

Mentoring and Coaching in The Digital Era and How Has Been Affected by Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

One of the instant increases in coaching and mentoring has been apparent in last years, indicating the increasing interest in several development aspects. This development concerns all sectors of the economy and society, such as education, health, entrepreneurship. The focus was on actions to enhance efficiency through development, mainly for the labor sector. Mentoring and coaching have become integral parts of educational life and vocational training, with the ultimate goal of the multifaceted development of those employed in various professions. This article was written during the Covid-19 pandemic to study the impact of the pandemic on the digital age and coaching and mentoring processes. The research data have emerged from recent studies, with full knowledge of the prevailing situation, including all problems and uncertainties. As we face the immense business interruptions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, coaching and mentoring play a significant role in maintaining employees motivated and determined during extraordinarily challenging times.

Keywords: mentoring, coaching, digital era, Covid-19 pandemic, effectiveness, development

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1. Introduction

In every organization and business, the concepts of motivation, professional training, education and development are all interrelated with the needs of the individual, human resources in general, as well as with the goals set by each organization and business.

Coaching and mentoring both play an important role in the whole process, being indispensable functions of the professional training, growth and development of an individual, either employee or executive, as well as to his/her professional career. They aim to clearly noteworthy developments and high skilled staff and commonly emphasize precise goals and skills; but may also affect some of the individual's features such as self-assurance and social communication. Coaching and mentoring are growth practices based on the use of one-to-one negotiations to improve an individual's skills, experience, or work execution.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been playing a key disruptive role in the smooth running of the various activities of daily living in a profound way. Employees in every field, now more than ever, need support and guidance to believe in their own strengths and overcome external difficulties with greater efficiency and effectiveness. These changes incurred by the Covid-19 pandemic necessitated immediate coaching and mentorship adaptations, aided by the accelerated digital achievements of recent years.

In this research, the basic terms are first clarified, namely coaching and mentoring, and reference is also made to the formation and relationship between them in the digital age we live in. This article of research was written amidst the uncertain circumstances of Covid-19 pandemic period, with the ultimate purpose to investigate the extent to which the coaching and mentoring processes have been affected by the pandemic.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Coaching

Coaching is a form of personal or professional development and transformative process in which an experienced person called a coach, properly identifies the strengths, weaknesses, abilities and interests of a willing to engage individual (or sometimes a group) called coachee, with whom he shares his knowledge of a skill or procedure. Furthermore, a coach systematically provides to a coachee following-through, understanding, feedback (Schichtel, 2009), support, motivation, consulting, pointing to the right direction, and redirecting if necessary, in order to accomplish a task or achieve a specific personal or professional objective. To accomplish the above, the coach needs to build empathy, rapport and trust, creating an enabling powerful and collaborative relationship that makes it easier for the coachee to learn. Coaching is a method of communication, lifestyle, and behavior, which, if applied to all aspects of personal and professional life, has excellent results (Serrat, 2010), not only for the coachee, but for the coach and the organization too (Table 1).

Table 1.
Benefits of coaching practices

Coachees	Coach	Organisations
Task learning & development, capitalising on experience	Assistance on on-going projects	Cost & time effectiveness
Developing new skills, initiative & self-confidence	Bringing own additional experience to decision-making	Focus on developing staff on job
Increasing self-awareness, capability, personal job satisfaction, performance & effectiveness	Professional recognition of long-term personal experience in task, good interpersonal & communication skills	Increasing self-sufficiency, effective teamwork, resilience, strategic thinking, capability & effectiveness of organisation
Increasing productivity	Revitalised interest in work	Increasing productivity
Increasing ownership of personal performance	Focus on strategic direction, rather than trouble-shooting	Creating culture of continuous learning & improvement
Dedicated guidance, feedback, support, motivation	Focusing on key objectives & increasing strategic thinking	Developing leaders from within the organisation
Learning to set goals, plan actions & achieve tangible results	Developing leadership style, enabling promotion prospects & career advancement	Experimenting allowed & gaining feedback
Dealing with change	Building greater job satisfaction	Developing working relationships

Benefits of coaching practices (own source)

The goal of coaching is through a specific scientific methodology, such as through open-ended questioning, reality recognition and motivation, to lead the coachee to answer them, determine course and actions, achieve change and accomplish his goals. Coaching is a process of self-improvement. It is the unlocking of the possibilities that the person has to get where he wants, quickly and immediately (Renton, 2009).

