaching. This seems to be indicated given their high frequency. This includes not only their frequency, but also their low to medium-sized intensity, and the importance to speak about them openly as the coach might under- or overestimate them. Relationship quality was shown to be a critical antecedent for negative effects for clients, so clients should assess in the first coaching encounter whether a trustful and close relationship can emerge with their prospective coach. This is not only relevant to prevent negative effects, but also to facilitate higher goal attainment. Clients may also hire coaches who they feel are competent for the topic that they want to work on and work with coaches who use supervision.

This dissertation offers suggestions for *coaches* as well. For being able to inform their clients about potential negative effects, coaches themselves need to know about them: which negative effects can occur, when they arise, how they emerge, and how they can be prevented. Concerning the antecedents of negative effects for clients, coaches should regularly reflect on the relationship quality towards their clients. Coaches should not only rely on their own evaluations but also let their clients evaluate the relationship quality and outcomes that they achieved with the help of coaching. Continuing professional development, such as further training, may help to enhance perceived and

actual competence as a coach. Besides this, coaches should be informed about negative effects for themselves. This seems to be indicated as they are related to coaches' health and well-being. The knowledge that nearly every coach experiences at least one negative effect for himself or herself may help to reduce its taboo and let coaches talk about them. Moreover, coaches may use supervision to reduce the possible negative impact of negative effects for clients on themselves. This may be indicated, if coaches feel less emotionally stable.

Although this dissertation does not employ the organizational perspective, there are also practical implications for *organizations* that offer coaching for their employees. To be able to select a suitable coach, it seems to be beneficial to recruit a large pool of potential external coaches. This may make it easier for clients to pick the coach who most optimal suits them – with respect to the potential for high quality relationships and best matching competence for the topics that they want to work on in coaching. Organizations should pick coaches for this pool who use supervision and are informed about negative effects, especially for clients.

Research on negative effects plays a far-reaching role in the regard of *coaching education and professionalization*. The taboo topic that is built around negative effects and coaching failure (Kilburg, 2002) impedes not only the education of coaches, but also gaining new insight about them and therefore the possibility to prevent or reduce them. Finally, the taboo lets coaches attribute the occurrence of negative effects on their own coaching competence and strains coaches. As Lindberg (2006) put it, "legions of newly minted coaches [are] entering the marketplace" (p. 250) and coaching educators and professional associations should inform coaches about negative effects. This may relieve coaches from the pressure and nudge their further information and support seeking. Moreover, coaching supervision may be a useful suggestion. This seems to be especially indicated for those coaches who are high in neuroticism, as they seem to be more affected.

4.3   GENERAL STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

This dissertation comes with strengths and limitations alike. One strength of the project is that each study *replicated* the main results of the preceding study and went a step further on its own. The first study replicated the frequencies and intensities of negative effects for clients found by Schermuly et al. (2014), but now by surveying the clients directly. Moreover, it presents relationship quality as an antecedent of negative effects for

clients. Study II replicated the predictive power of the relationship quality from the coaches' perspective and extended its influence on negative effects for coaches. Furthermore, it introduced the relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches. Study III picked up on this relationship and replicated it from both the clients' and coaches' perspective. Above and beyond that, it adds how this relationship is shaped by coaches' neuroticism and the use of supervision. In times where the reproducibility of psychological science is debated (Open Science Collaboration, 2015), this ongoing study development is of particular interest. A single study almost never provides sufficient evidence for or against an effect and its explanation (Open Science Collaboration, 2015) and the respective replications in this dissertation increase confidence in the reliability of its findings. Moreover, this dissertation used *multiple methodological approaches*, such as time-lagged designs, a field experiment, and a meta-analysis, which contributes to the robustness of the findings.

Another methodological strength concerns *common method variance*. Common method variance (CMV) may occur when perceptual data is gathered from a single source at one point in time, which might inflate the tested relationships (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). To attenuate common method variance, multiple measurement time points were used (Study I-III). Study III remedied the possible effects of CMV by using data from both clients and coaches. This indicates that a potential common method bias is unlikely to fully explain the found relationships.

Besides these methodological strengths, it should be mentioned that this dissertation contributes on a *theoretical basis* to the coaching literature by applying theories from the broader field of industrial and organizational psychology to the specific context of coaching. For instance, the joint predictions of job demands-resources theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1995) were used for the relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches and for identifying potential antecedents of negative effects. Furthermore, the included studies demonstrated that social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005) can be used to explain the role of the relationship quality between clients and coaches. This contributes not only to a deepened understanding of what happens in coaching, it also contributes to *practical implications* for coaches, their clients, and coaching educators.

Alongside these strengths, this project does not come without limitations. One major limitation relates to the use of *subjective measures* for investigating negative effects. The findings illustrate how the differential perspectives of clients and coaches affect their

evaluation. Objective measures, such as interaction analysis, would complement the findings because they depict the coaching process itself, which would validate the core findings on the supported antecedents. This would particularly provide information about the considered process variables, such as how relationship quality unfolds its influence on negative effects for clients and coaches.

Another limitation of this dissertation is the use of mainly correlational approaches that prohibit *causal assumptions*. This mainly concerns the findings on the antecedents of negative effects. Study I to III used time-lagged data and Study IV employed a meta-analytical approach, but the findings are nonetheless inherently correlational. Only Study III used an experimental design to draw causal assumptions on the effect of coaching supervision. Future research should follow this path and use experimental designs to validate the proposed antecedents of negative effects. Yet it might be difficult to accomplish. Ethical constraints are strong boundaries for research on negative effects, which make it hard to manipulate their antecedents – having in mind that they may foster negative effects. Cross-lagged designs might at least help to determine if negative effects and their antecedents exhibit a reciprocal influence.

Another limitation concerns the use of *sum scales* to measure the *number* of negative effects. Although sum scales are widely used for instance in psychotherapy research (e.g., Duncan et al., 2003) and no other measurement was available, sum scales only provide a broad perspective on the investigated phenomenon. For instance, the included studies did not investigate the development of specific negative effects. Given that this dissertation threw first light on how negative effects emerge for clients and coaches, future research may want to investigate these relationships with a narrower focus on specific negative effects, such as the development of the most frequent negative effects for clients (e.g., declined job satisfaction or performance).

4.4 CURRENT TRENDS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

This dissertation forms a queue in the tremendous efforts of researchers who investigate potential coaching outcomes and their limits (e.g., the factors that affect if, how, and how intense they occur). The agenda for future research is manifold and the very next steps for negative effects in coaching are suggested here.

To overcome the limitations of the current subjective measures, future studies should use new *measurement and research designs*. For instance, in the meantime of this dissertation, research started to use qualitative approaches to negative effects for clients

(Schermuly & Graßmann, 2016). Interviews with coaches based on Critical Incident Technique showed that they did not evaluate negative effects as necessary for goal attainment, but that they were able to cope with them during coaching. Urgently needed are longitudinal and experimental designs for replicating causality assumptions and shaping theory. This concerns the potential antecedents of negative effects, such as relationship quality or coaches' competence. For instance, it would be interesting to assess relationship quality after every coaching session to illustrate its development and influence over the entire coaching process. These approaches include amongst others the development of economic scales for their integration in larger projects. An objective research design, such as interaction analysis, is lacking completely so far for the investigation of negative effects, but may be a promising design to get a glimpse into the highly individual coaching processes. This may be particularly interesting for relationship quality and its potential reciprocal interplay with negative effects, but also for additional antecedents such as types of questions that have not been investigated so far.

The coaching literature requires *coaching theories* that are developed specifically for the needs of coaching. As an applied discipline, coaching research seems to be guided by phenomena that clients and coaches experience in practice. This approach has merits as it is more likely to be of interest for practitioners. However, theoretically based and reproducible knowledge is strongly needed in coaching (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007). One common way to employ theories is by borrowing them from neighboring disciplines (Whetten, Felin, & King, 2009), such as in this dissertation. Using social exchange theory (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005), job demands-resources theory (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017), and social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1995) has proved to be valuable in this dissertation. However, these theories were not originally developed for the context in which coaching takes place and the boundaries that coaches and clients encounter, such as the short-termed relationship, organizational constraints, or financial aspects. Theories are needed that are sensitive for the coaching context and this dissertation proposes two research models (see Figure 3 and 4) that might guide future investigations.

Further understanding is needed of the *relationship between negative effects for the three focal actors*: clients, coaches, and organizations. In particular, future studies may wish to investigate the relationship between negative effects for clients and for their organizations. For instance, Oellerich (2016) proposes that negative effects for clients precede negative effects for organizations. It is probable that negative effects for clients are closely related to negative effects for organizations, such as regarding the worsened

relationship to employees, colleagues, and supervisors, or clients' decreased job satisfaction, motivation, and performance. Given that there is a relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2017) this piece is missing in the puzzle so far but would help organizations to better understand the outcomes of their decisions.

Moreover, future research may want to investigate the *relative power of positive and negative effects*. An investigation of the negative asymmetry (Labianca & Brass, 2006; Taylor, 1991) seems to be promising, as negative experiences in general are shown to better explain outcomes than positive experiences (Labianca & Brass, 2006; Taylor, 1991). For instance, client dropout has been introduced to the coaching literature and was shown to be related to negative effects for clients (Schermuly, 2017). The literature on negative asymmetry would suggest that negative effects for clients better predict client dropout than positive effects, but future research has to test this assumption in coaching. Alongside negative effects in coaching, unintended positive effects (in terms of positive side effects) are likely as well. To broaden the scope of coaching outcomes in this direction, researchers should clarify their definition and when they emerge. Positive effects are also thinkable for coaches. This may involve compassion satisfaction, which has been found for workers in other helping relationships (e.g., Sprang, Clark, & Whitt-Woosley, 2007)

Last but not least, this dissertation flags the starting point for investigating antecedents of negative effects for clients and coaches. Yet *additional antecedents* are needed for the prevention of negative effects. This includes research on how to prevent them in advance and to reduce them if they have already occurred. Moreover, more research is needed on the *consequences* of negative effects. This dissertation showed that negative effects for coaches are associated with their health and well-being, but little is known if this holds true for clients. This knowledge would be fruitful to motivate coaches and clients to prevent negative effects in advance. Research should further test concrete interventions, such as coaching supervision (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2017) or explaining potential negative effects in the first coaching session. This may allow practitioners applying scientific knowledge in their practice and finally contribute to close the research-practice gap in coaching (Möller, Kotte, & Oellerich, 2013).

5   CONCLUDING REMARKS

Research on negative effects in coaching has opened the field for investigating a wider spectrum of coaching outcomes than has been studied before. Evidence-based coaching, which acknowledges both positive *and* negative outcomes, will further contribute to advance the theory and practice of the next decade of coaching professionalization. Considering negative effects as additional outcomes will allow coaching scholars and practitioners to have a more complete understanding of not only what coaching can provoke for clients and coaches, but also how negative effects emerge. This dissertation contributed to these questions by using diverse perspectives, integrating multiple coaching outcomes, analyzing the relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches, and investigating what predicts their occurrence. Researching the antecedents of negative effects will allow the field to move past the question of whether negative effects occur, which has already received support, to better understand how they emerge. Coaching researchers now need to support coaches to identify more opportunities for the prevention of negative effects and finally help clients to get the best out of coaching.

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7   FULL-LENGTH MANUSCRIPTS

This dissertation includes four studies that are presented here in their full length. The published papers are presented as they were published by the journals that accepted them for publication (Study I and III). The submitted studies (Study II and IV) are presented as manuscripts, formatted according to APA standards and journal guidelines.

Side Effects of Business Coaching and Their Predictors From the Coachees' Perspective

Abstract

Sound research demonstrates substantial positive effects of business coaching, but little is known about potential side effects. This study sheds light on the characteristics of side effects of coaching from the coachees' perspective and investigates three possible predictors: relationship quality between coach and coachee, the coach's expertise, and the coachee's motivation to change. Data was collected in a time-lagged design from 111 coachees who received business coaching in Germany. Coachees reported that side effects were frequent but with low to moderate intensity. The number of side effects was negatively associated with relationship quality at both measurement times and with coach's expertise at t_1. Results expand knowledge about side effects of coaching and reveal opportunities for how they can be reduced.

Keywords: expertise, motivation to change, negative effects, relationship quality

From the Coachees' Perspective: Side Effects of Business Coaching and Their Predictors

Business coaching can be described as a dyadic helping relationship established between a professional business coach and a coachee in order to optimize the coachee's work-related functioning (Theeboom, Beersma, & van Vianen, 2014). This includes enhancing the coachee's work performance and satisfaction, and thus increasing the effectiveness of the organization (Kilburg, 1996). A recent meta-analysis (Theeboom et al., 2014) indicated that coaching is effective for a broad scope of desirable outcomes, such as for enhancing performance, well-being, coping, work attitudes, and goal-directed self-regulation. The accompanying effect sizes ranged from medium to large. However, Theeboom et al. (2014) also showed that these positive effects differ widely between studies, suggesting considerable heterogeneity in coaching effectiveness.

While positive effects of coaching for coachees are evident, research focusing exclusively on positive outcomes does not meet the high complexity of experiences (Eby & Allen, 2002). In close relationships, like in coaching, negative experiences are a natural phenomenon, which we should not easily neglect (Duck & Wood, 1995). The investigation of negative effects was considerably promoted in other helping relationships like psychotherapy (e.g., Barlow, 2010; Berk & Parker, 2009; Lilienfeld, 2007), mentoring (e.g., Eby & McManus, 2004), and supervision (e.g., Ramos-Sánchez et al., 2002). In line with these fields of research, we aim to contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the full spectrum of coaching effects, by exploring the negative effects of coaching. This enables coaching practitioners to identify, attenuate, or even prevent potential negative effects of business coaching.

Until recently, researchers examined negative effects for coachees only theoretically (Berglas, 2002; Hodgetts, 2002; Kilburg, 2002). For instance, Berglas (2002) argued that coaches could misjudge the coachee's situation or unintentionally abuse their influence on the coachee and the organization. Kilburg (2002) added that negative effects of coaching need to

be carefully reviewed and listed possible negative consequences for the coachee including family problems, mental and physical health problems, loss of well-being, as well as loss of ambition and motivation. These first attempts illustrate that negative effects might arise in coaching and propose possible predictors that contribute to them. However, a thoroughly designed conceptual framework for negative effects was still needed for an empirical exploration.

Recently, Schermuly, Schermuly-Haupt, Schölmerich, and Rauterberg (2014) proposed this framework and defined negative effects of coaching for coachees in terms of side effects as "all harmful or unwanted results for coachees directly caused by coaching that occur parallel to or after coaching" (p. 19). Based on this definition and their subsequent empirical exploration of side effects, a list of possible side effects for the coachees emerged. It can be utilized as framework because it allows estimating the frequency and intensity of specific negative side effects. However, the authors conducted their study from the perspective of the coach, with one measurement time, and performed an explorative data analysis.

The current study makes three contributions to the literature. First, it provides the coachees' view on possible side effects of coaching. It is unclear how coachees experience side effects and whether their experience is comparable to the one assumed by their coaches so far. For this purpose, we asked directly a large field sample of coachees which side effects they experienced and compared their frequency and intensity to prior findings of Schermuly et al. (2014).

Second, it is important to understand which predictors lead to the emergence of side effects to enable their prevention or attenuation. While research started to investigate predictors of coaching success, little is known about what contributes to side effects of coaching so far. In this study, we test three variables that previous research has found to be

related to coaching outcomes: relationship quality between coach and coachee, coach's perceived expertise, and coachee's motivation to change.

Third, it is unclear if there are temporal effects of the side effects of coaching. The effects of coaching can be long-term (Shipper & Weers, 2011) or unfold their influence after some time has passed (MacKie, 2007). This might be a promising approach to side effects, since the influence of predictors under consideration might be delayed. To expand knowledge about these temporal effects, we investigate the predictors of side effects in a time-lagged design with two measurement times.

Side Effects of Coaching for the Coachee

Research has begun to explore the side effects of coaching empirically for both coachees (from the coach's perspective; see Schermuly et al., 2014) and coaches (Schermuly, 2014). Schermuly and colleagues found that in more than the half of the coaching processes, coaches reported that at least one side effect occurred for their coachee (2014). On average, about two side effects per coaching process were perceived by coaches. Additionally, although the reported side effects occurred frequently, they were not intense and were short in duration. They found that the three most frequent side effects were the triggering of in-depth problems that could not be dealt with (26%), the unwanted modification of coaching goals without coachee's approval (17%), and the experience of a decreased sense of meaning towards work (17%).

However, it remains unclear how frequent and intense coachees experience side effects when they are asked directly. Although coaches are trained in observing and evaluating progress and the outcomes of their service, they have access only to information that they receive from their coachees. In addition, they might tend to maintain their self-worth as helpful coaches, which can be compromised by the occurrence of negative side effects (Schermuly et al., 2014). Therefore, surveying coachees directly might provide promising insights into their actual perception of side effects. Thus, we want to explore the following

research questions concerning the characteristics of side effects from the coachees'

perspective:

RQ1: How frequent and intense are side effects of coaching from the coachees'

perspective?

RQ2: To what extent do side effects from the coachees' perspective differ from the

results of Schermuly et al. (2014)?

Predictors of Side Effects of Coaching

The other aim of our study is to investigate possible predictors of side effects of

coaching. In the first empirical approach to detect predictors of side effects of coaching, we

rely on the orientation model of predictors and outcomes by Greif (2007), which proposes that

predictors can represent characteristics of the coach, characteristics of the coachee, and

success factors in the coaching process itself. We tested predictors from each category, which

were found to be associated with positive coaching outcomes so far: relationship quality

between coach and coachee, perceived expertise of the coach, and coachee's motivation to

change. We tested all hypotheses at both measurement times.

Relationship quality between coach and coachee. A growing body of literature

proposes relationship quality between coach and coachee as the central predictor of coaching

success (Bluckert, 2005; McKenna & Davis, 2009; De Haan, Duckworth, Birch, & Jones,

2013). Relationship quality refers to a strong collaborative bond between a professional coach

and a coachee and implies agreement on the goals and tasks of coaching (Baron & Morin,

2009; Bordin, 1979).

High relationship quality is considered to be key for change because deep levels of

trust and attachment are needed for revealing protected inner experiences and being

vulnerable in front of another person (Alvey & Barcley, 2007; Bordin, 1979). The impact of

relationship quality has a rich research history in psychotherapy, where meta-analyses show

that it contributes moderately, but consistently to therapy outcomes (Horvath, Del Re,

Flückinger, & Symonds, 2011; Martin, Garske, & Davis, 2000). In coaching research, the impact of the relationship quality has been demonstrated as well, e.g. on satisfaction with coaching, perceived utility of coaching, performance, and overall evaluation of coaching (Boyce, Jackson, & Neal, 2010).

Relationship quality may also have an impact on side effects of coaching. Close and trusting relationships are associated with willingness to disclose (Alvey & Barcley, 2007; Farber & Hall, 2002). A coachee who does not feel comfortable in the relationship with the coach may not completely reveal his or her sensitive inner feelings and thoughts. This lack of information makes it more difficult to deal properly with the coachee's issues and enhances the possibility of side effects. In line with our assumption, relationship quality was associated with negative experiences in mentoring (Eby & McManus, 2004) and supervision (Ramos-Sánchez et al., 2002). Thus, we expect that:

H1: Relationship quality between coach and coachee is negatively associated with the number of side effects of coaching.

Perceived expertise of the coach. In coaching literature, perceived expertise is usually seen as a part of the coach's credibility and refers to the coach being perceived as having the necessary credentials to meet the coachee's needs (Boyce et al., 2010). Coaches' expertise is considered to be composed of their perceived "coaching competence, business, management, leadership, and political expertise" (Boyce et al., 2010, p. 917) and may also include the relevance of the coach's experience for the coachee's needs (Wycherly & Cox, 2008).

