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Analysis of the Indicators, Components, and Dimensions of the Effectiveness Model of Executive Coaching in the Red Crescent Society of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Hamze Farajollahi Moghadam[1], Bijan Abdollahi[2], Saeed Jafarinia[3], Akbar Hasanpour[3]

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Abstract

INTRODUCTION: The use of executive coaching has become increasingly popular in the organizational world in the past few decades and is considered a key intervention that increases the capabilities of managers at the professional, individual, and organizational levels. This study aimed to identify the indicators, components, and dimensions of the effectiveness of executive coaching in the Red Crescent Society of Iran (IRCS).

METHODS: This descriptive study was conducted based on an applied research method. The required data were collected using exploratory interviews with 20 experts and activists in the field of human resources education. The obtained data were then analyzed using conventional content analysis, as well as open, axial, and selective coding strategies.

FINDINGS: According to the findings of the research, orientation, sociability, regularity, empowerment, personality traits, and infrastructure conditions are among the most important factors affecting executive coaching in the Iranian Red Crescent Society. Moreover, two new constructs, namely formal and informal institutions were identified for the first time in the coaching literature as effective factors in the development of executive coaching.

CONCLUSION: This study paved the way for filling in some gaps in executive coaching literature. Unlike many previously conducted studies that have only evaluated the effectiveness of executive coaching, this study identified the set of factors related to the individual, organizational, and institutional levels, as well as infrastructural conditions affecting executive coaching. Moreover, the results led to the addition of two new constructs, such as formal and informal institutions, to the literature on coaching in general and executive coaching in particular.

Keywords: Coaching; Executive coaching; Red Crescent Society

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Introduction

International governments and organizations have acknowledged that the economic and social development of societies and countries is not possible without reducing the risk of accidents and disasters (1). Accordingly, people and vulnerable groups of society are more prone to the adverse effects of uncoordinated and unplanned development, as well as the damages by accidents. Humanitarian organizations, including the International Red Cross Movement and local institutions related to humanitarian activities, face challenges in achieving their goals which are providing effective and efficient assistance to vulnerable and damaged people, as well as promoting peace, friendship, understanding, and humanitarian values (2&3). To deal with the mentioned challenges, it is necessary to identify appropriate solutions and consider them in organizational plans.

Accordingly, the essential mechanisms to

1- Ph.D. Candidate of Human Resources, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran
2- Professor, Department of Educational Management, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran
3- Associate Professor, Department of Human Resources and Business Management, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran
Correspondence to: Bijan Abdollahi, Email: biabdolahi@yahoo.com

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predict and provide the necessary human, financial, and logistical resources and capacities will be generated for the efficient implementation of organizational tasks and missions. Executive management is one of the most important dimensions of organizational development; moreover, executive coaching plays an essential role in the development of senior managers of the organization and competent individuals (4). The executive coaching has been expanding over the past few decades and is regarded as one of the important mediators of the development through which organizations construct the capabilities of their executive managers.

It appears that the coaching industry income has been on the rise in recent years, and its development can be noted undoubtedly (3). The annual income of coaching was 1 billion US dollars in 2003 worldwide, and this figure increased to 1.7 billion dollars in 2007, and in 2019, it reached 2.84 billion dollars. Therefore, the emergence of executive coaching as a new management tool to increase productivity and efficiency is regarded as a response to the rapidly changing global economy (5&6). Since different forms of coaching have entered the business, recognition of the government and non-profit organizations and their effectiveness has become difficult for leaders and institutions.

Executive coaching can include various methods and tactics. There are two factors that distinguish executive coaching from other types: 1) Executive coaching requires a partnership among the executive director, the coach, and the organization to achieve maximum efficiency; 2) The individual goals of executive coaching are always aligned with the strategic goals of the organization and benefits from its support (7). Since this profession is under development, and there are controversies regarding its definitions and criteria, more theoretical and empirical research is required on the effectiveness of executive coaching (8&9).