2.2. Mentoring

Mentoring is a unique endeavor, an one-to-one collaborative relationship and a long-term process between two people, who exchange reflecting experiences, views and information (Schichtel, 2009), with the mentor facilitating practical advice for a specific field of employment or activity for which he is considered having extensive experience and content expertise (Pillon & Osmun, 2013) and the inexperienced mentee. It is a relationship that strengthens and develops the feeling of self-confidence, recognised to benefit (Schichtel, 2009) and enhance the professional and personal skills of both parties (Table 2) (Purcell, 2004). Mentoring is used to facilitate mentees to further grow and develop, undergoing a personal transformation focusing on broader culture-specific topics, guided and supported by the mentor. It offers practical tips that demystify difficulties and create conditions for growth and progress. Mentoring is confidential, collaborative, and helpful (Renton, 2009).

Mentoring presupposes the will and undivided attention on the part of both the mentor and the mentee, to develop and continuously cultivate a relationship of good communication, rapport, trust, empathy and mutual respect with cumulative positive results. Mentors often act with sensitivity as trusted advocates, as sounding boards for mentees or as ideal role models who provide inspiration and maximize learning from experience, as Pillon and Osmun (2013) did when working together as mentee and mentor.

Table 2.

Benefits of mentoring practices

Mentees	Mentors	Organisations
Personal support & valuable exposure to management	Progressing on-going projects	Cost effectiveness
Learning, capitalising on mentor's experience & development	Advancing self-knowledge and self-rejuvenation	Development of both managerial participants
Developing new skills	Financial rewarding	Increasing productivity
Assistance, advice & feedback	Solving problems, remotivating staff, growing talent, developing careers, personal fulfilment	Improving motivation at senior level, promoting success
Encouragement, dedicated guidance, empowerment, friendship	Professional recognition of own high degree of emotional intelligence & competence, credibility, round-up business experience & facilitating skills	Establishing a mentoring scheme & keeping a training momentum within the strategic needs of organisation
Developing increased confidence & self-esteem	Revitalising interest in work	Improving recruitment & talent management
Understanding of system expectations	Increasing self-confidence, overcoming conflicts	Improving organizational communication
Increasing awareness of organizational culture, structure, procedures & developing a sense of belonging	Focusing on culture-specific topics	Enhancing socialisation into culture
Stretching own full potential, career advancement	Self-development & career advancement	Improving commitment to the organization

Benefits of mentoring practices (own source)

Mentoring is an essential element of modern managerial practice of high-performance, contemporary organisations (Serrat, 2010), showing to have a catalytic role in critical thinking, sparking initiative, activating and inspiring creativity, and significant impact on

personal growth, career guidance, career choice, and research productivity (Pillon & Osmun, 2013) (Table 2).

2.3. Mentoring vs. Coaching

Although the two terms are often confused having many common skills and benefits, coaching and mentoring are quite distinctive from one another. One could identify three main features in which these two management processes differ. The first characteristic in which they differ is the origin, as the coach is a professional who comes mainly outside the company and has received clearly specialized training to guide the executives with whom he works. The mentor, on the other hand, is usually a senior executive of the company with several years of professional work experience (Kenworthy, 2015).

Coaching focuses on the development of skills and development of the individual, but without having a specific object on which the whole process will be built. It aims several times to improve communication, collaboration, mobilization, and leadership skills. Instead, mentoring focuses on a specific subject such as marketing, financially as it is a transfer of experience that the mentor has in a specific area.