Perceived expertise stems from psychotherapy research and is likewise proposed as an important predictor of coaching outcomes (e.g., Alvey & Barclay, 2007; Feldman, & Lankau, 2005; Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006; Greif, 2007). If coaches possess the appropriate expertise for coachees' needs, they will have the ability to consequently lead coachees to the intended changes. This assumption can be confirmed by several empirical findings, which indicate that

perceived expertise is positively related to coaching effectiveness in terms of higher

satisfaction with coaching and better leadership performance (Boyce et al., 2010; Bozer,

Sarroz, & Santora, 2014; Sue-Chan & Latham, 2004).

A coach's expertise could also be a relevant factor for the emergence of negative

effects of coaching (Hodgetts, 2002; Kilburg, 2002). If the coach's expertise does not fit the

coachee's particular needs, the coach will be less able to assess the coachee's important issues.

Through this, the coach may stir issues while being less capable of fostering proper solutions.

Moreover, if the coachee perceives the coach as having less expertise, he or she may not be

open for the coach's feedback, which would be necessary to find solutions (Bozer et al.,

2014). In conclusion, we assume that low perceptions of coaches' expertise are related to an

increase in the number of side effects.

H2: Perceived expertise of the coach is negatively associated with the number of side

effects of coaching.

Motivation to change. On the part of the coachee, motivation to change is an

important factor of coaching success (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Harakas, 2013; Kretzschmar,

2010; McKenna & Davis, 2009). Motivation to change refers to the coachee's willingness to

invest time and energy into the coaching process and to accept personal responsibility for

transfer and change, even when facing difficulties during the coaching process (McKenna &

Davis, 2009).

Motivation is necessary to activate the self to initiate behavior (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

As Kilburg (2002) stated, coaching will not work without active participation of the coachee.

Participant's motivation is indeed consistently related to positive intervention outcomes, as in

the field of coaching (Jansen, Mäthner, & Bachmann, 2004), training (Colquitt, LePine, &

Noe, 2000) and psychotherapy (Beutler, Moleiro, & Talebi, 2002).

Motivation to change may also be related to side effects. The coachee may get more

sensitized for weaknesses and become aware of them in daily life. Self-reflection has

important positive effects on learning (Mezirow, 1990), but is also associated with more stress and anxiety (e.g., Grant, Franklin, & Langford, 2002). If the coachee is not motivated to implement changes, he or she is sensitized to personal weak points, which will remain over time. Thus, we conclude that less change-motivated coachees will perceive more side effects.

H3: Coachee's motivation to change is negatively associated with the number of side effects of coaching.

Method

Sample

A total of 111 German coachees completed the questionnaire. Their average age was 38.4 years (*SD* = 10.9) and 55.0% were female. The majority of the coachees (71.2%) had a university degree and were executives (39.6%), followed by employees (38.7%), and self-employed (14.4%). Coachees also provided information about their coaches: the average age of coaches was 45.7 years (*SD* = 7.6) and 52.3% of coaches were female. The coaching lasted less than 5 months for 43.2% of the coachees, between 6 and 10 months for 28.9%, between 11 and 15 months for 14.4%, and more than 16 months for 13.5% of the coachees. On average, 4.2 different topics (*SD* = 2.6) were dealt with during coaching. The five most frequent topics were personality development (52.3%), reflection of one′s own work role (45.9%), career development (35.1%), personal motivation (35.1%), and help during times of change (34.2%).

Procedure

As a requirement of our study, the coachees had to have finished their business coaching in the past twelve months. We did not consider coachees who were currently in a coaching, because we wanted the data to be unaffected by temporal course of the coaching process. The restriction to twelve months allowed coachees to remember key characteristics of their coaching.

Research in the field of coaching faces high boundaries concerning the implementation of empirical studies (de Haan & Duckworth, 2012), such as difficult access to coachees due to high anonymity standards. To obtain a large field sample of coachees for both high external validity and statistical power, we recruited coachees via several channels. We contacted coachees and professional business coaches via websites where professional coaches provide their contact details for potential coachees (e.g., http://www.coach-datenbank.de) and a social network for professionals in Germany (http://www.xing.de). We additionally made our research public in the professional field of coaching in Germany via an e-mail newsletter provided by a major German coaching organization (Coaching Newsletter by Christopher Rauen). The majority of the participants were invited via a member of our research team (48%), 32% were invited by their coach, and 20% via a different channel like the newsletter. We found no significant difference between recruitment channels regarding the number of side effects.

Participants needed 14 minutes on average to complete the online questionnaire and were guaranteed that their data would remain confidential at all times during and after the project. Participants were invited again to participate in the follow-up questionnaire eight weeks later. This time span allowed coachees to implement considerable changes, but was short enough to attribute them to the coaching. In adoption of Kirkpatrick's model of training, MacKie (2007) suggests a time span of one to three months to assess effects of transfer. Forty-two participants completed this questionnaire, which took another five minutes. Drop out analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between participants who dropped out and participants who took part in the follow-up questionnaire in the number of side effects of coaching at the first measurement time. Additionally, we compared the findings for the full sample at t_1 (N = 111) with the results for the smaller sample at t_1 (N = 42). The ß-values of the predictors as well as the Adjusted R^2–value of the regression equation are

comparable to the full sample results. Hence, we concluded that the smaller sample at t_2 does

not differ substantially from the full sample and can be used for calculating effects at t_2.

Measures

The questionnaire included measures of relationship quality between coach and

coachee, perceived expertise of the coach, coachee's motivation to change, and side effects of

coaching, as well as several demographic variables. The follow-up questionnaire included,

again, an evaluation of the side effects of coaching.

Side effects of coaching. For the assessment of the number, intensity, and duration of

side effects, we adopted the scale of Schermuly et al. (2014). This scale has demonstrated its

criterion validity by showing, for example, that the number of side effects is negatively

associated with coaching success (Schermuly et al., 2014). In order to ensure clarity regarding

the understanding of the side effects of coaching, the definition of side effects was presented

first. Coachees were asked to indicate only those effects that could be labeled as negative or

undesirable consequences and that are directly related to the coaching. The 29 side effects

were introduced by "As a result of the coaching…" followed by the specific side effect (e.g.,

"I developed more anxiety about my job" or "I felt less competent at my job"). Coachees

rated each side effect on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = *strongly disagree*, 1 = *somewhat agree*, 2

= *moderately agree*, 3 = *strongly agree*, 4 = *completely agree*).

The total number of side effects for each coachee was determined by summing up all

effects that were evaluated with at least 1 (*somewhat agree*) or higher. For calculating the

mean intensity of one side effect, we used only those cases where this specific side effect was

reported. In addition, participants indicated whether side effects were short-dated (*lasted less

than four weeks*) or long-dated (*lasted more than four weeks*). Answers to those items were

not obligatory, because the coachee did not always experience every side effect and thus

could not evaluate its duration. The alpha coefficient for the number of side effects was .87 at

both measurement times.

Relationship quality between coach and coachee. The relationship quality between coach and coachee was measured by six items on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Jansen, Mäthner, and Bachmann (2004) developed these items to investigate predictors of coaching outcomes in a German sample (for example, "We had a trusting relationship" and "Our relationship is characterized by openness"). This scale has shown its criterion validity with relationships to variables like goal attainment and satisfaction with coaching (Jansen et al., 2004). The alpha coefficient in our study was .88.

Perceived expertise of the coach. The perceived expertise of the coach was assessed using McCroskey and Young's (1981) subscale of competence, which was for instance proved as a reliable measure in a sample of supervisors evaluated by their employees (Teven, McCroskey, & Richmond, 2006) and in an experimental setting examining hiring decisions regarding interviewees (Neuliep, Hintz, & McCroskey, 2005). The subscale of competence consists of six items, which were scaled on a seven-step semantic differential (e.g., *"expert"-"inexpert", "competent"-"incompetent", "informed"-"uninformed"*). Three items were reverse-coded. The alpha coefficient was .75.

Motivation to change. Coachee's motivation to change was measured by three items on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Items were developed by Jansen et al. (2004) for their investigation of predictors for coaching outcomes in a German sample. Items were as follows: "I was very motivated to work seriously on my issues", "I was very motivated to change relevant aspects in my (working) life", and "I was very motivated to implement changes in my (working) life which were initiated in coaching". This scale proved its criterion validity with relationships to variables like satisfaction with coaching and behavior-related changes (Jansen et al., 2004). The alpha coefficient was .84.

Control variables. Research in other helping relationships has shown that age and gender are associated with intervention outcome, like in psychotherapy (e.g., Ogrodniczuk, Piper, Joyce, & McCallum, 2001) and mentoring (Finkelstein, Allen, & Rhoton, 2003; Ragins

& Cotton, 1999; Scandura & Williams, 2001). Thus, we controlled for age and gender of both the coach and the coachee. The length of the relationship can also influence coaching outcomes like the coachees' self-efficacy (Baron & Morin, 2009). Neither the coaching duration nor the number of coaching sessions was significantly associated with the number of side effects. To preserve power, we dropped this insignificant control variable from analyses.

Power Analyses

To determine the sample size for our research model, we conducted power analyses with the open-software tool G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009). We calculated the necessary sample size for the total R^2 value for a multiple regression analysis with seven independent variables (four control variables and three predictors), power equal to .80, and an alpha level of .05. G*Power yielded a sample size of 49 for a large effect size of f^2 = .35 and a sample size of 103 for a medium effect size of f^2 = .15. Hence, the selected sample size provided adequate power to detect a medium effect. At the second measurement time, power analysis yielded a sample size of 36 for a large effect and a sample size of 77 for a medium effect. Hence, our sample size at the second measurement time was adequate to detect large, but not medium effects.

<div style="text-align:center">**Results**</div>

We used the open-source statistical environment R (R Core Team, 2014) for all calculations. Means, standard deviations, correlation coefficients, and reliability estimates of our key variables appear in Table 1. The independent variables were only moderately correlated. The highest correlation can be found between coachee age and coach age, r = .42, p < .001, and for relationship quality and perceived expertise, r = .41, p < .001. To further test for multicollinearity among the independent variables, we examined the variance inflation factor (VIF) statistics. The results showed that the highest VIF value was 1.36, suggesting that multicollinearity was not present.

To test whether our measurement model fits adequately, we conducted confirmatory factor analyses with the R package lavaan (Rosseel, 2012). We compared a single-factor solution to a four-factor solution composed of relationship quality, coach's expertise, motivation to change, and the number of side effects. We found that the single-factor solution did not fit the data well ($\chi^2(104) = 311.56$, $p < .001$, CFI = .64, RMSEA = .13). The four-factor-model fitted the data satisfactorily ($\chi^2(99) = 126.99$, $p = .03$, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .05) and significantly better than the one-factor-model ($\Delta\chi^2(5) = 64.80$, $p < .001$).

We also examined the extent to which common method variance may have influenced our findings by using the CFA marker technique (Williams, Hartman, & Cavazotte, 2010). Post-hoc, we included coachee age as a marker variable, because the marker variable needs to be theoretically unrelated to the key variables (Lindell & Whitney, 2001) and coachee age was the variable with the smallest observed correlation in our data set (as recommended by Richardson, Simmering, & Sturman, 2009). In confirmatory factor analyses, we compared a baseline model with fixed factor loading and error variance for the marker variable with a marker model with additional factor loadings from the marker variable to the items of the substantive variables. A chi square difference test between those two models obtained no significant result, $\Delta\chi^2(3) = .27$, $p = .97$. We thus conclude that our findings are not severely biased by common method variance.

Frequency and Intensity of Side Effects of Coaching

Out of the 111 coachees, 75 experienced at least one side effect in their coaching (67.6%). On average, 3.46 side effects (*SD* = 4.23) per coaching occurred. When a side effect occurred in a coaching, the average intensity was 1.70 (*SD* = 0.94). Compared to results of Schermuly et al. (2014), side effects in our sample occurred for 10.1% more coachees. The number of side effects per coaching was slightly higher ($\Delta M = 1.4$, $\Delta SD = 1.5$), as well as the average intensity of the reported side effects ($\Delta M = 0.40$, $\Delta SD = 0.54$).

Table 2 illustrates the frequency, intensity, and estimated duration by coachees for each side effect. The most frequently perceived side effects were the decrease of job satisfaction (31.5%), a decreased sense of meaning towards work (28.8%), the unwanted modification of coaching goals without coachee's approval (23.4%), the triggering of in-depth problems that could not be dealt with in the coaching (22.5%), and the decrease in life satisfaction (21.6%) and job motivation (21.6%).

Compared to previous findings of Schermuly and colleagues (2014), the separate frequency differences of each side effect range from -3.5% to +18.5%. Side effects, whose frequency differed in our sample more than ten percent, are in the following order: decrease in job satisfaction (+18.5%), decrease of job motivation (+12,7%) and life satisfaction (+11.8%), decrease of job meaningfulness (+11.7%), decrease of relationship quality with colleagues (+11.3%) and job performance (+11.2%), worsened work-life-balance (+10.9%), and decrease in relationship quality with employees (+10.2%).

We additionally determined whether the frequency order of each side effect differed between the two studies. More specifically, we analyzed whether the individual frequencies of each side effect are evaluated differently- above the general tendency of reporting higher frequencies on the part of the coachee. For this purpose, we calculated Spearman's rank correlation coefficients between the individual frequencies of each side effect from the sample of Schermuly et al. (2014) and our sample. The results showed that the correlation between both frequency evaluations of side effects was large and significant, $\rho = .87, p < .001$. This indicated that the frequency order of each side effect was comparable between the perspectives of coachees and coaches.

Thus, findings referring to the first and second research question provided support for the conclusion that side effects from the coachees' perspective are comparable to the findings of Schermuly et al. (2014), in such that they occur frequently, with a low to moderate

intensity, and with a comparable rank order. Nevertheless, the frequency and number of side effects was slightly higher from the coachees' perspective.

Predicting the Number of Side Effects at t_1

For testing our hypotheses, we conducted a hierarchical regression analysis predicting side effects of coaching from relationship quality, motivation to change, and perceived expertise (see Table 3). In Step 1 we controlled for gender and age of coachee and coach. Out of these control variables in the first step, only coachee gender predicted significantly the number of side effects, $\beta = -.40$, $p < .001$. Female coachees reported more side effects than male coachees. The control variables explained 18.6% of the variance of the number of side effects, $R^2 = .19$, $F(4,106) = 6.05$, $p < .001$. In Step 2, we entered the independent variables. The results showed that coachee gender, as a control variable, held its significant influence on side effects, $\beta = -.37$, $p < .001$. Further, the results demonstrated that the number of side effects was significantly predicted by relationship quality, $\beta = -.20$, $p = .04$, and perceived expertise, $\beta = -.28$, $p = .003$. Thus, Hypotheses 1 and 2 can be supported. Motivation to change did not predict the number of side effects, $\beta = -.01$, $p = .94$. Thus, Hypothesis 3 cannot be supported. The regression equation accounted for 29.5% of the variance of side effects of coaching at t_1, $f^2 = .42$, and explained significantly more variance of the number of side effects than the control variables alone, $\Delta R^2 = .15$, $F(3,103) = 8.01$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = .20$.

Due to our skewed dependent variable we supplementary calculated robust regression with M-estimation and Huber-weighting with the R package MASS (Venables & Ripley, 2002). We additionally bootstrapped the M-estimators with 5,000 resamples. Results are comparable to the OLS regression concerning the β-values of our set of predictors. The number of side effects at t_1 is still predicted by coachee gender, $\beta = -.30$, $t = -3.66$, 95% CI: -.50; -.13, relationship quality, $\beta = -.21$, $t = -2.41$, 95% CI: -.44; -.01, and perceived expertise, $\beta = -.23$, $t = -2.69$, 95% CI: -.55; -.02. Motivation to change did not have an influence on the number of side effects at t_1, $\beta = .00$, $t = .02$, 95% CI: -.36; .18.

Predicting the Number of Side Effects at t_2

Coachees evaluated the side effects again at the second measurement time eight weeks later. Neither coachee gender was significantly associated with the number of side effects at t_2, $\beta = -.06$, $p = .74$, nor coach gender, $\beta = -.07$, $p = .69$, coachee age, $-.04$, $p = .82$, or coach age, $\beta = -.03$, $p = .89$. For achieving higher statistical power for our calculations at t_2, we thus dropped these control variables from further analyses. Then, we regressed the number of side effects at t_2 on our set of predictors at t_1 (see Table 4). Relationship quality had a significant influence on the number of side effects at t_2, $\beta = -.43$, $p = .01$, lending further support to Hypothesis 1. Perceived expertise did not predict the number of side effects at t_2, $\beta = -.002$, $p = .99$. Thus, Hypothesis 2 cannot be supported at t_2. Again, motivation to change did not significantly predict the number of side effects at t_2, $\beta = -.28$, $p = .06$, although exhibiting a substantially higher β-value compared to t_1. However, Hypothesis 3 cannot be supported at t_2. The regression equation accounts for 23.5% of the variance of side effects at t_2, Adjusted $R^2 = .24$, $p = .004$, $f^2 = .32$.

Again, we supplementary calculated robust regression with M-estimation and Huber-weighting due to our skewed dependent variable. As before, results were comparable to the OLS regression concerning the β-values of our set of predictors. The number of side effects at t_2 was still predicted by relationship quality, $\beta = -.47$, 95% CI: -1.05; -.03. Perceived expertise did not have an influence on the number of side effects at t_2, $\beta = .00$, 95% CI: -.49; .29, as well as motivation to change, $\beta = -.26$, 95% CI: -.71; .11.

Additionally, we wanted to determine whether the predictors exhibited a delayed or indirect effect on the number of side effects at t_2. For this purpose, we performed mediation analyses to test whether the effects of our predictors at t_2 were mediated by the number of side effects at t_1. We conducted mediation analysis only for relationship quality, because it was the only predictor of side effects at both measurement points. When tested independently, both relationship quality, $\beta = -.46$, $p = .002$, and number of side effects at t_1, $\beta = .59$, $p < .001$,

significantly predicted the number of side effects at t_2. The effect of relationship quality was reduced to nonsignificance, $\beta = -.29$, $p = .07$, when number of side effects at t_1 was included in the regression equation, $\beta = .49$, $p = .001$. To test the significance of the indirect effect we used bootstrapping based on 5,000 resamples. Bootstrap confidence intervals revealed an indirect effect of relationship quality on the number of side effects at t_2, $\beta = -.23$, 95% CI: -5.40; -.04, suggesting a full mediation model.

Discussion

We found general support for the existence of side effects of coaching from the coachee's perspective and findings were comparable to those of Schermuly and colleagues (2014). Coachees experienced side effects of coaching with a high frequency, but with a low to moderate intensity. Coachees in our sample reported higher frequencies than the coaches in the previous study. Additionally, this study identified negative associations between the number of side effects and both relationship quality and perceived expertise at t_1, and negative associations with relationship quality at t_2. Moreover, motivation to change might have a delayed influence on the number of side effects at t_2. According to Cohen's (1988) recommendations for the interpretation of effect sizes, the proposed set of predictors exhibited a medium effect in predicting the number of side effects at both measurement times.

Theoretical Implications

Our findings contribute to the current coaching literature by presenting further evidence for the existence of side effects of coaching for coachees by delivering insight into the actual perception of coachees. Side effects of coaching are a frequent part of the coaching relationship. This finding is in line with Duck and Woods' (1995) notion that negative relational experiences rather than positive aspects only should be considered in all close relationships. Side effects combined with the broad spectrum of positive effects (Theeboom et al., 2014) build a more complex and adequate picture of coaching experiences.

In comparison with Schermuly and colleagues' (2014) research, similar patterns of side effects emerged. This replication provides additional evidence for their content validity. However, coachees reported slightly more side effects than coaches in the previous study. This is consistent with the assumption that coaches may not have all information or try to maintain their self-worth (self-worth motivation theory, e.g., Covington, 1984). But we have to interpret these results with caution, because we surveyed coachees without directly comparing their perceptions to those of their respective coaches. For investigating whether coachees report more side effects than their coaches, future studies should match both perspectives.