Despite the fact that organizations invest more and more of their resources in coaching as the organization's human resources strategy and use coaching as a tool to improve their employees' performance, development, and learning, there is a dearth of research on the factors affecting the coaching experience (10). Furthermore, executive coaching programs impose heavy costs on the organization; therefore, their proper management seems necessary, and coaches who work with managers need to detect novel ways to increase the effectiveness of executive coaching. There is limited research on coaching, and more empirical evidence is required to confirm the obtained results (2,11,&12). Additionally, the existing research has focused more on effectiveness in terms of its delivery type, model used, as well as pre-and post-coaching measurements (11,13), and few studies have investigated the relationship between individual psychological differences and the coaching process (10,14).

Moreover, the dimensions and components affecting the process of executive coaching in specific regional fields have been evaluated limitedly. In addition, the previously conducted studies have employed short-term emotional reactions as outcome measures and ignored effectiveness indicators, such as trainee learning, behavioral changes, and organizational outcomes (2,15). To fill in this gap, it is required to conduct studies utilizing established, reliable, and valid measurements to investigate the effectiveness of the outcomes before and after the coaching (9).

This study aims to identify the indicators, components, and dimensions of the executive coaching. The theoretical foundations and review of the literature will be discussed in the second section, and the third section is allocated to the research method. The results and data analysis will be presented in the fourth section, and the last section will draw conclusions and make suggestions regarding policy-making process. Table 1 presents other definitions of executive coaching in which each theorist has mentioned the comprehensive and integrated competencies and capabilities of coaching.

Despite the different aspects shared by each of these definitions, they all originate from the same foundation, which is the belief that coaching aimed at supporting the individual to grow and develop with the help of a series of interventions and facilities. In most of the definitions, coaching is a facilitating process in which the coach improves the development of the learner (8). In other words, most theorists in this field believe that the core of coaching is a two-way relationship between the coach and the learner with the aim of comprehensive personal and professional development (3,7 &8).

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Table 1. Definitions of executive coaching in chronological order

Reference	Definitions and Objectives
(16)	A cooperative relationship formed between a trainee with management authority and responsibilities in the organization and a consultant who uses a wide range of techniques and methods to help the learner achieve the goals set (by the parties). This will lead to the development of comprehensive professional performance and personal satisfaction which ultimately improve the effectiveness of the organization based on the agreement between the parties.
(17)	Confidential, fully-personalized, process-organized, and personal learning that is provided during a certain period of time in order to be able to work effectively, improve performance, or grow.
(18)	A purposeful and practical form of one-on-one learning that helps busy managers improve performance, develop behavior, promote careers, prevent disorder, and work on organizational issues and fundamental changes.
(19)	Systematic feedback intervention aimed at improving performance skills, intrapersonal awareness, and personal effectiveness.
(20)	An individual and experiential process of leadership development that empowers the leader to achieve the organization's short-term and long-term goals. This is directed through person-to-person communication, with the help of multifaceted data and is based on trust and mutual respect.
(21)	The process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities needed to develop and be effective.
(22)	A type of management (executive) consulting in which professional and trained organizational leaders act as facilitators and shape the process of cooperation with executive management to improve skills and effectiveness in communication, followed by the enhancement of team performance, organizational productivity, and professional-individual development
(23)	The social dialogue formed between the facilitator (coach) and the participant (trainee/learner) in which most of the interventions used by the coach are open-ended questions and lead to the stimulation of individual consciousness and personal responsibility.
(24)	A systematic process to improve others' ability to set goals, take action, and empower.