Mentoring is based on the transmission of knowledge that comes from the experience of the mentor. In the case of coaching, evolution is based on a process of an internal change of the individual. The prerequisite here for evolution and development is considered the reconciliation of the individual with himself so that he is able, through his own personal abilities, to determine the solutions and his overall path to achieve the goals that have been set (Kenworthy, 2015).

Data captured during a 2004 survey with participants being UK based professional coaches/mentors with years of relevant experience and reflections revealed the main reasons or real personal needs for willing people to follow coaching and mentoring processes, as presented below (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Reasons for choosing coaching/ mentoring practices
Source: (Mentor, 2020)

2.4. Coaching and Mentoring in Digital Era

2.4.1. Long-Distance Mentoring and Coaching

In 2004, a national cross-sectional web-based survey was conducted by the Society of General Internal Medicine (GIM) Annual Meeting, with 78% responding participants of 111 members, coming from the ranks of GIM mentors, GIM fellowship directors, and GIM National Institutes of Health (Pillon & Osmun, 2013, Luckhaupt et al, 2005). According to this survey, 67% of responding mentors had previously participated in a distance coaching / mentoring program using email and telephone communication. In fact, 79% of participated mentors clearly rated the examined sessions as poor in responsiveness, commitment and less demanding and efficient than the one-to-one coaching / mentoring sessions with personal contact (Luckhaupt et al, 2005).

Long-distanced sessions, however, have significant advantages, such as saving time and travel costs, better scheduling, and taking on additional responsibilities at the same time. Disadvantages include difficulty in finding common time, limited direct observation, techniques that may arise, reduced commitment (Ambrose, 2003).

Coaching / mentoring via email or telephone can, however, work well in simple cases, where brief communication and general information is needed, which can happen with mentoring. These two tools cannot work in cases of critical feedback or commentary on the knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes, beliefs, and behavior of the other, as in cases of coaching. Email communication can often be responsible for misinterpretations of meanings and often make it difficult to develop a more personal relationship, where there will be trust, respect, and deep and meaningful communication, which are essential for an effective relationship in coaching in particular, but also in mentoring, too (Schichtel, 2009).

2.4.2. Teleconferencing

Teleconferencing (i.e. Skype or Zoom) offers a significant advantage that participants have the flexibility of timing, duration, planning, ease of access, reduction of transport costs and distance. On the other hand, any difficulties, that may accidentally arise and cannot be ignored, are either technical problems (i.e. computer failure, poor connection), difficulty developing a relationship of empathy and trust without physical presence (Purcell, 2004), especially if there haven't been already any meetings, or at least one initial meeting in person, privacy or confidentiality issues, depending also on the surroundings of each participant at the time (Table 3).

Despite the disadvantages, teleconferencing is a worthy and effective substitute for face-to-face coaching/mentoring meetings, which could not otherwise take place, enhancing connectivity and ensuring focused attention of both participants, who enjoy audio and visual contact, benefiting of reading body language, noticing facial cues and avoiding multi-tasking, which helps to form a relationship with greater confidence and security (Purcel, 2004).

3. Method

Following reporting process guidelines for systematic reviews and meta-analyses, findings and data of relevant eligible studies and published research articles from other authors were collected, reviewed and evaluated. This systematic review was commissioned to identify and assess the importance of coaching and mentoring processes across all sectors, the interconnection or comparison between them, their evolution over the years of digital era we are living in, and in addition, how these processes have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

By employing researched studies of period from 1999 to 2015, we focused solely on coaching and mentoring, processes that garnered great attention in research literature and huge usage strategically by organisations since 1990s, allowing us to define the two and the differences between them, covering also their dynamics and effectiveness aspects if used remotely and digitally. The rest population of studies in our reference list includes small-scale empirical researches on the recent but time-limited Covid-19 pandemic impact on the processes, all issued in 2020.