Relationship quality was the only predictor that was associated with the number of side effects at both measurement times, with a larger effect at t_2 than at t_1. This draws on the conclusion that it is indeed an important predictor of coaching outcomes (Bluckert, 2005; McKenna & Davis, 2009; De Haan et al., 2013) and may play a key role like in psychotherapy (Bordin, 1979). Research should keep investigating how to establish high relationship quality between coach and coachee. For instance, behavioral similarity between coach and coachee in terms of affiliation and dominance was shown to be related to a higher relationship quality (Ianiro, Schermuly, & Kauffeld, 2013).

The effect of the coach's expertise is in line with Greif's (2007) coaching model, which proposes expertise as one of the main characteristics of the coach for coaching outcomes. The missing effect of the coach's expertise at t_2 may be attributable to the moderate correlation between relationship quality and coach's expertise. Relationship quality has been shown to function as a mediator to explain positive coaching outcomes (Baron & Morin, 2009; de Haan et al., 2013). More experienced coaches may be better in establishing a good relationship with the coachee or coachees might expect more experienced coaches to be better and therefore become more easily comfortable with the coach. The possible mediating function of relationship quality should be further examined by future studies.

Although not reaching significance, motivation to change had a higher impact at t_2 compared to t_1, which might indicate a delayed influence on the number of side effects. This lends support to Greif's (2007) model in suggesting motivation to change as a required characteristic of the coachee. The delayed influence may be due to the point that obstacles in maintaining changes might become apparent after the coaching is completed and lead to side effects in less change motivated coachees.

Interestingly, findings also showed that female coachees reported significantly more side effects than male coachees at t_1, but not at t_2. Important to note is that female coachees did not differ in their evaluation of relationship quality, expertise, and motivation to change (see Table 1). Confounds may lead to this specific effect at t_1. For instance, females seem to be more active in self-reflection than males (e.g., Csank & Conway, 2004), which would heighten the possibility to detect and report side effects. In coaching literature, research concerning gender effects is scarce (Stout-Rostron, 2013). Why female coachees reported more side effects than male coachees only at t_1 remains unclear. Additional research is necessary to determine whether this is a robust phenomenon or just an artifact in the data. One might additionally use the coach's evaluations to see whether coaches also report more side effects for their female coachees. If so, future studies should identify reasons for the occurrence of this effect.

Practical Implications

The practical implications of our study can be applied to the working practice and selection of coaches. Because side effects do occur frequently in coaching, coaches, their trainers, and their supervisors should raise their awareness for side effects, without necessarily questioning the positive outcomes of their service. Coaches should use routine supervision to discuss how side effects can be identified and reduced in their current coaching projects (Schermuly et al., 2014). Coachees should be informed about potential side effects in order to

receive a complete picture of what to expect and give them the chance to discuss them in coaching.

Relationship quality plays a central role for positive outcomes, but also for side effects of coaching. Increasing relationship quality might be one way to prevent side effects in advance or lower their number. Essential for the development of a high relationship quality is the basic principle of confidentiality (Alvey & Barcley, 2007). The coach should be congruent and authentic, and show unconditional positive regard for the coachee, as well as an empathetic understanding of the coachee's situation and goals (Rogers, 1957). In sum, coaches should put a lot of effort in relationship building to give their coachees a secure place to foster openness and disclosure and to work effectively with each other – achieving goals and preventing side effects.

Given the connection between perceived expertise of coaches and the number of side effects, coaches should not hesitate to emphasize their capabilities (McKenna & Davis, 2009). Coachees should be careful about selecting the suitable coach for their topic. Coaches should reflect on handing over the coachee to another coach when their own expertise is not matching the coachees' needs. From the organizational perspective, a pool of coaches with diverse experiences and competences seems to be beneficial to provide a broad range of suitable coaches. Furthermore, our results support the tremendous attempts of professional coaching organizations to establish competence guidelines and to certify coaches who can demonstrate these competences (e.g., International Coach Federation). Professional coaches who constantly develop their skills and experiences might enhance their perceived expertise for a broad spectrum of coachees' needs and consequently prevent side effects.

Because motivation to change might have a delayed effect on the number of side effects, coaches should identify the coachees' level of motivation in the beginning of a coaching and work with the coachee to enhance it if necessary. This can be done, for instance, by recognizing ambivalences and helping to build arguments for change (Passmore, 2007).

Likewise, organizations should be careful about selecting employees for their coaching programs. If a potential coachee does not acknowledge the necessity for changing his or her attitudes or behavior, a coaching might display side effects as well.

Limitations

There are several limitations to our study. First, although theoretical reasoning and a time-lagged design are introduced, the use of cross-sectional data does not allow us to make causal predictions. Further examinations are needed to test the causal direction of influence.

Second, another concern may be the retrospective data collection. We analyzed the influence of time passed by after coaching completion on the number of side effects. We found no significant relationship, $ß = -.01$, $p = .92$, indicating that our results are not severely influenced by the time passed by after coaching completion. However, additional data from within the coaching process seem to be valuable to remedy a possible retrospective recall bias.

Third, the use of perceptual data collected from a single source raises methodological concern regarding common method bias. However, results of the CFA marker technique (Williams et al., 2010) indicated that our findings are not severely biased by common method variance. We also limited the risk of common method bias by incorporating different scale formats and scale anchors (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003).

Fourth, the drop out rate of participants from the first to the second measurement time is high. Although we sent out reminders, the sample of the follow-up questionnaire is relatively small. Both samples did not differ in the number of side effects and the partial sample displayed comparable results as the full sample. However, a larger sample at the second measurement time would be beneficial for an adequate statistical power to detect medium and small effect sizes in our set of predictors.

Despite these limitations, the current study provides an important extension of coaching research by investigating side effects from coachees' perspectives in a large sample of coachees. It seems to be common that coachees experience side effects due to their

coaching. The predictors of side effects should be examined as systematically as those of

positive coaching effects to allow coaches and coachees to reduce or avoid harmful side

effects for the coachee.

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Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations

Variable	N	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Coachee gender	111	1.45	.50	-								
2. Coach gender	111	1.48	.50	.26**	-							
3. Coachee age	111	38.43	10.95	.01	-.07	-						
4. Coach age	111	45.75	7.64	-.03	.05	.42***	-					
5. Relationship quality	111	4.24	.66	.14	-.06	.26**	-.00	(.88)				
6. Perceived expertise	111	6.25	.73	-.01	.02	.13	.17	.41***	(.75)			
7. Motivation to change	111	4.48	.70	-.14	.08	.16	.09	.20*	.30***	(.84)		
8. Number of side effects t_1	111	3.46	4.23	-.39***	-.02	-.12	.09	-.39***	-.34***	-.07	(.87)	
9. Number of side effects t_2	42	3.36	4.13	-.07	-.09	-.06	-.05	-.46**	-.27	-.33*	.59***	(.87)

Note. Internal consistency values (Cronbach's alphas) appear across the diagonal in parentheses where applicable. Gender was coded with 1 = male and 2 = female. Coachees evaluated relationship quality and motivation to change on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Perceived expertise was evaluated on a 7-step semantic differential with a higher number indicating a higher perceived expertise. * = $p < .05$; ** = $p < .01$; *** = $p < .001$ (two-tailed).

Table 2

Side Effects of Coaching for Coachees

Side effect As a result of the coaching…	Frequ. in %	Intensity *M*	*SD*	Duration in % short	long	*N*
my job satisfaction decreased	31.5	1.94	1.11	44.8	55.2	29
I experienced my work as less meaningful	28.8	1.69	0.93	42.1	57.9	19
my original goals were modified without my approval	23.4	1.46	0.81	43.8	56.3	16
in-depth problems were triggered that could not be dealt with	22.5	1.68	0.99	20.0	80.0	15
my life satisfaction decreased	21.6	1.67	0.96	55.6	44.4	18
my job motivation decreased	21.6	1.88	1.04	40.9	59.1	22
my work-life-balance worsened	19.8	1.45	0.67	73.7	26.3	19
my job performance fluctuated more strongly	19.8	1.82	0.91	50.0	50.0	18
relationship quality with the supervisor decreased	18.0	1.85	0.99	46.2	53.8	13
I felt less competent at my job	17.1	1.26	0.81	50.0	50.0	14
relationship quality with colleagues decreased	16.2	1.72	0.90	38.5	61.5	13
my job performance decreased	15.3	1.47	0.87	53.8	46.2	13
relationship quality with employees decreased	12.6	1.21	0.43	81.8	18.2	11
relationship quality with other family members decreased	9.9	1.55	0.82			
I developed a strong dependency towards my coach	9.9	1.27	0.91			
my influence in my work area decreased	7.2	2.25	1.28			
relationship quality with spouse decreased	6.3	2.14	1.07			
I was less able to self-determine how to proceed in my job	6.3	1.43	0.79			
third parties gained access to personal information about me	6.3	2.14	1.07			
I developed more anxiety about my job	5.4	1.33	0.52			
I consumed more alcohol, cigarettes or medications	5.4	1.67	0.52			
I was put into a precarious financial situation	5.4	2.17	1.17			
I changed employers and am now working under worse job conditions	4.5	2.60	0.89			

(e.g., poorer promotion opportunities or lower salary)			
symptoms of my existing psychological disorder increased	4.5	1.60	0.89
I unintentionally lost my job	3.6	2.50	1.29
I developed symptoms of a psychological disorder	1.8	2.00	0.00
a love affair/sexual contact occurred between my coach and me	0.9	4.00	0.00
a lawsuit between the coach and me was filed with the court	0.0	-	-
I had to pay for services that were not agreed to in advance	0.0	-	-

Note. The evaluation of duration was not obligatory. Only percentages are reported with ten or more evaluations.

Table 3

Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Number of Side Effects of Coaching From Relationship Quality, Perceived Expertise, and Motivation to Change

Predictor	Step 1				Step 2			
	B	*SE(B)*	ß	*t*	*B*	*SE(B)*	ß	t
Control variables								
Intercept	6.51	2.66		2.45*	20.17	3.93		5.14***
Coachee gender	-3.35	.77	-.40	-4.36***	-3.13	.73	-.37	-.43***
Coach gender	.51	.71	.06	.66	.43	.71	.05	.60
Coachee age	-.07	.04	-.18	-1.80	-.04	.04	-.09	-1.02
Coach age	.08	.05	.14	1.49	.09	.05	.16	1.74
Predictors								
Relationship quality					-1.27	.60	-.20	-2.12*
Perceived expertise					-1.63	.53	-.28	-3.05***
Motivation to change					.04	.53	.00	.07

Note. In the first step, the control variables together explained significant variance in side effects of coaching, $R^2 = .19$, $p < .001$. In the second step, the addition of relationship quality, perceived expertise, and motivation to change significantly increased the R^2 value to .34 (Adjusted $R^2 = .30$), $p < .001$.

* $p < .05$; *** $p < .001$.

Coaches Need to Take Care of Themselves:

The Antecedents and Consequences of Negative Effects for Coaches

Abstract

Prior research showed that coaches often experience negative effects in their work. The present study explores their antecedents and impact on coaches' health and well-being. In a time-lagged design and an international sample, 275 coaches evaluated their last completed coaching process. Negative effects for coaches and their potential antecedents were assessed at t_1 and the consequences for coaches' health and well-being at t_2. Results from structural equation modeling indicated that coaches experienced more negative effects when the relationship quality with their clients was low. When coaches perceived their client's goal attainment as low and a high number of negative effects for their clients, coaches felt less competent as a coach, and thereby experienced more negative effects for themselves. Coaches who experienced more negative effects at t_1 perceived more stress and impaired sleep eight weeks later (t_2). This is the first study to present specific antecedents of negative effects for coaches and may assist coaches to prevent negative effects when working with clients. Our findings support the importance of self-care in coaching. The use of a time-lagged design helps to rule out common method variance that may exist in prior research on the consequences of negative effects.

Keywords: coaching, competence, goal attainment, negative effects, relationship quality

Coaches Need to Take Care of Themselves: The Antecedents and Consequences of

Negative Effects for Coaches

Working as a coach has demanding features that differentiate their work from

other occupations and roles, such as mentors or leaders. Coaches are usually self-

employed and work independently from others. Because of high confidentiality (de

Haan, 2008), they can hardly seek support when they experience difficulties. Coaches

work in a competitive market where future contracts depend on their clients'

recommendations. They operate in a complex social system where clients seek to

attain personal development goals and their organizations may hold a more business-

oriented focus (Gray, Ekinci, & Goregaokar, 2011). Moreover, clients seek help in

difficult and often threatening circumstances (Kilburg, 2002), like clients being close

to burn-out, struggling with responsibilities, or being threatened by job loss.

So it is not surprising that many coaches find their work to be complex,

unpredictable, demanding, and emotionally charged (Hodge, 2016). Research

repeatedly shows that workers in helping relationships can be negatively affected by

their work, for example in psychotherapy (Figley, 2002; Killian, 2008; Linley &

Joseph, 2007), mentoring (Eby & McManus, 2004), and social work (Lloyd, King, &

Chenoweth, 2002). In coaching, the concept of negative effects for coaches has

developed only recently. They can be defined as all harmful and unwanted results for

coaches that are directly caused by coaching (Schermuly, 2014), such as being

personally affected by topics discussed during coaching or being scared to not fulfill

the role as a coach (Schermuly, 2014). Prior research showed that coaches often

experience negative effects from their work (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2017;

Schermuly, 2014). In a professional sample of coaches, 95% of the surveyed coaches

reported at least one negative effect regarding their last completed coaching process

(Schermuly, 2014). Similar findings were found in sample of novice coaches, where all coaches reported negative effects for themselves (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2017). Despite this high prevalence, the literature reveals little to help coaches face these problems. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first study that aims to explain why coaches experience negative effects in their work and may assist coaches to prevent them when working with clients.

Little is known about the consequences of negative effects for coaches and how important they are for them. A previous study found that coaches who experienced more negative effects felt more emotionally exhausted, perceived more stress, and felt less psychologically empowered (Schermuly, 2014). This study is the first and single empirical examination of this topic so far. However, it was explorative in nature and obtained data only at one point in time. Common method variance may thus be a potential concern (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). We use a time-lagged design to rule out common method bias that may exist in prior research on the consequences of effects. This allows a more refined determination of the importance of negative effects for coaches.

Our study contributes three key points to the current literature. First, we investigate antecedents for negative effects for coaches. We do so by examining potential job demands for coaches in their last completed coaching process. Specifically, we propose that coaches experience more negative effects when the relationship quality to their clients is low. Furthermore, we assume that when coaches perceive a low goal attainment and a high number of negative effects for their clients, they feel less competent as a coach, and thereby experience more negative effects for themselves. These potential antecedents may suggest how coaches can care for themselves. Second, this study examines the consequences of negative effects on

coaches' health and well-being to better understand their importance for coaches. In a time-lagged design, we test the association between negative effects for coaches and their perceived stress and sleep disturbance eight weeks later. Third, we explore which negative effects coaches experienced in their last coaching process to enhance knowledge about which negative effects coaches experience most frequently. For the first time, we use an international sample of coaches to assess negative effects.

Antecedents and Consequences of Negative Effects for Coaches

To provide first insights into the antecedents and consequences of negative effects for coaches, we rely on the health-impairment process of the job-demands resources model (JD-R model; Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). The JD-R model can be applied in many occupational settings to improve employee health and well-being (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). It assumes that job demands are aspects of work that require sustained psychological effort and therefore cause job strain (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Job strain in turn impairs individuals' health and well-being (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). We see negative effects for coaches as a specific job strain for coaches because they describe the harmful effects on the individual coaches caused by their work as a coach.

To explain negative effects for coaches and to consider the changing nature of coaches' work, this study used coaches' evaluations of their last completed coaching processes. Job demands can vary across work situations and time and this changing component explains considerable variance in negative work outcomes (Brauchli, Schaufeli, Jenny, Füllemann, & Bauer, 2013). Such a changing component may be best reflected by performance episodes that are thematically organized around goals (Beal & Weiss, 2013). Coaching processes are best suited as performance episodes,

because they are directly organized around the clients' goals. Furthermore, the JD-R model itself does not deliver an explanatory mechanism and future research should further explore the underlying processes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Our study contributes to this call by using social cognitive (Bandura, 1977, 1995) theory to explain why our set of antecedents (regarding the last completed coaching process as performance episodes) may be associated with coaches' health and well-being. In the following section, we first present the proposed antecedents of negative effects for coaches and close with their potential consequences.

Antecedents of Negative Effects for Coaches

The JD-R model suggests that every occupation has its own job demands (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014) which we will describe in the following regarding the coaching occupation. We argue that low relationship quality, low goal attainment, and negative effects of coaching for clients represent coaching-specific job demands that precede negative effects for coaches. Our research model is shown in Figure 1.

Relationship quality and negative effects for coaches. The relationship quality between coach and client refers to a sound collaborative bond between them and includes mutual agreement on the goals and tasks of coaching (Baron & Morin, 2009; Bordin, 1979). High relationship quality is associated with higher coaching success, satisfaction with coaching, perceived utility of coaching, and coaching effectiveness (Boyce, Jackson, & Neal, 2010; de Haan, Grant, Burger, & Eriksson, 2016; Grant, 2014). It is also associated with less negative effects of coaching for clients (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016), suggesting a broad spectrum of effects.

Due to its key role in the coaching processes, low relationship quality may represent a considerable socio-emotional demand when working as a coach. Coaches must engage strongly in relationship building, because they need their clients' trust

and willingness to open up on sensitive issues. Additionally, relationship quality has a

considerable impact on clients' coaching outcomes, which heightens its weight as a

potential job demand for coaches. Low relationship quality may foster coaches'

experience of strain, because it requires them to invest more emotional effort

(Schaufeli and Bakker 2004; Totterdell and Holman 2003; Xanthopoulou et al. 2013).

Moreover, problems in interpersonal relationships create psychological vulnerability

if the relationship is perceived as meaningful (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Thus,

coaches who report low relationship quality with their clients may be more vulnerable

to experiencing negative effects. We assume that the effort to establish and maintain a

high relationship quality act as a job demand within the JD-R model and therefore

expect that:

Hypothesis 1: Relationship quality is negatively related to the number of

negative effects for coaches.

Coaches' perception of client outcomes, coaches' perceived competence,

and negative effects for coaches. Little is known about how coaching outcomes for

clients relate to negative effects for coaches, e.g. how coaching failure affects coaches

in turn. We address this gap by utilizing social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977,

1995) as the explanatory mechanism that we will explain below. Specifically, we

propose that when coaches perceive clients' goal attainment as low and negative

effects for their clients as high, they feel less competent as a coach, and thereby

experience more negative effects for themselves. Clients' goal attainment and

negative effects are critical coaching outcomes that indicate coaches' past

performance in coaching. Goal attainment is the key outcome for coaching

interventions (Spence, 2007) and low goal attainment occurs when clients fail to make

substantial improvement towards the goals for which coaching has been contracted

(Kilburg, 2002). Coaching may also result in negative effects for clients. Negative effects for clients are all harmful or unwanted results for clients that are directly caused by coaching and occur during or after the coaching process (Schermuly, Schermuly-Haupt, Schölmerich, & Rauterberg, 2014). For instance, clients frequently experience a decrease in their job satisfaction, experience their job as less meaningful, or report the triggering of in-depth problems that could not be dealt with (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016). We argue that these coaching outcomes qualify for job demands for coaches because coaching processes are centered around them and put pressure on coaches who are often held accountable for them (de Haan, 2008).