Source: Research findings

Methods

This applied study was conducted based on a non-experimental and qualitative (content analysis) research method since none of the variables will be modified or manipulated. The statistical population of the present study is divided into two main subgroups. The first subgroup consisted of academic experts familiar with the concept of coaching who have publications in this regard. The second subgroup included experts active in the human resource management in the Red Crescent Society. Accordingly, they had at least a master's degree and 5 years of work experience in this field. Regarding the prerequisites and regulations, exploratory interviews were conducted with 20 people. The face and content validity of the interview protocol were examined based on the viewpoints of 6 experts specializing in the field of qualitative research, and the results are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Face and content validity evaluation of the preliminary questionnaire

Row	Indicators	E6	E5	E4	E3	E2	E1
1	Preparation of questions and items	4	3	3	4	3	**5**
2	Adaptation of questions or items with specified constructs	4	4	4	5	4	**5**
3	Adaptation of questions or items with research objectives	5	5	3	3	4	**5**
4	Adequacy of questions or items to cover research objectives	5	4	3	5	5	**5**
5	The need to remove or add to questions or items	5	4	5	5	4	**5**
6	Mean points (according to experts)	4.6	4	3.6	4.6	4	**5**
7	Total mean			**4.26**			
8	Validity percentage			**0.85**			

Source: Research findings

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As can be observed, the validity percentage for this questionnaire is obtained at 0.82, and according to Mas et al. (1998), this validity percentage is accepted. The purposeful and strategic sampling method continued until the analysis process reached theoretical saturation (25). In total, 268 preliminary codes were obtained at the first stage of open coding. Since some of the resulting cases overlapped, and some codes were not closely related to executive coaching, the overlapping cases were merged in the second step, followed by the elimination of unrelated codes. Consequently, 187 open codes were obtained. The diagram 1 also shows the process of theoretical

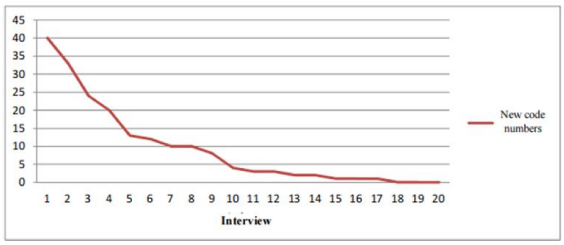

Diagram 1. Theoretical saturation process

saturation in interviews. In this diagram, the vertical axis indicates the number of new concepts identified during the interview, and the horizontal axis presents the number of interviews. As can be seen in the diagram, the number of new codes gradually decreases in new interviews and after the 15th interview (interviews 16 to 20), no new code was found, and thus, the researcher reached theoretical saturation. It is worth mentioning that this does not indicate the uselessness of interview 15 onwards; however, it shows that afterward, the interviewees highlighted the codes that were already mentioned in other interviews.

The reliability of the research tool was evaluated using the intra-subject agreement method (26). Moreover, test-retest reliability was performed to evaluate the reliability of data coding. Accordingly, four cases were selected from the conducted interviews and coded in a specific time interval (20 days) (twice each), and the codes obtained in the determined time intervals were compared with each other.

$$\text{Reliability percentage} = \frac{2 \times \text{total number of agreements}}{\text{total number of codes}} \%100$$

Formula 1. Evaluation of the reliability of the qualitative tool

The reliability values of the tool were obtained at 94%, 93%, 79%, and 82% respectively. This level of reliability in qualitative research is confirmed according to the acceptable value of 0.6 (Mass et al., 1998). Regarding the content analysis method in this study, the data were coded in three stages, namely open, axial, and selective. Following that, Atlas TI software (version 8) was used to code the research data.

Findings

The demographic characteristics of the interviewees in this study are presented in Table 3.