A comprehensive search of articles published from 1999-2020 was conducted, utilising literature search engines, to identify relevant published and unpublished studies. Initially, various electronic databases were searched, Google Scholar, Scribd, Elsevier and Academia being amongst them. Individually or in combination of Boolean algebra search strings with key words or phrases including ‘*coaching*’, ‘*mentoring*’, ‘*digital era*’, ‘*Covid-19*’, ‘*pandemic*’, ‘*impact*’, ‘*long-distanced*’, ‘*development*’, ‘*affected by*’ or ‘*effectiveness*’ were used to spot relevance spotted in their title and/or abstract. Published articles identified during the database search, were included in the reference list and manually reviewed for later extended study.

Data were derived from a variety of published surveys’ results complemented by chart documented information. Their meta-analysis of the research carried out a result related to the issue, from where our conclusions derived, leading to our suggestions, in order all to be utilized by further future research.

4. Results

From the body of research studied, scholars agree that mentoring can be used at various life stages and as a method or strategy to elicit a wide range of positive outcomes for mentees, be it targeting academic success, or as a means of personal development, or optimising professional career, without ignoring the benefits of the trainers themselves and the organizations they work for (Table 2). The literature in general has demonstrated a basic similarity between coaching and mentoring which is the common support of adult education. The adult learning pathway is based on experience, understanding it through reflection. As binary relationships both, they are characterized by confidentiality, which is considered fundamental to success. The researchers have stressed that relationship quality is essential to the success of both the process and coaching. Recognizable differentiation is found in the nature of the process, which in mentoring’s case is considered less formal, while in coach’s case the focus is on targeted performance and alignment with business growth objectives.

The recent particularly disruptive Covid-19 pandemic has managed to affect every domain of physical and mental health, social relationship, operations, business, activity, lifestyle and well-being, creating short and long term financial implications too (Palmer et al, 2020). The conditions set by the COVID-19 pandemic had caused a sense of uncertainty in the coaching/mentoring process, highlighting a number of challenges experienced by the participants. Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated damages to the quality of training and guidance a coachee/ mentee received, which may negatively impact their career advancement.

Amongst all levels from people, organisations and communities impacted (Palmer et al, 2020), the Covid-19 pandemic has caused many professionals job insecurity, due to visa and travel restrictions and companies having financial insecurity and limited funding (CIPD, 2020), leading to hiring or training freezes, postponement or gaps in employment. Existing working conditions have changed, with teleworking being the predominant option. The heavy burden on mental and physical health (CIPD, 2020) and collective anxiety (Fleisher et al, 2020), the lockdowns and the distance imposed, in addition, as a health measure significantly

affected the conduct of conferences, seminars, and other educational activities. The coaching and mentoring branches could not help but be affected by the new living conditions.