We assume that these client outcomes, as experienced by the coaches, impact coaches' perceived competence as a coach. Perceived competence is a personal resource that describes the belief of mastering the specific demands at hand (Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1992; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). It focuses on a specific work role rather than global self-efficacy (Spreitzer, 1995). Therefore, coaches' perceived competence describes their belief in their capabilities for mastering their work as a coach. This belief is assumed to be malleable (Gist & Mitchell, 1992; Zhao, Seibert, & Hills, 2005), because it can vary between different clients and develop over time. In the following section, we explain why coaches' perception of low goal attainment and negative effects for clients may decrease their perceived competence, before turning to the relationship between coaches' perceived competence and negative effects for coaches.

Perceived goal attainment and negative effects for clients likely impact coaches' perceived competence. According to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1995), past performance accomplishments are the most effective and authentic predictor of perceived competence. If individuals perceive their past performance as

low, they feel less competent. Research repeatedly shows that past performance impacts perceived competence (see Sitzmann & Yeo, 2013, for a meta-analysis). For instance, teachers feel less competent when they are dissatisfied with their teaching performance (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007). We argue that in order to judge coaches' perceived competence, coaches are best suited to self-report the coaching outcomes for their clients. Although coaches and clients might differ in their evaluation, the coaches' own perception determines coaches' potential strain. The subjective interpretation of job demands is shown to better explain negative outcomes than objective job demands (Cohen & Williamson, 1988; Rau & Henkel, 2013). In a sample of novice coaches, negative effects for coaches were related to negative effects for their clients only when coaches evaluated them (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2017) - demonstrating that coaches' evaluations may lead to better predictions. We therefore argue that coaches feel less competent, if they perceive that their clients did not achieve their coaching goals and that they experienced a high number of negative effects. Given that these arguments establish a link between perceived client outcomes and coaches' perceived competence, we now turn to the relationship between perceived competence and negative effects for coaches.

Social cognitive theory assumes that low perceived competence activates detrimental cognitive and affective processes that elicit more stress and anxiety in demanding situations (Bandura, 1977, 1995). Low perceived competence leads to higher vigilance towards potential threats, facilitates disturbing thoughts, and reduces coping behavior, that magnifies the severity of potential threats (Bandura, 1995; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Indeed, low perceived competence has been shown to lead to burnout and stress in teachers (Schwarzer & Hallum, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Coaches' decreased perceived competence

after coaching may therefore lead to negative effects for coaches. For instance, the coach might question his or her judgements, techniques, and motivation, and can feel guilty, embarrassed, and anxious (see Kilburg, 2002, for a case description).

Combining our arguments from above on both relationships, and drawing on the joint predictions of the JD-R model and social cognitive theory, we propose that when coaches perceive clients' goal attainment as low and the number of negative effects for their clients as high, they feel less competent and therefore perceive more negative effects for themselves. This may demonstrate a mechanism that is unique for coaches, as compared to mentors for instance. Coaches depend on their clients' recommendations for future contracts. If clients are not satisfied with the outcomes of coaching, they will not recommend their coaches to other potential clients and their organizations will unlikely hire them again - which has negative financial repercussions and intensifies the pressure on coaches. Within the JD-R framework, job demands can negatively affect personal resources leading to negative work outcomes (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). For instance, research has shown that perceived competence mediates the effect of interpersonal work conflict on physical and psychological health (Lubbers, Loughlin, & Zweig, 2005), as well as the effect of the working environment (e.g. workload, control, and reward) on burnout (Laschinger, Borgogni, Consiglio, & Read, 2015). We therefore propose that:

Hypothesis 2a. Coaches' perceived competence mediates the relationship between goal attainment and the number of negative effects for the coach, such that goal attainment is positively related to coaches' perceived competence and thereby decreases the number of negative effects for coaches.

Hypothesis 2b. Coaches' perceived competence mediates the relationship between the number of negative effects for the client and the number of negative

effects for the coach, such that the number of negative effects for clients is negatively related to coaches' perceived competence and thereby increases the number of negative effects for coaches.

Consequences of Negative Effects for Coaches

According to the JD-R model, job strain leads to negative health outcomes for the individual (Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Adopting this perspective, we assume that coaches who perceive a high number of negative effects for themselves may also suffer from impaired health and well-being. To investigate the consequences of negative effects for coaches, we focus on two indicators: perceived stress and sleep disturbance. Perceived stress is the degree to which situations are appraised as stressful (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983). Sleep disturbance refers to the perception of adequacy and satisfaction with sleep, e.g. perceived difficulties with getting to sleep or staying asleep and restoration from sleep (Buysse et al., 2010; Cella et al., 2011). Both perceived stress and impaired sleep are good indicators of individuals' health and well-being because they are closely related to a large range of psychological and physical health problems. For instance, perceived stress is associated with overall mental health (Bovier, Chamot, & Perneger, 2004) and coronary heart disease (Hoevenaar-Blom, Spijkerman, Kromhout, van den Berg, & Verschuren, 2011; Kashani, Eliasson, & Vernalis, 2012; Kivimäki et al., 2012). Sleep quality is related to burnout and depression (Rosen, Gimotty, Shea, & Bellini, 2006), health-related quality of life and well-being (Kuppermann et al., 1995; Steptoe, O'Donnell, Marmot, & Wardle, 2008), as well as cardiovascular disease (Hoevenaar-Blom et al., 2011; Kashani et al., 2012), for instance.

We suggest that negative effects for coaches will be positively associated with perceived stress and sleep disturbance. According to the JD-R model, high job strain

leads to negative outcomes through the gradual draining of mental resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Indeed, high job strain has been repeatedly shown to influence health, satisfaction, and well-being (e.g. Cropley et al., 2006; de Jonge et al., 2000; Killian, 2008; Kivimäki et al., 2012). This may be particularly true for coaches who experience a high number of negative effects in their work as a coach. Coaches who feel guilty or overchallenged, for instance, may affectively ruminate more about what happened in coaching, which costs them additional energy and mental resources. Impaired sleep has been shown to be strongly related to work-related worries, especially when they deal less with problem-solving and more with affective rumination (Cropley et al., 2006). Coaches may be prone to be affected by negative effects of their work because they have intense contact to their clients, their clients seek their help in challenging times, and their own job insecurity is present because of short termed contracts. A previous study in the field of coaching found that coaches who experienced more negative effects felt more emotionally exhausted, perceived more stress, and felt less psychologically empowered (Schermuly, 2014). However, this study was explorative and cross-sectional in nature. We expect this effect to be lagged in time as negative effects may need time to reveal their influence on health and well-being. Therefore, we test the impact of negative effects on perceived stress and sleep disturbance in a time-lagged design.

Hypothesis 3. The number of negative effects of coaching for the coach (t_1) is positively related to perceived stress (t_2).

Hypothesis 4. The number of negative effects of coaching for the coach (t_1) is positively related to sleep disturbance (t_2).

Method

Procedure

Coaches were recruited in February 2016. We identified professional coaches from Australia, Great Britain, and the United States via their contact details found online and sent them the link to our survey. Additionally, we made our research public in the professional field of coaches via an e-mail newsletter provided by the International Coach Federation (ICF), the largest network of coaches worldwide. Within their research assistance program, members who were interested in coaching research were invited to participate in our study. The response rate was 12.6%. Coaches were instructed to refer to their last completed coaching process that lasted at least three hours. We chose this procedure to reduce a possible selection bias, e.g. that coaches select the most successful or unsuccessful coaching process for this study. Participants needed 14 minutes on average to complete the online-questionnaire and were guaranteed that their data would remain confidential at all times during and after the project.

We invited the coaches to participate in the follow-up questionnaire eight weeks later. We chose this time interval because we assume that negative effects for coaches need time to reveal their influence on coaches' health and well-being and it should be long enough to detect possible consequences. For instance, this time interval was used when examining negative effects for clients (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016).

Sample

A total of 275 coaches completed the questionnaire. The majority of the coaches worked in the United States (34.2%), Australia (13.8%), and Great Britain (13.1%). Their average age was 52.7 years ($SD = 8.2$) and 72.7% were female. The majority of the coaches passed a coaching education program (97.5%). The coaches had on average 9.1 years ($SD = 6.0$) working experience as a coach and used 52.4%

(*SD* = 26.6%) of their working time for coaching. The coaches also provided the

following information about their clients: the clients were on average 42.5 years (*SD*

= 9.0) old and 60.0% were female. The coaching process lasted on average 6.5

months (*SD* = 4.7) and the majority of the coaches (56.4%) were hired by the client

directly. On average, 3.4 different topics (*SD* = 1.8) were dealt with during coaching.

The three most frequent topics were clarifying and pursuing clients' goals (41.8%),

improving communication (40.4%), and managing careers (38.5%). Ninety-six

coaches completed the second questionnaire, which took an additional five minutes.

The majority came from the United States (19.8%), Australia (17.7%), and Great

Britain (18.8%). Their average age was 52.7 years (*SD* = 8.2) and 63.5% were female.

Measures

The first questionnaire included measures of negative effects for coaches and

clients, relationship quality, goal attainment, coaches' perceived competence, and

several demographic variables. The follow-up questionnaire contained measures of

perceived stress and sleep disturbance.

Negative effects of coaching for coaches. The number of negative effects for

coaches was assessed by the scale of Schermuly (2014), which contains 30 negative

effects on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = *strongly disagree*, 1 = *somewhat agree*, 2 =

moderately agree, 3 = *strongly agree*, 4 = *completely agree*). The negative effects

were introduced by "During the coaching…" followed by the specific negative effect

(e.g., "I felt too much responsibility towards the client" or "I felt emotionally

exhausted"). Coaches evaluated the negative effects on how closely they applied to

them in their last finished coaching process. The total number of negative effects for

each coach was determined by summing all effects that were evaluated with at least 1

(*somewhat agree*) or higher. This scale has shown its criterion validity with

relationships to psychological empowerment, emotional exhaustion, and perceived stress (Schermuly, 2014). Cronbach's alpha was .85.

Relationship quality between coach and client. Relationship quality was measured by the Working Alliance Inventory - Short Form Revised (WAI-SR; Hatcher & Gillaspy, 2006). The WAI-SR relies on Bordin's (1979) model of relationship quality and consists of three subscales (bond, agreement on goals, and agreement on tasks). Example items include "My client and I respected each other" (bond), "My client and I had a common perspective of his/her goals" (goal), and "We agreed on what is important for my client to work on" (task). Coaches evaluated the items on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 *(strongly disagree)* to 7 *(strongly agree)*. This scale is the most widely used instrument for measuring relationship quality in coaching and for instance demonstrated its relationships with clients' motivation to transfer and goal attainment (e.g. Baron & Morin, 2009; Ianiro, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Kauffeld, 2014). Cronbach's alpha was .78. In the structural equation model, relationship quality was measured by the scale means of the three sub-facets.

Perceived goal attainment. We assessed the degree of goal attainment by using goal attainment scaling (GAS; Grant, 2003; Spence, 2006). Goal attainment scaling is widely used for determining coaching success (e.g. Grant, Curtayne, & Burton, 2009; Grant, 2003; Spence, 2007). Coaches were asked to identify up to three goals of their clients and rate them for perceived difficulty on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 *(very easy)* to 5 *(very difficult)*. They also rated the degree to which these goals were attained by the client on a scale from 0% to 100%. Goal attainment scores were calculated by multiplying the difficulty rating by the degree of goal attainment. In the

case of multiple goals, the mean rating of the goals was used. Cronbach's alpha was .71.

Perceived negative effects of coaching for clients. To assess the number of negative effects for clients we adopted a shortened version of Schermuly et al.'s (2014) scale. Coaches evaluated the 12 most frequent negative effects in how far they applied to their client in their last finished coaching process on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = *strongly disagree*, 1 = *somewhat agree*, 2 = *moderately agree*, 3 = *strongly agree*, 4 = *completely agree*). The negative effects were introduced by "As a result of the coaching…" followed by the specific negative effect (e.g., "the client's job satisfaction decreased" or "the client's job performance fluctuated more strongly"). The total number of negative effects for each client was determined by summing up all effects that were evaluated with at least 1 (*somewhat agree*) or higher. This scale was proved as a reliable measure from both the perspectives of coaches (Schermuly et al., 2014) and clients (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016). Cronbach's alpha was .90.

Perceived competence. Perceived competence of the coach was measured with the three-item competence scale developed by Spreitzer (1995). We slightly modified these items to the coaching context: "I am confident about my ability to do my job as a coach", "I am self-assured about my ability to do my job as a coach", and "I have mastered the skills necessary for my job as a coach". Coaches rated these items on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). This scale demonstrated its criterion validity with relationships to effectiveness and innovation (Spreitzer, 1995). Cronbach's alpha was .86.

Perceived stress. Perceived stress was measured with three items of the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1983) at the second measurement point. Coaches were asked to answer the following questions

concerning the last four weeks: "How often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?", "How often have you felt that things were going your way?" (reverse coded), and "How often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?". Items were presented on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*). The PSS is the most widely used instrument for measuring the perception of stress and has been shown to correlate with other stress measures and health outcomes (Cohen & Williamson, 1988). Cronbach's alpha was .72.

Sleep disturbance. For measuring sleep disturbance at the second measurement point, we used a short form of the sleep disturbance scale from the Patient-Reported Outcomes Measurement Information System (PROMIS; Yu et al., 2013). Prior research showed strong correlations with longer forms and greater measurement precision than the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index and the Epworth Sleepiness Scale (Yu et al., 2013). The short form consists of eight items on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *never*, 2 = *rarely*, 3 = *sometimes*, 4 = *often*, 5 = *always*), e.g. "My sleep was restless" or "I was satisfied with my sleep" (reverse coded). Coaches were asked to evaluate these items concerning the last four weeks. Cronbach's alpha was .92. We used three parcels as indicators in the structural equation model.

Control variables. Several potential control variables were considered. Both the coaches' and clients' gender as well as coaches' neuroticism were considered for inclusion because prior research found that they may be related to negative effects of coaching (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016, 2017). Prior research also showed that workload is associated with well-being (e.g. Fritz & Sonnentag, 2006). We thus considered controlling for the number of working hours, number of coaching sessions, and number of clients in the last four weeks at the second measurement time.

Results

We used the open-source statistical environment R (R Core Team, 2014) for all data analysis. Means, standard deviations, correlation coefficients, and reliability estimates of our key variables appear in Table 1. We first analyze the drop out sample, the associations with potential control variables, and provide the descriptive statistics for negative effects for coaches. We then report the statistics for our measurement model and specify the model for structural equation modeling. Afterwards we provide the results for the proposed hypotheses and the overall model fit statistics.

Preliminary Analysis

Drop out analysis revealed that there was no significant difference between coaches who dropped out and coaches who took part in the follow-up questionnaire in the number of negative effects for coaches, $t(272) = 1.81$, $p = .07$. There were also no significant differences concerning the proposed antecedents of negative effects for coaches, suggesting that there is no severe drop out bias in the data.

We tested the associations between our key variables and the considered control variables. There were no significant associations of our key variables with client and coach gender, or with coaches' neuroticism. There were no significant associations between perceived stress and sleep disruption with the number of working hours, number of sessions, and number of clients. To preserve statistical power and following the recommendations by Spector & Brannick (2011), we dropped these control variables from subsequent analysis.

Regarding their last completed coaching process, 94.9% of the coaches reported at least one negative effect. These coaches experienced on average 7.04 (*SD* = 4.78) negative effects. The three most frequent negative effects were being

disappointed that long-term influences of coaching could not be observed (49.8%),

feeling too much responsibility towards the client (45.1%), and being scared that he or

she could not fulfill the role as a coach (44.0%). The frequencies of each negative

effect are shown in Table 2.

Measurement Model and Model Specifications

To test whether our measurement model fits the data adequately, we

conducted confirmatory factor analyses by using the R package lavaan (Rosseel,

2012). We included all key variables in the model and allowed the factors to correlate

freely. The measurement model fitted the data well, $\chi^2(72) = 79.53$, $p = .25$, CFI =

.99, TLI = .99, RMSEA = .02, SRMR = .05. All factor loadings were significant. We

therefore conclude that our measurement model fits the data well.

We then specified our structural model for structural equation modeling

(SEM). For testing our first hypothesis, we specified a SEM that regressed negative

effects for coaches on relationship quality. To test an indirect effect of goal attainment

and negative effects for clients via coaches' perceived competence on negative effects

for coaches (Hypothesis 2, see Figure 1) we specified the direct and indirect effects in

one model (Iacobucci, Saldanha, & Deng, 2007). We therefore also regressed

negative effects for coaches on goal attainment, negative effects for clients, and

coaches' perceived competence. We defined the indirect effects of goal attainment and

negative effects for the client via coaches' perceived competence as parameters. For

testing our third and fourth hypotheses, we regressed perceived stress and sleep

disturbance on negative effects for the coach. Goal attainment and the number of

negative effects for both the client and the coach were specified as manifest variables

due to their nature as a compound measure or count variable, respectively.

Relationship quality, coaches' perceived competence, perceived stress, and sleep

disturbance were specified as latent variables and were measured by their respective

items. Relationship quality, goal attainment, and negative effects for the client were

allowed to correlate freely, because it has been shown that they are associated with

each other (Baron & Morin, 2009; Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016; Schermuly et al.,

2014). Research has found that perceived stress is related to impaired sleep (Kashani

et al., 2012; Knudsen, Ducharme, & Roman, 2007), so they were also allowed to

correlate freely. For parameter estimation, we used robust Maximum Likelihood

estimation (MLR) with Huber-White' robust standard errors because of non-normality

of the number of negative effects for coaches. Full Information Maximum Likelihood

estimation (FIML) was used for missing values because of the drop out from t_1 ($N =$

275) to t_2 ($N = 96$).

Model and Hypotheses Testing

Based on the criteria of Hooper et al. (2008), the model exhibited a good fit,

$\chi^2(81) = 113.20$, CFI = .97, TLI = .96, RMSEA = .04, SRMR = .09. The model with

standardized parameter estimates is shown in Figure 2. The standardized path

estimates of the manifest indicators (ranging from .54 to .96) were all statistically

significant. In support of Hypothesis 1, relationship quality was negatively related to

negative effects for coaches, ß = -.18, $p = .01$. Hypothesis 2a proposed an indirect

effect of goal attainment via coaches' perceived competence on negative effects for

coaches. Indeed, goal attainment significantly predicted coaches' perceived

competence, ß = .24, $p < .001$. Goal attainment was not related to negative effects for

coaches under control of the other predictors, ß = .05, $p = .32$. The indirect effect of

goal attainment via perceived competence on negative effects for coaches was

significant, $b = -.007$, $p = .003$, 95% CI = [-.011; -.002]. Thus, hypothesis 2a can be

supported. In support of Hypothesis 2b, the standardized indirect effect of negative

effects for clients via perceived competence on negative effects for coaches was significant, $b = .105$, $p = .04$, 95% CI = [.005; .205]. The number of negative effects for the client was significantly related to perceived competence, ß = -.15, $p = .03$, and to negative effects for coaches when under control of perceived competence, ß = .35, $p < .001$, indicating partial mediation. Goal attainment and negative effects for clients explained ten percent of the variance of coaches' perceived competence. All proposed antecedents accounted for 38% of the variance of negative effects for coaches. Moreover, negative effects for coaches significantly predicted perceived stress, ß = .53, $p < .001$, and sleep disturbance, ß = .23, $p = .02$, eight weeks later. Hence, Hypotheses 3 and 4 can be supported. The number of negative effects for coaches explained 28% of the variance of perceived stress and 5% of the variance of sleep disruption eight weeks later.

Discussion

The findings supported our hypotheses. In a cross-sectional design, low relationship quality between coaches and clients, negative effects for clients, and coaches' perceived competence predicted the number of negative effects for coaches. Coaches' perceived competence mediated the impact of perceived goal attainment as well as negative effects for clients on negative effects for coaches. Eight weeks later, coaches who experienced more negative effects for themselves perceived more stress and sleep disturbance.