A sample of the interview text is presented in the following:

The first narration:

{...The person who plays the role of a leader should have enough experience and knowledge, as well as communication skills and be able to guide others. Why! This is because the role he plays is that of a leader, and this leadership makes the work more difficult in the Red Crescent Society during a crisis. I believe that communication and persuasive skills, authority, and the skills affecting the learner in some way are among the necessities of coaching to make the trainee/learner interact with the coach...}

The second narration:

{...I divide the listening skills into active listening in which we listen to a topic, understand, and do it. There is another type of listening where the attention is elsewhere and the listener only listens. What is very important in all issues, especially in executive coaching, is active listening. Of course, according to many years of experience in the field of coaching, I have to say that active listening is a prerequisite; I think that if we want to intervene in the work and life of anyone, we must have knowledge of his work and activities, and one of the ways is to talk to the person and listen to his words. The person who plays the role of a leader must have good information about his subordinates and if we want to guide well, we must listen well. When they trust, things go well, and a sense of empathy is created between the trainee and the coach, and it creates a platform so that the learner can provide the goals clearly to be implemented...}

Some of the obtained codes are as follows:

Table 5 summarizes the axial and selective coding outputs.

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Table 3. Demographic characteristics of the interviewees

Interviewee code	Gender	Educational Level	Work experience	Managerial experience	Familiarity with coaching		
					High	Average	Low
I1	Male	Ph.D.	26	15	*		
I2	Female	Ph.D.	28	18	*		
I3	Male	Ph.D.	16	6	*		
I4	Male	Ph.D.	25	5			*
I5	Male	Master's	29	14	*		
I6	Female	Ph.D.	22	8		*	
I7	Female	Master's	27	15	*		
I8	Male	Ph.D.	22	10		*	
I9	Male	Ph.D.	13	12	*		
I10	Female	Ph.D.	20	9		*	
I11	Male	Ph.D.	27	7		*	
I12	Male	Ph.D.	12	5		*	
I13	Male	Ph.D.	14	3			*
I14	Male	Ph.D.	18	5		*	
I15	Female	Ph.D.	2	1			*
I16	Male	Ph.D.	11	5		*	
I17	Male	Ph.D.	13	3			*
I18	Male	Ph.D.	22	10		*	
I19	Male	Ph.D.	29	15	*		
I20	Male	Ph.D.	18	12	*		

Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to identify the indicators, components, and dimensions of the effectiveness of executive coaching in the IRCS. Accordingly, the present study was conducted using the qualitative research method and content analysis strategy. The required data were collected utilizing interviews with 20 experts involved in coaching in the IRCS. According to the results, orientation, sociability, regularity, empowerment, systematicity, personality traits, and infrastructure conditions were identified as the most important indicators related to the effectiveness of executive coaching in the IRCS. They were then divided into two main categories of software and hardware conditions. Moreover, incentive-oriented, positivism, feedback-oriented, interactionism, trust-building, cognition-oriented, stability-oriented, order-oriented, normalization, capacity-building, institutionalization, awareness-building, empiricism, convergence, holistic-oriented, diversification, trainee's personality traits, coach's personality traits, formal institutions, and informal institutions were also identified as the main dimensions related to the effectiveness of executive coaching in Iranian Red Crescent Society. Some studies conducted on existing coaching consider executive coaching a relatively new and promising discipline related to growth and development; however, there is limited empirical evidence to support this observation (17).

When it comes to the actual improvement of the measurable effectiveness, it directly refers to the participation of the coaches in the performance of managers and trainees, and there is also little and scattered information available in this regard. This study fills in some gaps in the executive coaching literature. In contrast to many previously conducted studies in this field that have evaluated only the effectiveness of executive coaching, this study identified a set of factors related to the individual, organization, institutional, and infrastructural conditions affecting executive coaching.

Moreover, some new constructs, such as formal and informal institutions were added to the literature on coaching in general and executive coaching in particular. Throughout history, institutions have been created by humans to reduce uncertainty in transactions. The institutions play a significant role in an environment where innovation and knowledge are drivers of economic development. The interaction between actors and institutions, and as a result, the relationship of the production system with government authorities, universities, and educational centers affects the innovative performance of enterprises, organizations, and economies.