Theoretical Implications

This study is the first to present specific antecedents of negative effects for coaches. We used the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017) as a framework for their investigation. Our results demonstrate that the specificity of coaching processes may be a useful performance episode, which can account for the variability in

coaches' work (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). It also allows examining a new set of job

demands, such as client outcomes. These job demands refer to a specific coaching

process and could not be investigated otherwise. This approach may be useful for

workers in other helping relationships as well, like mentors or counselors. Future

research may want to investigate whether job demands regarding a specific

performance episode better explains work-related functioning than job demands in

general.

   We found a small but significant effect of relationship quality on negative

effects for coaches. This supports the idea that low relationship quality is a socio-

emotional demand for coaches. However, the small effect suggests that relationship

quality is not the sole antecedent for negative effects for coaches. Compared to other

helping relationships like psychotherapy, coaching comprises fewer interactions with

clients, limiting the length and depth of the relationship. While the shortness enhances

the importance of relationship quality for clients to open up, it may also explain why

low relationship quality affects coaches only mildly. Future research should clarify

whether coaches are affected more strongly in longer and more intense coaching

relationships. Our findings show that relationship quality better predicts client

outcomes. This further supports that relationship quality fosters clients' goal

attainment (e.g. Grant 2014) and prevents negative effects for clients (Graßmann &

Schermuly, 2016). Different mechanisms may explain the emergence of coaching

outcomes for either clients or coaches.

   We found support for the assumption that low goal attainment and negative

effects for clients reduce coaches' perceived competence and thereby increase the

number of negative effects for coaches. This aligns well with the joint predictions of

the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014) and social

cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977, 1995). This may demonstrate a mechanism that is particularly relevant for coaches. Coaches depend on clients' coaching success for future recommendations. Our study is the first to suggest that perceived client outcomes are associated with negative effects for coaches. This contradicts the opinion of some coaches that coaches are free of being affected by negative effects for their clients and consider it unprofessional when they are (Schermuly & Graßmann, 2016). More research is needed for explaining the mechanism between outcomes for clients and coaches. For instance, clients' progress may impact negative effects for coaches during coaching less than the final assessment at the end of coaching, because the final assessment shapes future recommendations and contracting. Future research may also want to investigate if this relationship is stronger when coaches are paid by the client's organization or when coaches do not have a strong prior reputation.

While these first findings on the antecedents rely on a cross-sectional design, this study is the first to use a time-lagged design to demonstrate the impact of negative effects on coaches' health and well-being. We found a large effect on perceived stress and a small effect on sleep disturbance. Employing a time-lagged design helped to rule out common method variance that may exist in prior research on the consequences of negative effects (Schermuly, 2014). It also adds sleep disturbance as another major health indicator. The small effect on sleep disturbance may indicate that although coaches feel stressed, negative effects of coaching do not strongly intrude their sleep - at least after coaching completion. Future research should investigate how coaches can reduce these detrimental effects by examining the buffering role of job resources that is proposed by the JD-R model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014).

The overwhelming majority of coaches in our sample reported negative effects of coaching for themselves. This extends Schermuly's (2014) finding to an international sample of coaches. Moreover, the negative effects with the highest frequency were comparable, providing evidence that results might be generalizable. Although negative experiences in mentoring are not a low base rate phenomenon (Eby & McManus, 2004), it seem to occur more frequently in coaching - calling for more research to help coaches when they face negative effects of their work.

Practical Implications

The high prevalence of negative effects for coaches and their impact on their health and well-being speak to the importance of self-care for coaches. First of all, coaches should raise their awareness for the frequent occurrence of negative effects for themselves. Coaching trainers should discuss the emergence of negative effects in coach training to prepare them in advance. Coaches in active practice should discuss negative effects with supervisors and other professional coaches. They should not be afraid of broaching this subject, in the belief they were the only ones who experience them. An open discussion may remove the taboo from this topic and may impede its negative impact on coaches' health and well-being. Moreover, this study's findings suggest opportunities to prevent negative effects for coaches.

Coaches can prevent negative effects for themselves by enhancing relationship quality with their clients directly or reduce its impact by increasing their work-related and personal resources. For instance, research found that resources like social sharing buffers against strain from emotional work (McCance, Nye, Wang, Jones, & Chiu, 2010). Social sharing is difficult to implement in coaching by virtue of confidentiality, but may be achieved by reflecting on emotional demands in supervision. Another possibility to prevent negative effects for coaches is to enhance

goal attainment and reduce negative effects for clients. Enhancing relationship quality seems to be again valuable for both purposes (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016). In regard of goal attainment, coaches should take time to specify goals. Based on goal-setting theory (Locke & Latham, 2002), these goals should be challenging but realistic to achieve. Because goal attainment strongly depends on clients' behavior and motivation to change, we also suggest coaches to reflect on their perceived competence for prevention. Supervision may be useful for nourishing coaches' perceived competence. Coaches see supervision as a good opportunity for dealing with difficult cases (Grant, 2012) and report that supervision increases confidence in their work as a coach (Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009). Coaches under supervision experience less negative effects for themselves (Schermuly, 2014) and were less affected by negative effects for their clients (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2017), speaking for its beneficial influence.

Limitations and Outlook

Our study has several limitations. The employed methodology cannot rule out reverse causality. For instance, it may also be the case that negative effects for the coach deteriorate the relationship with the client. Albeit we established a time-lagged design for the consequences on coaches' health and well-being, we cannot draw causal conclusions. Cross-lagged designs may help to clarify the direction of causality.

We used coaches' perceptions as a single source. We introduced theoretical reasoning why we used coaches' perceptions, but common method variance is a potential concern (Conway & Lance, 2010). We used varying anchors for our scales, ensured participants' anonymity, and used a time-lagged design to attenuate the risk of common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Given that the introduced

antecedents were related to negative effects for coaches, future research should integrate additional measurement time points to remedy a potential bias.

We assessed negative effects for coaches by summing up the specific negative effects that they experienced, as proposed by Schermuly (2014). Although this measure does not account for qualitative differences among negative effects, no other validated measure of coaches' negative effects is currently available. Considering the frequency of negative effects allows a broad focus on this phenomenon. Such measures have been frequently used in other research areas such as in psychotherapy (Duncan et al., 2003). Future research may want to use a qualitative investigation to clarify the differences among negative effects.

In conclusion, this study is the first to present specific antecedents of negative effects for coaches. It also illustrates their importance since their number is connected with coaches' health and well-being in an international sample of coaches. Findings provide insight into how coaches may prevent negative effects to support this large and constantly growing discipline worldwide.

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Table 1

Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Perceived stress (t_2)	1.99	.69	(.72)						
2. Sleep disturbance (t_2)	2.33	.74	.37***	(.92)					
3. Negative effects coach (t_1)	6.68	4.91	.49***	.23*	(.85)				
4. Negative effects client (t_1)	1.43	2.57	.25*	.30**	.46***	(.90)			
5. Goal attainment (t_1)	283.07	83.68	-.09	.06	-.19**	-.23***	(.71)		
6. Perceived competence (t_1)	6.22	.81	-.32**	.04	-.43***	-.17**	.24***	(.86)	
7. Relationship quality (t_1)	6.21	.79	-.20	-.15	-.33***	-.27***	.41***	.25***	(.78)

Notes. Negative effects of coaching for both coaches and clients are calculated as a sum score. Goal attainment was calculated by multiplying

attainment of a goal (on a 5-point Likert scale) with difficulty to achieve it (scale from 0% to 100%).

***$p < .001$; **$p < .01$; *$p < .05$ (two-tailed).

Table 2

Frequencies of Negative Effects of Coaching for Coaches

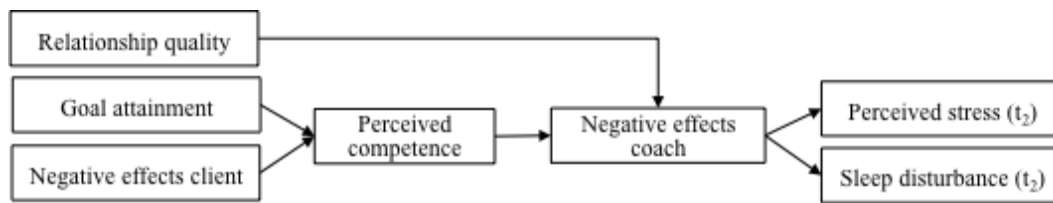| Negative effect During coaching…	Frequ. in %	Intensity M	SD
I was disappointed that I could not observe the long-term influences of the coaching	49.8	1.58	0.77
I felt too much responsibility towards the client	45.1	1.55	0.84
I was scared that I would not fulfil my role as a coach	44.0	1.33	0.66
I felt under pressure as a result of high expectations	43.6	1.52	0.75
I felt underpaid	40.7	1.87	0.99
I felt feelings of love towards the client	40.0	1.93	1.00
I felt a sense of guilt that I had not done enough for the client	37.8	1.53	0.86
I was frustrated that the problems the client was facing could not be resolved	33.5	1.37	0.71
I felt emotionally exhausted	31.6	1.45	0.68
I felt insecure	30.9	1.27	0.59
I was scared to do something wrong	30.5	1.29	0.69
I was personally affected by the topics discussed during the coaching (those topics discussed had a direct relation to aspects of my own life that I find problematic or have found to be problematic in the past)	30.5	1.37	0.69
I found it difficult to refrain from thinking about those topics discussed during coaching in my private life	25.1	1.28	0.64
I felt stressed	24.7	1.31	0.65
I felt overchallenged	19.3	1.38	0.66
I was disappointed that the coaching was ineffective	17.5	1.35	0.73
I felt bored	17.1	1.43	0.74
I felt burdened by the extraordinary topics discussed during the coaching	15.6	1.26	0.54
I found it difficult to be an effective communicator (e.g. active listening)	15.3	1.19	0.40
I felt lonely	13.5	1.43	0.77
I found it difficult to maintain personal boundaries with the client	13.1	2.17	0.45
As a result of the coaching process I had too little time for myself or my family	12.4	1.35	0.77
Those services provided were inappropriately or not compensated	12.0	1.76	0.97
I experienced anger towards the client	11.6	1.41	0.88
Following the coaching sessions I found it difficult to open up to those important to me	6.5	1.17	0.38
I felt sexually attracted to the client	2.9	2.13	0.35
The client insulted me	1.8	2.00	1.00
The client made sexual advances on me	0.7	2.00	1.41
The client stalked me	0.7	1.00	0.00
The client threatened me	0.4	2.00	0.00

Figure 1. Theoretical model.
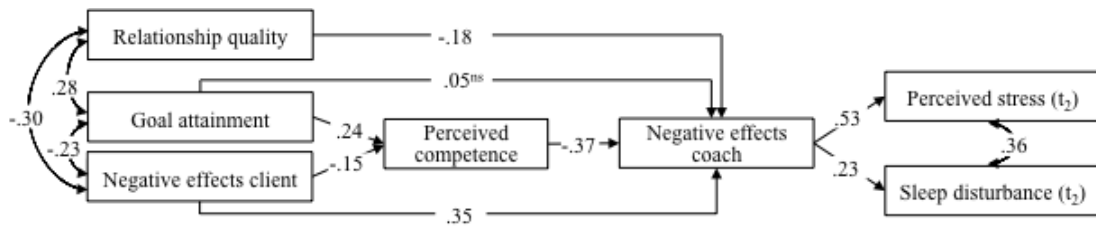
Figure 2. Results for the proposed hypotheses. The measurement model was omitted from the figure for reasons of clarity. The standardized path estimates of the manifest indicators were all statistically significant. The displayed path estimates are standardized and significant at *p* < .05 or lower, unless otherwise noted.

The Role of Neuroticism and Supervision in the Relationship Between Negative Effects for Clients and Novice Coaches

The majority of coaches experience negative effects from coaching, but little is known of what determines their occurrence. This study investigates the relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches from both clients' and coaches' perspectives. It also analyses the role of coaches' neuroticism and the use of supervision in this relationship. A randomized controlled field experiment with a student sample was used, where half group of the coaches received supervision during coaching and the other half received supervision after coaching was completed. Results show a strong positive relationship between negative effects for coaches and clients, but only from the coaches' perspective. This relationship was stronger when coaches' neuroticism was high, but only when coaches did not use supervision during coaching. These findings support the impact of negative effects for clients on negative effects for coaches from the coaches' perspective and discuss supervision as an intervention to mitigate this relationship.

Keywords: coaching; negative effects; neuroticism; side effects; supervision

Practice Points:
(a) To which field of practice area(s) in coaching is your contribution directly relevant? This article has direct relevance for coaching practitioners who are interested in the outcomes of coaching for coaches and coaches' professional development.
(b) What do you see as the primary contribution your submission makes to coaching practice? This study shows that negative effects for clients as perceived by coaches relate to negative effects for coaches in a sample of novices and suggests how coaches can shape this relationship.
(c) What are its tangible implications for practitioners? Novice coaches may want to align their evaluation of negative effects for clients with their clients' perspective and should consider using supervision in their practice.

Introduction

Coaches work with clients who often seek help in difficult and threatening circumstances (Kilburg, 2002). They often face multiple stakeholders, and even multiple time zones and deeply different cultural contexts (Joseph, 2017). Coaching practice can therefore not only be complex, but also unpredictable, challenging, and emotionally charged (Hodge, 2016). Because coaches are important partners in the co-creation of coaching, they should be taken into account when examining coaching outcomes (Greif, 2016). Workers in helping relationships are often negatively affected by their work, like psychotherapists (Figley, 2002; Killian, 2008; Linley & Joseph, 2007), mentors (Eby & McManus, 2004), and social workers (Lloyd, King, & Chenoweth, 2002). The same was recently found for coaches. Negative effects of coaching for coaches are all harmful and unwanted results for coaches that are directly caused by coaching and occur parallel to or following coaching (Schermuly, 2014). This study showed that nearly every coach reported at least one negative effect in their last completed coaching process. Coaches frequently experienced negative effects like feeling too much responsibility towards their clients, being scared that they could not fulfil the role as a coach, or feeling personally affected by topics discussed during coaching. Despite its high prevalence and importance for coaching practitioners, the coaching literature reveals little suggestion why coaches experience these effects and how they can prevent them.

Negative effects can also occur for clients (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016; Schermuly, Schermuly-Haupt, Schölmerich, & Rauterberg, 2014) and may relate to negative effects for coaches. They are all harmful and unwanted results that occur on the part of the client and are directly caused by coaching (Schermuly et al., 2014). For instance, clients reported that their job satisfaction decreased as a result of coaching, they experienced their job as less meaningful, or in-depth problems were triggered that

could not be dealt with during coaching (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016). When clients experience negative effects, it is likely that their coaches do not remain unaffected. We argue that it is likely that the more clients experience negative effects of coaching, the more coaches experience negative effects for themselves. To obtain an accurate estimate of negative effects for clients, this study investigates them from both the coaches' and clients' perspective.

Little is known about the conditions when negative effects for coaches are strongest. This knowledge can be used for preparing coaches for the possible negative effects of their job, as well as for their professional development (Greif, 2016). For this purpose, we focus on novice coaches. Preventing negative effects for coaches is also essential to increase their well-being. Coaches who experience more negative effects from coaching also perceive more stress, more emotional exhaustion, and less psychological empowerment (Schermuly, 2014). In the current study, we shed light on how the relationship between negative effects for clients and novice coaches could be shaped by proposing two intervening variables: coaches' neuroticism and the use of supervision as a prevention mechanism. We focus on these two variables because coaches' neuroticism is often shown to enhance the vulnerability towards job demands and we investigate whether low neuroticism lessens the relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches. Supervision on the other hand is a highly popular self-care intervention among coaches and this study aims to test its possible mitigating influence on this relationship.

This study contributes to two main goals. First, we explore for the first time the relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches from both the coaches' and clients' perspective. We use a matched sample of coach-client dyads for this purpose. Second, we examine how this relationship can be shaped. In doing so, we

investigate coaches' neuroticism as a moderator and test the effect of supervision in this relationship. We use an experimental setting where half of the group of coaches used supervision during coaching and the other half after coaching completion to draw causal conclusions on the effect of supervision. Our findings may assist coaches in their professional development and self-care and thereby support the ongoing professionalization of coaching.

The Relationship Between Negative Effects for Clients and Coaches

Negative effects for clients can be demanding for coaches, especially for novice coaches. First, negative effects are seen as a taboo topic in coaching (Kilburg, 2002). This keeps coaches from actively exchanging their experiences with coaching colleagues and creates tension, because coaches may think that they are the only ones who experience negative effects for their clients and themselves. It may be especially difficult for novice coaches to exchange their experiences, because they do not have established a professional network of experienced coaches yet. Second, negative effects for clients represent a potential threat to coaches' self-worth (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016; Schermuly et al., 2014), because coaches may fear that they indicate a possible failure or reduce their professional reputation. This may be particularly relevant for novices who have no strong reputation yet. Third, the job-demands resources model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014) assumes that job demands, such as negative effects, lead to job strain, because they absorb additional mental and emotional resources. According to this prediction, coaches need more cognitive and emotional energy to cope with negative effects for their clients and are therefore more prone to negative effects themselves.

Evidence for the relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches is needed from both the coaches' and clients' perspective. Coaching evaluation should be

done from multiple perspectives (Lawley & Linder-Pelz, 2016), because coaches and clients can differ in their ratings (e.g. in their assessment of the working alliance, see Baron, Morin, & Morin, 2011). Although the samples were not matched in prior research, coaches and clients reported almost the same high frequencies of negative effects for clients and in a comparable frequency order (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016; Schermuly et al., 2014). To draw solid theoretical and practical conclusions on the relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches, both clients' and coaches' perspectives are required. Hence, we use both perspectives to examine this relationship:

Hypothesis 1a. The number of negative effects for clients from the clients' perspective is positively associated with the number of negative effects for coaches.

Hypothesis 1b. The number of negative effects for clients from the coaches' perspective is positively associated with the number of negative effects for coaches.

The Role of Coaches' Neuroticism

Little is known under which conditions negative effects for clients may exhibit their influence on negative effects for coaches. According to the job demands-resources model, personal resources moderate the influence of job demands on job strain (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Neuroticism is proposed as an important personality factor in this relationship (Bakker et al., 2010; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). Low neuroticism, or in other words high emotional stability, constitutes the personal resource in this framework. High neuroticism presents a risk factor for impaired health and well-being (Friedman & Kern, 2014; Lahey, 2009) and is related to negative affectivity, emotional instability and inability to cope with challenging situations (McCrae & Costa, 2006). Individuals who are high in neuroticism are often self-critical, sensitive to the criticism of others, and feel personally inadequate (Lahey, 2009). They

experience more negative events in their life (Magnus, Diener, Fujita, & Pavot, 1993) and are more prone to burnout (Zellars & Perrewé, 2001).

Coaches' neuroticism is likely to intensify the relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches. The hyper-responsivity mechanism (Spector, Zapf, Chen, & Frese, 2000) theorizes that negative affectivity strengthens the negative response to challenging work demands. It assumes that this is due to a heightened vulnerability to aversive stimuli, a more ready feeling of job strain, and the appraisal of work situations as threatening (Bakker et al., 2010; Spector et al., 2000). Empirical research supports this greater reactivity to work demands. For instance, the negative relationship between work demands and mental health is stronger for individuals who are high in neuroticism (e.g. Moyle, 1995; Parkes, 1990). According to its conceptualization (McCrae & Costa, 2006), individuals high in neuroticism are prone to worry, dwell on what can go wrong, guilt, and diminished self-worth, which interferes with their ability to deal adequately with challenging situations. They interpret ambiguous stimuli in a more threatening manner and experience greater levels of anxiety than individuals who are low in neuroticism (Eysenck, 2014). In adopting these perspectives, coaches high in neuroticism may perceive negative effects for their clients as more threatening, react with more negative emotions to them, and feel less capable to cope with them. Hence, they should be more vulnerable for negative effects themselves. We thus propose that:

Hypothesis 2. Coaches' neuroticism moderates the relationship between the number of negative effects for clients and the number of negative effects for coaches such that this relationship will be stronger when coaches are high in neuroticism.

The Role of Coaching Supervision

Coaching supervision is a formal process of professional support, designed to enhance

the professional functioning of coaches and the quality of their coaching practice for clients (Bachkirova, Stevens, & Willis, 2005; Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). It is the dominant model for coaches' professional development and reflective practice (Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009) and receives overwhelming support from coaches, particularly when they deal with difficult cases (Grant, 2012). However, just a minor population of coaches uses supervision regularly in their practice (Grant, 2012; Jepson, 2016). One explanation for this gap may be the lack of evidence for its effectiveness in enhancing coaching practice (Bachkirova, Jackson, & Clutterbuck, 2011; Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009). Although there is no empirical evidence for the actual outcomes of coaching supervision, coaches often perceive supervision as beneficial. For instance, they report that supervision raised their awareness, coaching confidence, perseverance, sense of belonging, professionalism, and that they developed an internal supervisor (Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009). Moreover, coaches value supervision as an opportunity for reflective practice, the development of insights and new perspectives, and for maintaining the delivery of good quality coaching (Grant, 2012).

Supervision may help to mitigate the relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches. According to the job demands-resources model, job resources buffer the influence of job demands on job strain, because they alter perceptions and cognitions that are associated with the job demand (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Supervision offers coaches the opportunity to receive two major job resources for their current coaching practice: feedback and social support. Feedback from others helps to understand why job demands are present and social support offers coping opportunities and puts job demands into another perspective (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). In a similar vein, Hawkins and Smith (2006) theorize that supervision has a resourcing function that enables coaches to deal with the intensity of working with

their clients. Coaches need to attend to themselves to avoid over-identification with their clients and to defend against being further affected (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). Supervision in groups enables learning from others, experimentation, and objectivity (Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009). Supervision can be helpful at all stages of a coaching career, but is seen as especially important during the training stages and in helping novice coaches develop professionally (Joseph, 2017). Thus, negative effects for clients may less affect coaches who use supervision, because they receive feedback and support from other professionals. We propose that:

Hypothesis 3a. Using supervision decreases the relationship between the number of negative effects for clients and the number of negative effects for coaches.

Some coaches may be more likely to benefit from supervision than others (Joseph, 2016). The preventive function of supervision may be particularly true for coaches who are high in neuroticism. Due to its resourcing function (Hawkins & Smith, 2006), supervision may help them the most by offering emotional support when dealing with difficult cases. There are three reasons for why coaches with high neuroticism may have a greater need for supervision: they experience more negative events in their lives (Magnus et al., 1993), are less able to cope with them (McCrae & Costa, 2006), and talk more about negative aspects in their work, which makes them feel worse instead of getting positive social support (Zellars & Perrewé, 2001). Supervision may help them the most to evaluate negative effects for their clients as less threatening and inhibit their negative response to them. The proposed interaction effect of coaches' neuroticism and negative effects for clients should thus diminish when coaches use supervision:

Hypothesis 3b. The interaction effect of the number of negative effects for clients and coaches' neuroticism on the number of negative effects for coaches is smaller when coaches used supervision.

Method

Procedure

This research project took place at a German university. A student sample was used to accomplish the randomized controlled experiment. The coaches were Master's students of business psychology and their clients were Bachelor's students from the same university. This sample enabled a random assignment of the coaches to their clients and to the experimental condition, and allowed us to survey not only the coaches, but also their respective clients. The coaches took part in a coaching education program that was particularly designed for conducting career coaching for young academics. For instance, examples of coaching issues were how to clarify career goals after obtaining the Bachelor's degree or where to do an internship. Both coaches and clients were free to participate and quit at any time. After training the coaches, their clients were recruited via the first author and randomly matched to their coaches. The coaches were assigned to two clients each.

After the first coaching session with their clients, coaches were randomly assigned to the supervision group that used supervision during coaching or the group that used supervision after coaching completion. Supervision was led by the professional coach who conducted the coaching education program. Coaches from both conditions were allowed to ask for help if they felt they needed support during coaching. This ensured that the coaches from both conditions would have been able to deal with potential problems with their clients. None of the coaches used this possibility. The group supervision took place two times accompanying to the coaching processes and lasted four hours each, equalling eight hours of group supervision in total.

Both coaches and clients were asked to take part in a survey after the first coaching session and after coaching completion. Two measurement times were chosen

to remedy a potential common method variance. Anonymity was ensured at all times during and after the project.

Sample

A total of 29 dyads of matched clients and coaches participated in this research project. Eight coaches, representing 16 coaching dyads, used group supervision during their coaching processes. The majority of coaches were female (93.0%) and on average 27.00 years ($SD = 3.00$) old. The majority of their clients (58.6%) were male, on average 23.10 years ($SD = 3.64$) old, and studied business psychology (75.9%). On average, 3.31 coaching sessions ($SD = .76$) were conducted. Coaches and clients worked on career-related issues for students: Deciding whether to start their Master's studies or find a job (31.0%), choosing a Masters' study program (24.1%), finding an internship (17.2%), or clarifying job opportunities after receiving the Bachelor's degree (13.8%). Overall, the clients evaluated coaching as successful, $M = 4.14$ ($SD = .69$) on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*not at all successful*) to 5 (*very successful*).

Measures

After the first coaching session, coaches evaluated a measure of their neuroticism, as well as several demographic variables. After coaching completion, coaches and clients evaluated negative effects of coaching for clients. Coaches additionally evaluated negative effects of coaching for themselves.

Negative effects of coaching for clients

We assessed the number of negative effects for clients by adopting the scale of Schermuly et al. (2014). To better adjust the items to the student sample, we changed the job context accordingly to the circumstances that the clients were doing their studies and entered only items that were applicable to students. The remaining 23 negative

effects were evaluated by how far they applied to the client on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = *strongly disagree*, 1 = *somewhat agree*, 2 = *moderately agree*, 3 = *strongly agree*, 4 = *completely agree*). The negative effects were introduced by "As a result of the coaching…" followed by the specific negative effect (e.g., "the client's study motivation decreased" or "the client's study performance fluctuated more strongly"). The total number of negative effects for each client was determined by summing up all effects that were evaluated with at least 1 (*somewhat agree*) or higher. Both clients and coaches evaluated this measure.

Negative effects of coaching for coaches

The number of negative effects for coaches was assessed by the scale of Schermuly (2014), which contains 28 side effects on a 5-point Likert scale (0 = *strongly disagree*, 1 = *somewhat agree*, 2 = *moderately agree*, 3 = *strongly agree*, 4 = *completely agree*). Two items of the original scale were removed, because they did not fit the context of the experiment (e.g. financial issues). The negative effects were introduced by "During the coaching…" followed by the specific negative effect (e.g., "I felt too much responsibility towards the client" or "I felt emotionally exhausted"). The total number of negative effects was determined by summing up all negative effects that were evaluated with at least 1 (*somewhat agree*) or higher.

Coaches' neuroticism

Coaches' neuroticism was assessed with the neuroticism scale of the NEO-FFI-30 (Körner et al., 2008; a short version of the NEO-FFI by Costa & McCrae, 1989). The six items were evaluated on a 5-point Likert-scale from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 5 (*agree strongly*). For instance, example items were "When I'm under a great deal of stress, sometimes I feel I'm going to pieces", and "I often feel tense and jittery".

Cronbach's Alpha was .77.

Control variables

Clients' gender was considered as a control variable, because prior research showed that female clients reported more negative effects than male clients (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016).

Results

For all calculations, we used the open-source statistical environment R (R Core Team, 2016). Means, standard deviations, and correlation coefficients of all variables appear in Table 1.

Descriptive Statistics

72.4% of the clients reported at least one negative effect ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 4.32$). The same percentage of coaches reported at least one negative effect for their client ($M = 1.72$, $SD = 1.69$). Coaches' evaluation of negative effects for their clients were not significantly related to their clients' evaluations, $\rho = -.22$, $p = .25$. Concerning the number of negative effects for coaches, every coach reported at least one negative effect. The coaches reported a high number of negative effects for themselves: 9.21 negative effects per coaching process ($SD = 5.09$). Coaches experienced a higher number of negative effects for themselves than for their clients, $t(28) = 8.97$, $p < .001$.

The coaches evaluated supervision as helpful, $M = 4.00$ ($SD = .89$). The discussion of their colleagues' coaching processes were evaluated as helpful, $M = 4.00$ ($SD = 1.03$), and slightly more helpful than the discussion of their own coaching processes, $M = 3.38$ ($SD = 1.09$). In the blank field for how supervision supported the coaches, the majority of coaches (57.1%) reported supervision to provide reflection and

security in using methods and 21.4% reported that it increased their self-confidence. 14.3% of the coaches reported an increase in role clarity, observation of colleagues' practice, and support in assessing their clients.

Hypotheses testing

For testing our hypotheses, we employed path modeling by using the R package lavaan (Rosseel, 2012). Due to the nature of negative effects as a count variable, we used the robust MLR-estimator for our analyses. Clients' gender was not significantly associated with the number of negative effects for coaches. For preserving power due to our small sample size and following the recommendations by Spector and Brannick (2011), this potential control variable was thus dropped from further analyses.

In a first step, we regressed the number of negative effects for coaches on the number of negative effects for clients. The number of negative effects for clients significantly predicted the number of negative effects for coaches, when negative effects for clients were evaluated from the coaches' perspective, $\text{ß} = .50$, $p = .001$, but not from the clients' perspective, $\text{ß} = -.05$, $p = .61$. Thus, Hypothesis 1 can only be supported from the coaches' perspective (Hypothesis 1b), but not from the clients' perspective (Hypothesis 1a). To preserve power, we dropped negative effects for clients from the clients' perspective from further analyses.

For testing the second and third hypotheses, we entered coaches' neuroticism, the interaction term of coaches' neuroticism, and negative effects for clients as predictors into the model. The predictors were mean-centered before entering into the model. Because supervision is a categorical variable, we used multi-group analysis with supervision as the group determinant. The results for the two groups are displayed in Figure 1 and are plotted in Figure 2. For coaches who used supervision after coaching completion, the number of negative effects for coaches was significantly associated

with all predictors in the model: the number of negative effects for clients, ß = .41, p = .004, coaches' neuroticism, ß = .50, $p < .001$, and their interaction term, ß = .27, p = .07, lending support for Hypothesis 2. The model explained 66.5% of the variance in the group of coaches who used supervision after coaching completion. Hypothesis 3a proposed that using supervision decreases the relationship between the number of negative effects for clients and the number of negative effects for coaches. In the supervision group, the number of negative effects for clients was not significantly related to negative effects for coaches, ß = .27, p = .36, supporting Hypothesis 3a. Coaches' neuroticism significantly predicted the number of negative effects for coaches, ß = .40, p = .03. Hypothesis 3b proposed that using supervision diminishes the interaction effect of coaches' neuroticism and negative effects for clients on negative effects for coaches when coaches use supervision during coaching. Lending support for Hypothesis 3b, the interaction term did not predict negative effects for coaches, ß = -.10, p = .66. The model explained 26.7% of the variance of negative effects for coaches in the supervision group.

Discussion

These findings support the relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches, but the perspective used was crucial. The number of negative effects for coaches was strongly related to the number of negative effects for clients only when they were assessed from the coaches' perspective. Coaches' neuroticism strengthened this relationship. These relationships did not occur when coaches used supervision in an experimental setting.

Theoretical Implications

Negative effects for clients were related to negative effects for coaches from the

coaches' perspective. According to the job demands-resources model, negative effects for clients seem to be a critical job demand for coaches that can absorb additional energy and resources that produce more negative effects for coaches in turn. It is interesting that this is only true from the coaches' perspective. It was not necessary that negative effects for clients indeed existed, but the coaches must have thought they occurred to be influenced by them. This is consistent with prior research regarding objective and subjective job demands. Objective job demands alone do not suffice to explain job strain and its negative outcomes (Cohen & Williamson, 1988; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Their subjective interpretation is shown to better explain negative outcomes and partly mediate the impact of objective job demands (Cohen & Williamson, 1988; Rau & Henkel, 2013).

The results also indicate that clients and coaches could differ in their evaluations of negative effects for clients in a sample of novice coaches. Negative effects from the clients' perspective may be related to negative effects for coaches, if coaches' and clients' assessment would converge more, e.g. in a more experienced sample of coaches. Nevertheless, this sample of unexperienced coaches exaggerates a critical aspect: coaches may not always have full access to their clients' emotions, cognitions, and social relationships. On the other hand, clients may not always address negative effects in coaching, which lead to different evaluations. This raises the question about whether coaches with more coaching experience converge more with their clients' evaluations, e.g. because they may address this issue during coaching or may be more experienced in evaluating coaching outcomes.

Coaches' neuroticism was shown to strengthen the relationship between negative effects for clients and coaches from the coaches' perspective. Coaches who are high in neuroticism indeed may be more threatened of negative effects that they perceive for

their clients and react more negatively to them, fostering more negative effects for themselves. This aligns with the predictions of the job demands-resources model regarding the moderating role of personal resources and supports the importance of low neuroticism as such a resource (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker et al., 2010; Schaufeli & Taris, 2014). It also supports the hyper-responsivity mechanism in assuming that negative affectivity enhances the reactivity to work demands (Spector et al., 2000). Moreover, this study shows as well that coaches' neuroticism influences the perception of negative effects directly. This finding is in line with the assumption that neuroticism also influences the perception of work strain directly, and even indirectly by altering the perception of job demands (Bakker et al., 2010; Moyle, 1995; Spector et al., 2000). Given the strong impact of coaches' neuroticism in this sample of novice coaches, more research is needed on its manifold influences in the context their self-care.

The findings may indicate a possible preventive function of supervision for novice coaches in such that supervision diminished the effect of negative effects for clients and its interaction effect with coaches' neuroticism on negative effects for coaches. This aligns well with the resourcing function of supervision (Hawkins & Smith, 2006), which states that supervision provides emotional support which enables the coach to deal with the intensity of working with clients. Coaches will be less emotionally affected from being present and empathetic with their coaching clients (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). Future studies should investigate how supervision delivers this resourcing function, for instance by feedback mechanisms or social support.

Although there was no relationship between negative effects for clients and for coaches when coaches used supervision, it did not prevent negative effects for clients and coaches in the first place. Therefore, supervision may not be a panacea for negative

effects per se. The impact of supervision seems to be far more complex and our results suggest interaction effects rather than direct effects. However, due to the small sample size in our study, direct effects on actual coaching outcomes may be present, but not large enough to detect in this experiment. Future studies should use large samples in a professional setting and investigate whether supervision impacts actual coaching outcomes for both clients and coaches.

Practical Implications

The high prevalence of negative effects for coaches supports the necessity of coaches' self-care. This study's findings suggest several opportunities for how coaches can care for themselves. It is self-evident that negative effects for clients should be prevented in the first place, not only to obtain the best results for clients but also to avoid negative effects for coaches. The findings also suggest some opportunities for the case that coaches recognize that their clients already experienced negative effects from coaching.

First, negative effects for clients were only related to negative effects for coaches when negative effects for clients were assessed from the coaches' perspective. This implies that novice coaches may prevent negative effects for themselves if they compare their evaluations with their clients' perception. Clients may have a different experience and it seems to be worthwhile to adjust these perspectives. It is assumed that there might be considerable room for improvement in such calibration skills (Lawley & Linder-Pelz, 2016). Even if coaches' evaluations are in agreement with their clients' experience, an open discussion enables coaches and clients to work jointly on the reduction of negative effects.

Second, coaches who are high in neuroticism reported more negative effects of coaching when they felt that their clients experienced negative effects. Because neuroticism is conceptualized as a stable personality trait (McCrae & Costa, 2006), it

seems to be more promising that coaches who are high in neuroticism use the resourcing function of supervision to prevent negative effects for themselves.

Although the effects of supervision seem to be complex, these results suggest that novice coaching practitioners may benefit from supervision. However, the type and timing of supervision vary greatly (Joseph, 2017; Moyes, 2009; Passmore, 2011), but little is known so far about the differential effects. In addition, there are other helping interventions for coaches beyond the use of supervision. The resourcing function of supervision though will be hard to substitute. Supervision may be the only intervention where coaches can discuss difficult cases, explore their feelings about their clients, get unstuck, or receive ideas from a different viewpoint (Butwell, 2006). Future research should investigate these differential effects to support the growing community of professional coaches who may benefit from these results.

Limitations

There are several limitations to these findings. Because of the small sample size, the statistical power was only high enough for detecting large effects. A replication with a larger sample is particularly needed for investigating the direct effects of supervision on coaching outcomes.

Secondly, common method variance may be a concern. To limit the potential for common method bias, we used the evaluations of both coaches and clients on negative effects for clients and assessed coaches' neuroticism at another measurement time. Moreover, the proposed interaction effects would have been even more difficult to identify under high common method variance (Siemsen, Roth, & Oliveira, 2010). Our results can thus be interpreted as conservative measures of the interaction effects.

Thirdly, we measured negative effects for clients and coaches by summing up the negative effects that they experienced, as suggested by prior research on this topic

(Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016; Schermuly et al., 2014; Schermuly, 2014). Although using the number of negative effects allows a broad focus on this phenomenon, we cannot draw conclusions on their different nature. A qualitative investigation may help to clarify the differences among negative effects.

Fourthly, we used a student sample that allowed us to implement an experimental research design. Although this enables high internal validity and causal assumptions, the coaches were novices and results may not be representative for a more experienced sample of coaches. Coaches with strong coaching experience may feel more secure and feel less need for support. Moyes (2009) suggests that more experienced coaches may benefit more from the use of learning logs and peer mentoring than from group supervision. But it is also conceivable that these results are even more applicable to experienced coaches, because coaching cases may get more complex. More research is needed to investigate these effects in different stages of coaching experience.

Despite these limitations, the current study shows that coaches experienced negative effects when they felt that their clients experienced negative effects of coaching. This relationship is stronger for coaches who are high in neuroticism, but these results did not occur when they used supervision. More research is needed to fully understand the mechanism of supervision and to establish a strong intervention to support coaching practitioners.

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Tables

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Bivariate Correlations.

| Variable	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5
1. Client gender	1.59	0.50					
2. Negative effects for coaches	9.21	5.09	.04				
3. Coaches' neuroticism	1.89	0.60	-.02	.53**			
4. Negative effects for clients (client)	2.41	4.32	.20	-.05	.10		
5. Negative effects for clients (coach)	1.72	1.69	.11	.50**	.24	-.14	
6. Supervision	0.55	0.51	-.05	-.07	.22	.25	-.32

Note. Gender was coded as 1 = female, 2 = male. Supervision was coded as 1 = supervision, 0 = supervision after coaching completion. Both clients and coaches rated negative effects of coaching for clients. The perspective can be found in parenthesis in the variable section.
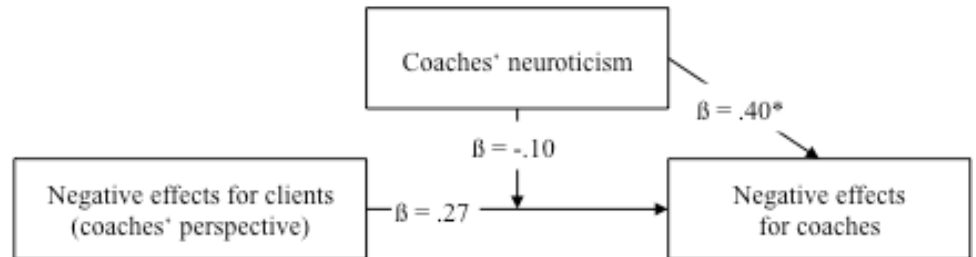**p < .01 (two-tailed).