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Table 4. Examples of some obtained open codes

Row	Preliminary open code	The number of interview																				Supporting theoretical foundations
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
1	Support and encourage people to create new activities	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	✓
2	Incentives based on ideas	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	✓
3	Motivate people to be involved in the decision-making process	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	✓
4	Increasing the capacity for criticism	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓
5	Educational knowledge	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
6	Technology knowledge	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
7	Knowledge related to the Red Crescent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	✓
8	Planning skills	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓
9	Self-management skills	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
10	Taking criticism	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
11	Being effective	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	
12	Influencing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓
13	Attractiveness	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	✓
14	Effective communication	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	
15	Changeable attitudes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	✓
16	Having a goal to develop the objectives of the Red Crescent Society	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	
17	Creative thinking and encouraging it in trainees	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	✓
18	Ability to meet people's needs	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓
19	Conceptual modeling, sense of humor, and transparency of the goal	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	✓
20	Persuasion, attitudes, and self-confidence	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓
21	Patience and flexibility	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
22	Becoming overly dependent or lack of the trainee involvement	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	✓
23	Trainee's poor decision making or performance	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
24	Creating differences in the coach's interests	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	
25	Unfair understanding of the trainee	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓
26	Senior management: the coaching process disruption	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	✓
27	Preparation to be a coach	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
28	Trust-building	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	

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Table 5. The axial and selective coding

Indicator	Dimension	Component
Orientation	Incentive-oriented	Supporting and encouraging people to create new activities/diversifying financial incentives for employees and managers/incentives based on ideas/using incentive mechanisms based on tasks/creating incentives for people to be involved in decisions/giving tangible benefits, such as better management of the coach at work
	Positivism	Being benevolent/positive view of talented people/management based on valuing people/increasing employee job satisfaction/behavioral ability: Strong interest in the development of others/enthusiasm for success/ forgiveness and generosity
	Feedback-oriented	Investigating the amount of behavior change after training/good listener/conducting on-the-job evaluation/periodicity of evaluation after training/evaluation of service clients' satisfaction/lack of desirable practical evaluation/design of indicators for the evaluation of results and actions
Sociability	Interactionism	Promotion of empowerment based on interaction/creating a chain of communication among organizational components/strengthening the communication skills of the coach/level of formality of the relationship or plan/establishing two-way interaction/models of coaching relationships/linear or non-linear coaching relationships
	Trust-building	Adherence to people's secrets/ethics of trustworthiness/ethics of honesty/ethics of responsibility/two-way trust/self-disclosure/trust building/having a support and showing the path from the coach/making sure of the qualifications and competencies of the mentee at work/getting help in cultivating and applying key capabilities
	Cognition-oriented	Understanding of oneself, managers, and colleagues/ Facilitating the process to know people at work/allocating enough time to get to know people/awareness of the type of activities of oneself and others/familiarity with activities related to the Red Crescent Society/self-awareness and behavioral awareness
Regularity	Stability-oriented	Changing the position of the employees in different sections of the organization/training on how to deal with stressful situations/training on crisis prevention methods/building capacity against crisis/implementing crisis modeled maneuvers/level of engagement with daily organizational issues and challenges/preferring a transformational approach to a result-oriented approach/receiving assistance in problematic and contradictory situations/reducing fear and anxiety/ambitious/risk-taking spirit
	Order-oriented	Managers' desire to do urgent important tasks/holding workshops in order to prepare plans/the way to manage employees' time at the work cycle/homogenizing heterogeneous people/explaining mid- and long-term strategies/examining the current and desirable situation/having more plans at work/budget-orientation of the Red Crescent Society/lack of observing the coaching rules/not paying enough attention to the principles of the Red Crescent Society in the selection process/improving and modifying the organization of the units to suit the new activity
	Normalization	Applying new technologies in the process of monitoring people/making the process of monitoring people invisible/developing ethical controls of employees and managers/numerous and diverse experiences of facing special conditions/taking advantage of time and equal opportunity
Empowerment	Capacity-building	Optimum use of technology facilities in providing services/increasing critical-taking capacity/improving planning skills/improving self-management skills/improving problem-solving skills/having self-confidence/manipulation and intervention in human capacities