Figures

Figure 1. Results for the path model in the two groups.
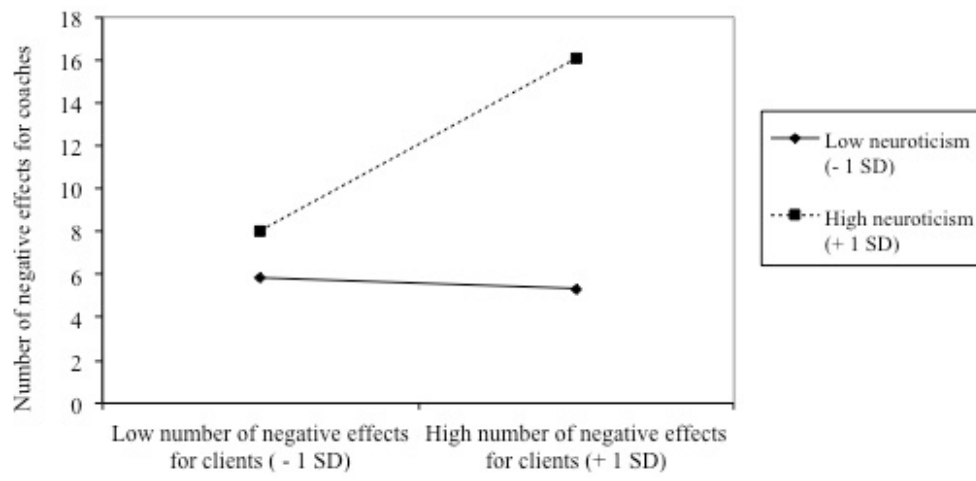
(a) Supervision after coaching completion
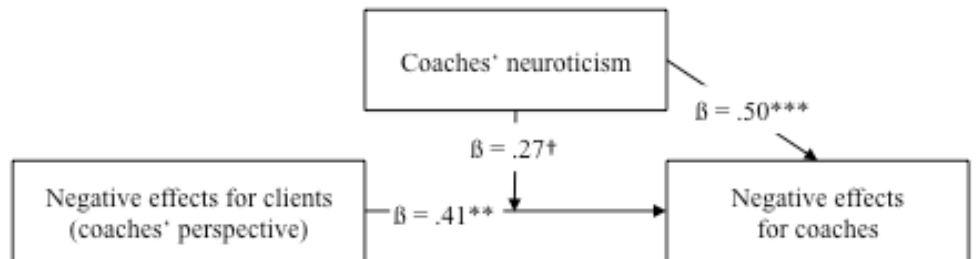
(b) Supervision during coaching

Note. † *p* < .10, * *p* < .05, ** *p* < .01, *** *p* < .001.

Figure 2. Interaction effect of negative effects for clients and coaches' neuroticism

predicting negative effects for coaches who used no supervision during coaching.

The Relationship Between Working Alliance and Client Outcomes in Coaching:

A Meta-Analysis

Abstract

A growing number of studies emphasize the working alliance between the client and the coach to be a key factor in coaching. Synthesizing 26 samples (N = 3,510), this meta-analysis sheds light on the relationship between working alliance and a broad range of coaching outcomes for clients: coaching satisfaction, perceived effectiveness, self-reflection and insight, self-efficacy, goal attainment, and negative effects for clients. The meta-analytic results indicate a moderate and consistent overall relationship between a high-quality working alliance and coaching outcomes for clients (r = .42, 95% CI [.35; .49], p < .001). Working alliance was positively related to all desirable coaching outcomes (with ranges from r = .32 to r = .64) with the strongest relationship to coaching satisfaction and effectiveness. Working alliance was negatively related to negative effects of coaching (r = -.29). These relationships seem to be stronger from the clients' perspectives than from the coaches' perspectives, while they did not differ between field and student samples. Similar to other helping relationships like psychotherapy or mentoring, the results support the importance of a high-quality working alliance in coaching.

Keywords: coaching, meta-analysis, client outcomes, relationship quality, working alliance

The Relationship Between Working Alliance and Client Outcomes in Coaching:

A Meta-Analysis

"I propose that the working alliance between the person who seeks change and the one who offers to be a change agent is one of the keys, if not *the* key, to the change process."

- Bordin, 1979

Coaching describes an egalitarian relationship between a client and a professional coach (Grant & Stober, 2006). Coaches help clients to define and set individual goals and assist them in achieving those goals. This often comprises optimizing clients' satisfaction, well-being, and job performance (Kilburg, 1996), or ─ stated differently ─ maximizing clients' personal and professional potential (ICF, 2012). Recent meta-analyses compared the effects of coaching to a control group and supported that clients can successfully use coaching for optimizing their learning and performance (Jones, Woods, & Guillaume, 2015; Sonesh, Coultas, Lacerenza, Marlow, Benishek, & Salas, 2015; Theeboom, Beersma, & van Vianen, 2014). Yet this effect was largely heterogeneous, indicating that some coaching processes were highly successful and others were not. This heterogeneity raises the following question: Which factors determine when coaching is most successful? This study moves past the question *if* coaching is successful, which has been clearly demonstrated, and takes the next step to illuminating the predictors of successful coaching. Particularly, this meta-analysis examines the quality of the working alliance between clients and coaches, which has been recognized as a key factor in coaching (e.g. Bluckert, 2005; Broin & Palmer, 2006).

There is some ambiguity regarding the concept of working alliance (Horvath, Del Re, Flückiger, & Symonds, 2011) and its labeling, where different labels describe the same or a related concept ─ such as coaching relationship (e.g., de Haan, Grant, Burger, & Eriksson, 2016), relationship quality (e.g., Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016), or working alliance (e.g., Baron, Morin, & Morin, 2011). Despite this ambiguity, some characteristics of a high-quality working alliance emerged in these conceptualizations. In a high-quality working alliance,

clients and coaches mutually agree on the goals they want to achieve in coaching, they agree on the tasks that will help to reach those goals, and finally create a bond that entails trust, respect, and liking for each other (Baron & Morin, 2009; Bordin, 1979; Horvath & Greenberg, 1989). This involves a sense of partnership between coach and client, in which they share the feeling that they care for each other, are committed to their responsibilities, and actively engaged in the process (Horvath & Bedi, 2002; Kokotovic & Tracey, 1990). In synthesizing these characteristics, we define the working alliance in coaching as the collaborative partnership between a professional coach and a client for the purpose of working jointly towards the client's goals for which coaching has been contracted.

Although theoretical interest was high early on (Kilburg, 1996; Wasylyshyn, 2003), quantitative investigations of the working alliance in coaching have been started only in recent years (for the first study on this topic, see Baron & Morin, 2009). Relationships between working alliance and outcomes were supported in other helping relationships, like psychotherapy (Horvath et al., 2011; Martin, Garske, & Davis, 2000), mentoring (Eby et al., 2013), and supervision (Ramos-Sánchez et al., 2002).[1] Working alliance also plays a critical role in teaching (Rogers, 2015) and leadership (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Schermuly & Meyer, 2015) ─ demonstrating its key role in professional human interactions. In coaching, studies yield contradictory findings on the strength of the working alliance-outcome relationship, where some studies showed no or small-sized relationships (e.g., Berry, Ashby, Gnilka, & Matheny, 2011) and others revealed large effect sizes (e.g., de Haan et al., 2016). Therefore, we test the general assumption that working alliance is a key factor in coaching (Bluckert, 2005; Broin & Palmer, 2006) and aim to better understand the magnitude of its relationship to coaching outcomes for clients.

We also shed light on which outcomes have the strongest relationship with working alliance. For instance, working alliance may be most strongly related to overall satisfaction, but less to actual goal attainment as it is a more specific coaching outcome. To detect key

factors for successful coaching, we need to distinguish between different categories of coaching outcomes. Moreover, research on negative effects of coaching started recently (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016; Schermuly, Schermuly-Haupt, Schölmerich, & Rauterberg, 2014). To match that emerging interest on negative effects and the little knowledge on how to prevent them (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016), we study whether working alliance may function as a preventive factor for negative effects for clients. This advances our understanding of not only if working alliance is an important factor in coaching, but also which outcomes are actually related to it.

Furthermore, this meta-analysis strives not only to obtain a more elaborate understanding of this relationship, but also questions the stability of the potential key role of the working alliance in coaching. In particular, this study investigates if there is a difference between coaches' and clients' perspectives on the working alliance-outcome relationship. The "true" working alliance is hard to determine, because it is only accessible by the clients' and coaches' perceptions. In dealing with data that solely rely on perceptions, especially from a single source, common method variance is a strong cause for concern (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012). We therefore explore clients' and coaches' perspectives on the strength of the working alliance-outcome relationship.

To sum up, the present meta-analysis makes three contributions to the current coaching literature. First, we synthesize studies on the working alliance in coaching and determine the strength of its relationship to client outcomes. This tests our understanding of the presumed importance of the working alliance in coaching. Second, we shed light on which coaching outcomes are related the strongest to working alliance. We explicitly test its importance for goal attainment and preventing negative effects. This delivers new perspectives on the coaching outcomes that working alliance is actually related to. Third, we investigate the conditions under which this relationship is strongest to obtain a more elaborate understanding of this relationship. Most notably, this study explores potential differences

between coaches' and clients' perspectives on the working alliance-outcome relationship. These findings aim to deepen our understanding of the working alliance in coaching, to finally help clients and coaches achieving the best possible outcomes in coaching.

Working Alliance and Coaching Outcomes for Clients

Social exchange theory helps to explain the importance of working alliance. It assumes that the interactions between individuals are interdependent and contingent on the actions of the interaction partner (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). The idea of beneficial social exchanges in helping relationships can be traced back to Bordin (1979), who proposed that working alliance involves an agreed-upon contract with concrete exchanges between both partners. The core of the explanation is the access to psychological benefits (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995) that pave the way for achieving desirable coaching outcomes. When clients and coaches are engaged in high quality working alliances, clients share trust and openness (Alvey & Barclay, 2007). Clients exchange sensitive information that they would otherwise prefer to keep private. Moreover, clients disclose their uncertainty, helplessness, or their current inability to cope with work-related challenges. They may be more open for the idea of change when feeling safe (Kretzschmar, 2010), more receptive of the coaches' actions and willing to adopt different perspectives. When clients exchange these resources, coaches can exchange other psychological benefits in turn. Coaches can share new perspectives on the situation, shed light on clients' resources to handle their challenges, and help them find workable solutions. Receiving more feedback from their clients, they can be better attuned to their clients' needs and use more appropriate and effective techniques. In sum, coaches can deliver opportunities to learn and grow. These exchanges in high-quality working alliances are likely to foster desirable coaching outcomes for clients.

Coaching outcomes for clients can be manifold (see Table 1), because they differ depending on the client and the subject that he or she wants to discuss in coaching (Greif, 2016). For instance, research showed that working alliance is related to clients' higher

satisfaction with coaching (Boyce, Jackson, & Neal, 2010) and higher perceived effectiveness (Ghods, 2009). Furthermore, working alliance has been shown to be related to clients' insight into their own thoughts, feelings, and behavior (Grant, 2014; Sonesh et al., 2015). Research also supported a positive relationship to self-efficacy, which describes clients' perceived ability to perform skills attained in coaching and is as a proxy for their performance (Baron et al., 2011). Because coaching centers around clients' goals, researchers oftentimes specify coaching success as goal attainment – which can be seen as the key outcome in coaching (Spence, 2007). Research supported that working alliance can be positively related to goal attainment (Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015). In regard of the beneficial exchanges in high quality working alliances as outlined above, we expect working alliance to be positively related to all of our proposed client outcomes:

Hypothesis 1: Working alliance is positively related to (a) coaching satisfaction, (b) self-reflection and insight, (c) self-efficacy, (d) effectiveness, and (e) goal attainment.

Besides a broad range of positive coaching outcomes, coaching can also lead to negative effects for clients. Negative effects are all harmful or unwanted results for clients that are directly caused by coaching and occur parallel to or after coaching (Schermuly et al., 2014). For instance, clients frequently reported that they were less satisfied with their job, that they experienced their job as less meaningful, or that in-depth problems were triggered that could not be dealt with in coaching (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016). Prior research showed that every second client experiences at least one negative effect from coaching, usually several negative effects at once (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016; Schermuly et al., 2014). The high frequency of negative effects calls for finding ways to prevent them. Working alliance may serve as a preventive factor and we therefore take negative effects into account as an outcome in this meta-analysis.

Working alliance may be beneficial to prevent negative effects for clients. Building upon social exchange theory, coaches and clients exchange more psychological benefits in

high quality-working alliances. These exchanges, as outlined above, include the disclosure of sensitive inner feelings and thoughts that make clients vulnerable in front of their coach. When clients do not share them with their coaches, coaches may not be able to obtain sufficient information about the clients' situation. This lack of information may impede dealing properly with the clients' issues and make negative effects more likely (Graßmann & Schermuly, 2016). In line with this assumption, working alliance was associated with negative experiences in mentoring (Eby & McManus, 2004) and supervision (Ramos-Sánchez et al., 2002). We therefore assume that:

Hypothesis 2: Working alliance is negatively related to negative effects for clients.

The Differential Perspectives of Clients and Coaches

Clients and coaches may differ in their evaluation of working alliance and coaching outcomes. Based on social exchange theory, both interaction partners exchange resources and experience positive and negative effects (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). However, we assume that the relationship partners do not necessarily agree in their evaluations of these exchanges and experiences. For instance, clients may not always share the necessary information with their coaches and coaches can only take into account what clients have communicated. Moreover, it is hard to evaluate the "true" working alliance objectively, because it describes a subjective feeling between clients and coaches. Research has already demonstrated that coaches and clients can differ in their evaluation of working alliance (Baron et al., 2011) and coaches' empathy (Will, Gessnitzer, & Kauffeld, 2016).

The relationship between working alliance and coaching outcomes may be stronger when clients evaluate the working alliance. Clients' evaluation of working alliance may be a better predictor of outcomes because their evaluation, and not the evaluation of their coaches, shapes how they act during the coaching process, what they will disclose, and what they are going to change. Therefore, it might not be sufficient that coaches evaluate the quality of the working alliance as high, but their clients' perspective may yield better predictions for

coaching outcomes. In support of this assumption, clients' evaluations of session quality were shown to be stronger related to their own evaluation of working alliance than when evaluated by their therapists (Kivlighan et al., 2016; Kivlighan, Kline, Gelso, & Hill, 2017). Therefore, we explore if the working alliance-outcome relationship differs between clients' and coaches' perspectives:

Research Question 1: Is there a difference in the strength of the working alliance-outcome relationship from the clients' and coaches' perspectives?

Method

Selection of Studies

Empirical research in the field of coaching, especially regarding the role of working alliance, is rather young. We incorporated so-called grey literature (i.e., unpublished work, dissertations, and books) to maximize the number of studies included in this meta-analysis and to reduce possible publication bias. We describe our procedures for the selection of studies in the following.

Literature search. For finding relevant studies to include in our meta-analysis, we searched several databases (EBSCO, including PsycINFO and PsychArticles, Web of Science, ProQuest Dissertations, Mendeley, and ICF Research Portal as a coaching-specific database). We used the keyword coaching in combination with each of the following additional keywords: working alliance, relationship quality, bond, coaching alliance, or their German counterparts. We also searched coaching-specific journals and conference proceedings (of the Academy of Management, Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, European Association of Work and Organizational Psychology, German Psychological Society, as well as the conference of their section of Industrial and Organizational Psychology). To retrieve unpublished studies on the working alliance in coaching, we contacted scholars known to be active in the field of coaching research and sent out a request for published and unpublished studies via the Organizational Behavior mailing-list service of the Academy of Management.

Inclusion criteria. According to the understanding of coaching introduced in the beginning, we do not cover group coaching, sports coaching, clinical populations, and managerial coaching in this meta-analysis. Managerial coaching is hierarchical in nature, as it takes place between subordinates and their formally appointed direct supervisors (Gregory & Levy, 2010). We therefore see it as a component of leadership that differs from coaching with external or internal coaches - mainly in unequal power, organization-driven goals, and lack of confidentiality (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). Besides executives who use coaching for their professional development, coaching is also popular for clients without managerial responsibility (ICF, 2016). We therefore also incorporate studies that do not exclusively rely on executive coaching.

We used the following guidelines as inclusion criteria: (a) The working alliance had to be referred to as working alliance, relationship, relationship quality, bond, or simply alliance; (b) the coaching intervention matched our coaching definition; (c) the study included a quantifiable measure of the relationship between working alliance and a coaching outcome for clients; and (f) the study was presented in English or German. We excluded all studies that did not fit our inclusion criteria (see Figure 1). The most common reason for the elimination of a study was that there was no quantifiable measure of the relationship between working alliance and coaching outcome. All studies included in the final analysis are indicated with an * in our list of references.

Coaching Outcome Categories

The studies included in this meta-analysis used a broad range of coaching outcomes. We categorized the coaching outcomes into six outcome categories: coaching satisfaction, perceived effectiveness, self-reflection and insight, self-efficacy, goal attainment, and negative effects for clients. Categories not covered by at least three studies have not been included. The first and the second author independently categorized the outcomes into the

categories. The agreement between the coders was high, $\kappa = .82$. In the case of discrepancies, the coders discussed cases of disagreement to reach a consensus for the final coding.

Statistical Analyses

Meta-analytic approach. We employed the Hedges and Olkin (1985) approach to meta-analysis to calculate the effect sizes. Each effect size was weighted by its precision, so that studies with larger sample sizes contributed more to the estimate of the population effect size. This approach does not allow for artificial sources of variance that tend to result in an inflation of effect size estimates (Hunter & Schmidt, 1990). Furthermore, we adopted the random effects model as the statistical approach for this meta-analysis. The random effects model allows the true effect size to differ from study to study (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2010), which seems to be justified because of the variability in coaching processes. We used comprehensive meta-analysis software (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2014) for our calculations.

Estimation of effect sizes. The included studies reported correlations or beta coefficients as effects sizes. We therefore used the product-moment correlation (r) as the effect size estimate. For those few studies in which multiple time points were used, we considered the correlation at the first measurement time for being comparable to the other studies. We used linear composites of correlations if the same focal construct was measured by multiple indicators. When studies reported more than one outcome, we examined the effect sizes from that study individually and as a combined effect size for that study. We combined the outcomes for each study into an overall effect size per study and entered it into an overall working alliance-coaching outcome analysis. In addition, the overall working alliance-coaching outcome relationship was disaggregated by type of outcome and was reanalyzed individually. When studies included clients' and coaches' perspectives, we chose the effect sizes from the clients' perspective for estimating the overall effect. For calculating the effect

sizes for the differential perspectives of clients and coaches, we used the individual effect

sizes per perspective and entered them into the analysis.

Results

Demographic Description of Included Samples

Table 2 summarizes the characteristics of the selected studies. Twenty-two articles

were identified that met the inclusion criteria, representing 26 separate samples. Total sample

size was based on 3,510 coaching processes. Individual sample sizes ranged from 14 to 1741

coaching processes (*Mdn* = 50). In the majority of the included samples, clients evaluated

working alliance and outcomes (50%), followed by both clients and coaches (31%), or

coaches only (19%). A field sample was used in most cases (65%). Forty-six percent of the

samples were published in peer-reviewed journals and 77% of the manuscripts were written in

English.

Relationship Between Working Alliance and Coaching Outcomes

The overall aggregated correlation between working alliance and coaching outcomes

for clients was $r = .42$ ($k = 26$, 95% CI [.35; .49], $p < .001$). This suggests that the working

alliance between clients and coaches, in general, has a significant positive relationship with

coaching outcomes for clients. We analyzed heterogeneity between studies with Cochran Q,

I^2, and T^2 statistic. The Q statistic provides a test of significance if the true effect size varies

from study to study, I^2 represents the proportion of the observed variance that can be

attributed to differences in true effect sizes rather than sampling error, and T^2 is the variance

of true effect sizes (Borenstein, Hedges, Higgins, & Rothstein, 2009). The heterogeneity in

effect sizes was significant and large in magnitude, $Q = 88.53$, $p < .001$, $I = 71.76$, $T^2 = .03$,

leaving room for the analyses of possible moderating variables.

Another main goal of this meta-analysis is to shed light on the differential

relationships between working alliance and a range of coaching outcomes for clients (see

Table 3). In support of Hypotheses 1 and 2, the results indicate that working alliance is

significantly associated with all considered coaching outcome categories. The relationship was strongest between working alliance and coaching satisfaction ($r = .64$, 95% CI [.49; .75], $p < .001$), perceived effectiveness ($r = .58$, 95% CI [.50; .65], $p < .001$), and self-reflection and insight ($r = .47$, 95% CI [.14; .71], $p < .001$). We also found significant relationships between working alliance and goal attainment ($r = .33$, 95% CI [.26; .40], $p < .001$), as well as self-efficacy ($r = .32$, 95% CI [.24; .39], $p < .001$). Furthermore, working alliance was significantly related to less negative effects for clients ($r = -.29$, 95% CI [-.42; -.14], $p < .001$).

The Influence of Perspectives

This meta-analysis also aims to explore if there is a difference in the strength of working alliance-outcome relationship when clients' or coaches' perspectives are used. Thus, we explored the differences in effect sizes between studies that used either the clients' or coaches' perspective (see Table 4). The perspective can refer to either working alliance or coaching outcomes. We analyzed the overall relationship between working alliance and coaching outcomes for four possibilities: the perspective on working alliance (client or coach) and the perspective on coaching outcomes (client or coach). The relationship was strongest when clients evaluated both working alliance and coaching outcomes ($r = .47$, 95% CI [.40; .53], $p < .001$). However, this effect was not stronger than compared to the other combinations, as their confidence intervals slightly overlapped. There was still a medium-sized relationship between working alliance and outcomes evaluated only from the coaches' perspectives ($r = .37$, 95% CI [.19; .52], $p < .001$) and when coaches evaluated working alliance and their clients evaluated coaching outcomes ($r = .26$, 95% CI [.08; .42], $p = .01$). We could not compute the effect size for the case when clients evaluated working alliance and coaches evaluated coaching outcomes because of the lack of studies.

Publication Bias and Sensitivity Analysis

To investigate if publication bias was present in the data, we visually inspected the funnel plot. The funnel plot appeared to be distributed symmetrically. Furthermore, we used

the trim-and-fill-method (Duval & Tweedie, 2000) that estimates and adjusts a funnel plot for missing studies. No studies seemed to be missing and the effect size remained unchanged. We also analyzed language as a moderator. There was no difference between studies that were written in English ($r = .42$, 95% CI [.34; .49], $p < .001$) or German ($r = .44$, 95% CI [.26; .60], $p < .001$). Based on these calculations, there is no indication for publication bias in the data.

We then analyzed sample type as a moderator. There was no difference between studies that used field samples ($r = .44$, 95% CI [.36; .51], $p < .001$) or student samples ($r = .38$, 95% CI [.23; .51], $p < .001$). Because of the large sample size of the study by de Haan and colleagues (2016), we also examined the overall effect without this study. There was no difference in the overall effect ($r = .42$, 95% CI [.33; 50], $p < .001$), suggesting a robust relationship.

Discussion

There is a moderate and robust relationship between working alliance and coaching outcomes for clients. The relationship was strongest to coaching satisfaction, effectiveness, and self-reflection and insight. We also found a positive relationship between the working alliance and goal attainment, as well as self-efficacy. Moreover, a high quality working alliance was related to a fewer number of negative effects for clients.

Theoretical Implications

These findings speak for the importance of the working alliance in coaching. We based our rationale for this relationship on social exchange theory (Blau, 1964; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). We assumed that clients and coaches are more likely to exchange psychological benefits (e.g. openness and trust) in high quality working alliances that enhance the possibility to achieve desirable coaching outcomes. The moderate magnitude of the relationship that we found in this meta-analysis matches the moderate effect sizes reported in meta-analyses in other helping relationships, such as in psychotherapy (Horvath et al., 2011; Martin et al., 2000) or mentoring (Eby et al., 2013). This supports Bordin's (1979) early

hypotheses that working alliance is "one of the keys, if not *the* key, to the change process" (p. 252) and that this may be true for every helping relationship. Nevertheless, the relationship between working alliance and client outcomes in coaching seems to be nearly twice as strong as in psychotherapy (Horvath et al., 2011, $r = .28$; Martin et al., 2000, $r = .22$). This seems paradoxical. Coaching issues are less severe than in psychotherapy, which should reduce the threshold for self-disclosure and therefore the dependency on a high quality working alliance. The stronger relationship in coaching may be due to fewer and less frequent interactions. Clients may need to open up more quickly to attain their goals. Clients may also expect less depth and necessity to open up, holding back sensitive but valuable information, which may elevate the beneficial effect of the working alliance. Although this meta-analysis reveals an overall relationship between working alliance and coaching outcomes, we cannot determine which kind of exchange was responsible for the achievement of coaching outcomes. Future research should clarify in more detail which part of the working alliance contributes the most to coaching outcomes. For instance, a goal-focused working alliance was a unique and significantly more powerful predictor of coaching success than other aspects of the working alliance (Grant, 2014). Likewise, client-initiated agreement on goals and tasks was positively related to coaching success, whereas bonding behavior was not (Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015).

We found the strongest relationships between working alliance and satisfaction, followed by perceived effectiveness, and self-reflection and insight. Working alliance may exhibit the strongest relationships to these coaching outcomes because they may depend the least on other variables, such as using new skills in the organization may also depend on the clients' tasks, supervisor, or colleagues. Self-efficacy and goal attainment were related to working alliance with a lower, but moderate strength. Self-efficacy as the proxy for performance (Baron et al., 2011) and goal attainment as the key outcome for coaching processes (Spence, 2007) are more specific in nature. Clients usually started coaching for

achieving goals and coaches are paid for helping them to do so. Clients and coaches therefore specify explicit goals in the beginning of coaching and assess them regularly. This dependency on the specific client and his or her coaching topic make coaching processes highly individual (Greif, 2016). So it is hardly possible to assess coaching success by using objective measures (such as promotions), because every client would need another measure depending on his or her coaching topic. Goal attainment is nevertheless one way to assess coaching success more specifically than other measures, such as satisfaction or perceived effectiveness. To find that working alliance is related to this specific measure (with the highest number of studies), suggest a robust ingredient that coaches can use to promote this key coaching outcome.

Besides the positive coaching outcomes for clients, working alliance was also negatively associated with negative effects for clients. This demonstrates its broad spectrum of effects. A high quality working alliance may let clients be more open and coaches more focused on how they can help their clients, lowering the possibility for the emergence of negative effects. The relationship with negative effects was lower than with positive client outcomes. This indicates that working alliance may not be the sole protective factor for the emergence of negative effects. The question cannot be answered if working alliance may be more important for their reduction once they emerged. High quality working alliances may deliver the safe environment where such a taboo topic (Kilburg, 2002) can be openly discussed, which allows the joint work on their reduction. Future research should investigate the differential effects of working alliance for the emergence and reduction of negative effects for clients.

The strength of the working alliance-outcome relationship did not differ when clients' or coaches' perspectives were used. However, there was still a trend for a higher relationship from the clients' perspective and the small number of studies may explain the lack of difference. This might indicate that coaching is strongly client-focused: What matters most is

the client him- or herself. Similar findings were found in psychotherapy, where clients' evaluations of working alliance better predicted outcomes than therapists' evaluations (e.g. Zilcha-Mano et al., 2015). We suggest that future research continues to assess working alliance from clients' and coaches' perspectives, because both are related to coaching outcomes (see Krasikova & LeBreton, 2012, for practical suggestions on how to analyze dyadic relationships). Future studies should though examine the role of the perspective in more detail, as clients and coaches may differ in their evaluation of working alliance and coaching outcomes. Coaches may not have all the information they need for their assessment or they may have a larger frame of reference, because they interact with several clients during their career. Critically, there was still a medium-sized relationship between working alliance and coaching outcomes when it was not solely assessed from one perspective (coach or client only). This indicates that common method variance is not the sole explanation for this relationship (Podsakoff et al., 2012) and lends further support for the working alliance-outcome relationship.

Practical Implications

Considering the robust relationships between working alliance and coaching outcomes, coaches should actively monitor their working alliance with their clients throughout coaching. Working alliance seems to be a good measure of how well coaches and clients work together, so coaching supervisors may want to use working alliance as a starting point in supervision. For clients, we suggest to opt for the coach they feel they can best relate to. For this purpose, coaches usually offer a first session to get to know each other. Although working alliance may develop over time as it positively relates to the number of coaching sessions (Baron & Morin, 2009), clients should use this first contact to evaluate whether they will establish a high quality working alliance with their coaches.

The difference in perspectives indicates that coaches should reevaluate the working alliance and outcomes constantly. Coaches should realize that their clients' perspective might

differ from their own perspective. Coaches need to develop such calibration skills so they can be more responsive to their clients' needs (Lawley & Linder-Pelz, 2016). Feedback may help coaches to do so. Psychotherapy research showed that feedback strengthened the association between therapist-evaluated working alliance and outcome, suggesting that feedback helped therapists to identify clients who were not progressing as expected and let them modify the treatment as needed (Zilcha-Mano & Errázuriz, 2015).

Coaches should use the necessary time to establish and improve the working alliance to their clients. There are some suggestions on which techniques lead to a high quality working alliance in coaching. For instance, working alliance was related to coaches' dominant-friendly behavior and coaches' pleasant mood (Ianiro & Kauffeld, 2014), reciprocal friendliness (Ianiro, Lehmann-Willenbrock, & Kauffeld, 2015), behavioral similarity regarding dominance and affiliation (Ianiro, Schermuly, & Kauffeld, 2013), and clients' perceived range of coaches' techniques (de Haan et al., 2016). This meta-analysis demonstrated how important working alliance is for coaching outcomes, so we call for more research on its predictors to help coaches establish high quality working alliances.

Limitations and Strengths

This study is not without limitations. Because research on the working alliance in coaching is not a decade old, this meta-analysis included a small number of studies. Whilst it appears sufficiently large to detect meaningful relationships, more studies would allow for the investigation of additional moderators. This seems necessary due to the high heterogeneity between the studies. The vocational access to coaching is not secured by entry regulations and leads to diverse backgrounds, education, and approaches of coaches. The large diversity of clients' issues and personal needs contributes to individual and heterogeneous coaching processes. We cannot dissolve the differential effects of working alliance across this heterogeneity and encourage researchers to investigate additional moderators, such as coaching experience or client-coach matching.

Meta-analyses can only be as good as the studies that they include. The included studies relied on correlational data that prohibit causal assumptions. Although our theoretical reasoning suggests working alliance as a predictor for coaching outcomes, the opposite direction might be possible as well. When clients feel that coaching has strong positive outcomes for them, this may change the coaching process and strengthen their working alliance with their coaches in turn. Because experimental manipulation of working alliance will be hard to apply because of ethical considerations, cross-lagged study designs should help to determine the reciprocity of this relationship.

Alongside these limitations, our study has several strengths. Prior meta-analyses showed that coaching is an effective intervention (Jones et al., 2015; Theeboom et al., 2014) and this meta-analysis is the first to systematically examine what determines its success. The finding that working alliance is considerably related to a broad range of coaching outcomes for clients marks an important advancement of the coaching literature. Methodologically, we see the high share of grey literature as a major strength of this meta-analysis. Its inclusion allowed raising the number of studies and reducing publication bias, which enhances the representativeness of the findings. Moreover, our examination of clients' and coaches' perspectives contributes to a more refined understanding of the working alliance in coaching.

Conclusion

There is a robust medium-sized relationship between working alliance and a broad range of client outcomes in coaching. Above mere satisfaction of the client, working alliance is also associated with goal attainment as the key outcome in coaching. Furthermore, working alliance is negatively related to negative effects of coaching. Given its profound relation to client outcomes, the time has come to identify what improves the working alliance between clients and coaches.

References

References marked with an asterisk indicate studies included in the meta-analysis.

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Footnotes

[1] We distinguish coaching from other helping relationships by working with non-clinical clients on work-related topics (contrary to psychotherapy), focusing on the clients' rather than the organizations' goals (contrary to mentoring), and excluding the purpose of quality control (contrary to supervision).
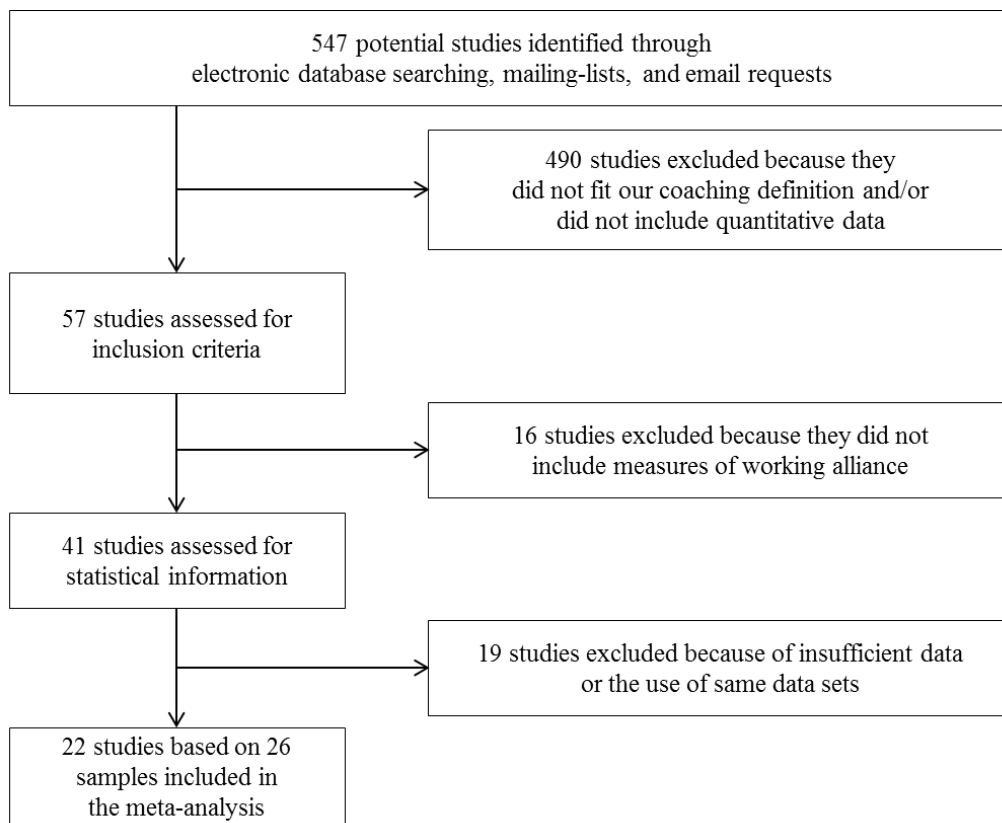
Figures

Figure 1. Search strategy for the inclusion of studies in the present meta-analysis.

Tables

Table 1. Coaching outcome categories used in this meta-analysis.

Outcome category	Description
Coaching satisfaction	Satisfaction with coaching process
Perceived effectiveness	Perceived effectiveness of coaching for attaining coaching outcomes
Self-reflection and insight	Self-reflection and insight into feelings, thoughts, and behavior
Self-efficacy	Perceived ability to perform skills attained in coaching
Goal attainment	Level of accomplishment of the goals coaching has been contracted for
Negative effects	Harmful or unwanted results for clients that are directly caused by coaching

Table 2. Study characteristics and outcome of studies included in the meta-analysis.

Study	*n*	Outcome categories	Perspective	Sample	Peer-reviewed	Language
Baron, Morin, & Morin (2011)	30	Self-efficacy	Both	Field	Yes	English
Beinecke, Schubert, & Putz (2017)	27	Satisfaction, self-reflection and insight, effectiveness	Both	Student	No	German
Berry (2005) – Distance group – Face-to-face group	51 51	Goal attainment	Coach	Field	No	English
Boyce et al. (2010)	74	Satisfaction, effectiveness	Both	Field	Yes	English
De Haan et al. (2013)	156	Effectiveness, self-efficacy	Both	Field	Yes	English
De Haan et al. (2016)	1741	Effectiveness, self-efficacy	Both	Field	Yes	English
Dingman (2004)	92	Self-efficacy	Client	Field	No	English
Gan & Chong (2015)	172	Effectiveness	Client	Field	Yes	English
Gessnitzer & Kauffeld (2015)	31	Goal attainment	Both	Student	Yes	English
Ghods (2009)	152	Satisfaction, effectiveness	Client	Field	No	English
Grant (2014)	49	Goal attainment, self-reflection and insight	Client	Student	Yes	English
Graßmann, Schermuly, & Wach (2017)	275	Goal attainment, negative effects	Coach	Field	No	English
Graßmann & Schermuly (2016)	111	Goal attainment, negative effects	Client	Field	Yes	English
Graßmann & Schermuly (2017)	28	Goal attainment, negative effects	Both	Student	No	English

(Continued)

Table 2. (Continued).

Study	*n*	Outcome categories	Perspective	Sample	Peer-reviewed	Language
Ianiro et al. (2013)	33	Goal attainment	Client	Student	Yes	English
Ianiro et al. (2015)	30	Goal attainment	Client	Student	Yes	English
Jansen, Mäthner, & Bachmann (2004)	71	Satisfaction, goal attainment	Both	Field	No	German
Maurer (2009)						
– Questions group	14	Satisfaction	Client	Field	No	German
– Reflection group	14					
Putz & Berost (2017)	40	Self-efficacy, goal attainment	Client	Student	No	German
Schermuly (2017)						
– Dropout group	67	Negative effects	Coach	Field	No	English
– Without dropout	49					
Sonesh et al. (2015)						
– Study I	44	Self-reflection and insight, goal	Client	Student	Yes	English
– Study II	89	attainment		Field		
Webers (2008)	19	Self-reflection and insight, self-efficacy	Client	Student	No	German

Table 3. Overall effect size of working alliance on outcome and disaggregated by outcome category.

Outcome	k	N	r	CI (95%) Lower	Upper
Coaching satisfaction	6	353	.64***	.49	.75
Perceived effectiveness	6	2,322	.58***	.50	.65
Self-reflection and insight	5	228	.47***	.14	.71
Self-efficacy	6	2,059	.32***	.24	.39
Goal attainment	13	904	.33***	.26	.40
Negative effects for clients	5	530	-.29***	-.42	-.14
Total	*26*	*3,510*	*.42****	*.35*	*.49*

Note. k = number of studies included in the analysis, N = total sample size in k studies, r = correlation coefficient, CI = 95% confidence interval. Studies could include multiple outcomes.
*** $p < .001$.

Table 4. Effect sizes sorted by perspective on working alliance and outcome.

Perspective on working alliance	Client			Coach		
	r	95% CI	*k*	*r*	95% CI	*k*
Client	.47***	.40; .53	21	-	-	-
Coach	.26**	.08; .42	6	.37***	.19; .52	10

Note. *r* = correlation coefficient, CI = 95% confidence interval, *k* = number of studies included in the analysis.

*** *p* < .001, ** *p* < .01.

Table 5. Effect sizes of working alliance on outcome for client sample and language as moderators.

Outcome	*k*	*r*	CI (95%) Lower	CI (95%) Upper
Client sample				
Field sample	17	.44***	.36	.51
Student sample	9	.38***	.23	.51
Language				
English	20	.42***	.34	.49
German	6	.44***	.26	.60

Note. *k* = number of studies included in the analysis, *r* = correlation coefficient, CI = 95% confidence interval. Unpublished studies conducted in Germany were coded as written in German.
*** $p < .001$