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	Awareness-building	Training to face a crisis/building capacity through knowledge improvement/training how to deal with patients/introducing resources for technical knowledge/awareness of specialized working terms/use of continuous training/training the correct work cycle/ Applying local knowledge and experiences in formulating a strategy/facilitating the learning process/familiarity with learning strategies/familiarity with teaching methods
	Institutionalization	Conceptualizing the relationship between the coach and the trainee in organizations/explaining the social benefits and advantages of the organization to increase work motivation/explaining the nature and functions of the organization for employees/attributing the resources of the organization to personal resources/using indirect training methods/explaining the ideal metaphors for describing jobs/belief in the vision concept by the managers and employees/disbelief of the developers of the vision in the prerequisite of the vision/organizational commitment
	Empiricism	Using the experiences of retirees and predecessors/combining work experience with scientific and technical knowledge/promoting reality-based training/skill-oriented training/recalling similar experiences and events for the coach/increasing people's experience/practice in doing exercises
Systematicity	Convergence	Promoting community-oriented activities/receiving empathy and support/predominance of livelihood concern over human concern in job applicants/existence of an empathic relationship between the coach and trainee/establishing a friendly and sincere relationship with the trainee/level of trainee obedience from the coach/creating a common understanding among the members of the organization or group /level of people's work and organizational bias/facilitating people's access to middle and top managers/integration of people with the organization's strategy and roadmap/reducing the feeling of isolation/ feeling more comfortable at work/participating in the coach's experiences/dealing with the power difference between the trainee and the coach/setting goals together
	Holistic-oriented	Complete understanding of the organization's components/use of collective wisdom by the organization's leader/possibility of accessing the organization's resources, information, and facilities/conducting comparative studies/clarification of organizational processes and structure/use of technical consultants by the organization's leadership/comprehensive and impartial supervision and monitoring
	Diversification	Testing different management styles/training to recognize and distinguish priority cases/participation of experts in coaching courses abroad/adopting a specific version of behavior management for each person separately/organizational inability to attract diverse resources
Personality Traits	Trainee’s personality traits	Being responsible/personally active/ethics-oriented
	Coach’s personality traits	The charismatic characteristics of the managers and coaches/the level of seriousness in giving orders to employees/conducting psychological tests before work/use of personality assessment consultants/commitment to continuous self-development (coaching)/personal activation/accountability
Infrastructure conditions	Formal institutions	Regulations/laws resulting from policymakers
	Informal institutions	Collective values/informal communication/norms

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North points out that competition forces organizations to continuously invest in skills and knowledge in order to survive (18&19). Accordingly, the knowledge asset of the individuals in society is a very critical determinant of the performance of economies and societies. In other words, the change in knowledge assets is a key for the evolution of economies and societies. Systematization, as well as systematic behavior and vision, make the coaching process more goal-oriented and the achievement of results more effective. The first step to achieving systematization is diversity the results of which are tolerance and idea-making. For diversification, it is recommended that by experimenting with different management styles, individuals prepare themselves to take charge of management, perform tasks in crisis, and take numerous responsibilities.

Education on recognition and separation of the prioritized cases is another way that prepares individuals to deal with a crisis. This is also of critical importance and is resulting from the diversity of being in different situations, which makes a person recognize the priority of things. Similarly, in order to increase people's competencies in the field of diversification, they can be involved in coaching courses abroad. Accordingly, such cases make the trainee adopt a special version of behavior management for each person individually. The diversity factor causes convergence in the organization over time, and people can show better performance in terms of coaching by finding common ground in different fields.

Sociability consists of interactionism, trust-building, and cognition-oriented, all of which indicate communication between people and the way communication is formed. In other words, communication is the main component of the core code of sociability, and sociability is the result of communication. In interactionism, which emphasizes more on communication among people, promotion and empowerment are considered based on interaction.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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