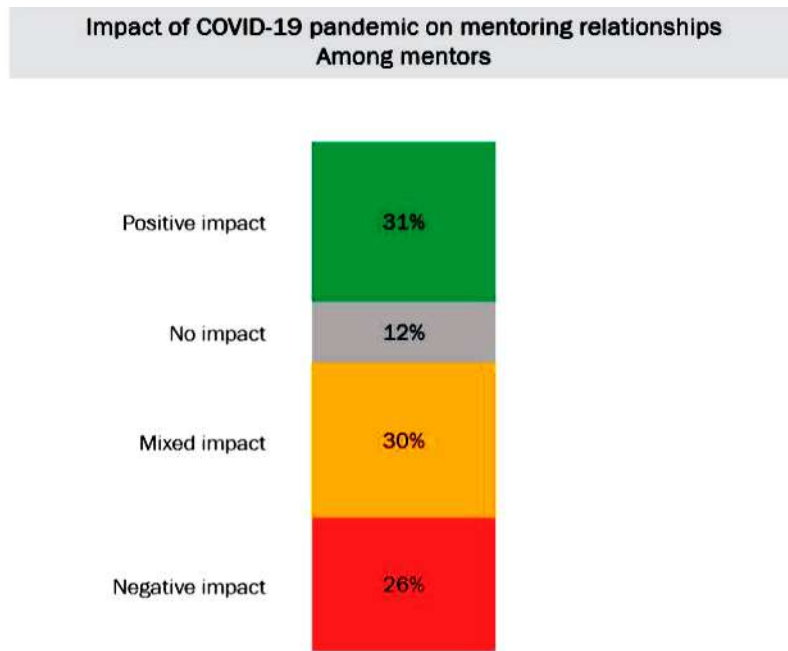
4.1. Effects on Mentoring

Researches have demonstrated a number of challenges and concerns regarding guidance during the COVID crisis. These included difficulties in establishing and / or maintaining interpersonal relationships with mentees, concern for the well-being of both mentees and trainers, awareness of disruptions and uncertainty about their mentees ' progress and professional careers. Thus, some evidence suggests that long-distance mentoring may, in some circumstances, be less effective for the mentee and less satisfying for the mentor (Luckhaupt et al., 2005).

The emergence and spread of the recent Covid-19 pandemic affected every area of professional and business activity, including mentoring practices (CIPD, 2021). However, in a time defined by remote and hybrid work, this industry has succeeded and responded with relative adaptability and speed, acting with innovation, managing to cope relatively satisfactorily with the health crisis and the needs it has created. The mentors have shown the necessary will and zeal to succeed, as far as possible, in making concerted efforts to provide needed guidance to mentees, assuring them that they would be able to achieve their goals despite unprecedented conditions.

The world of digital learning and development, that includes coaching/mentoring, has been accelerating rapidly over the past two decades. Some organisations had been quick to embrace change, deploying relevant technology, processes and capabilities to support in an effective, flexible and scalable way the growing need and exploit current capabilities (CIPD, 2000). The adoption and utilization of digital technological innovations, in a very fast pace, proved to be the decisive and supporting driver, which has paved the way for some mentoring relationships that under different circumstances could not keep in touch.

According to the literature review, almost 31% of the cases claimed that the Covid-19 pandemic had a clear positive effect on mentoring relationships as new digital support methods were developed (Figure 2). However, 26% of cases reported that the pandemic affected mentoring negatively due to cancellations of programs and meetings, while 12% report neutral impact (Figure 2).



Base: Nationally Representative Sample who mentor (Total Answering n=111).

Figure 2. Impact of the pandemic on mentoring relationships
Source: (Mentor, 2020)

In fact, 1 in 5 mentors says they spend more time on mentoring sessions with pandemics and lockdowns, offering more support than ever before, proving once more that the process goes way beyond helping someone advance in their career (Luckhaupt et al, 2004) or pursue their dreams.

The results of the literature study show that the digital media that were most in-demand in mentoring were teleconferencing and telephone interfaces. In fact, 51% of those who used teleconferencing say that it proved to be extremely effective for both parties (Figure 3) (Palmer et al., 2020). One in five cases reported interrupting mentoring sessions due to social distance regulations, uncertainty, and a number of other challenges (Figure 3). In these cases, 65% of mentoring programs were canceled due to the pandemic, 30% were canceled due to financial obligations caused by the pandemic. The challenge, however, was not only economic. Mentoring programs were asked to modify their methods to adapt to a digital learning and work environment, resulting in a lack of trust and insecurity in the relationship with the mentor without the physical presence (CIPD, 2020, Thomas, 2020). Research studies had highlighted several obstacles to the further expansion and effective use of the online process, which fall into three categories (CIPD, 2021)(Table 3).

Table 3.

Barriers to growth and application of online coaching/mentoring

Organisational cultural & technological barriers	Coach's/Mentor's barriers	Coachee/Mentee's barriers
Reliability & limits of existing technology infrastructure	Digital competence levels /lack of digital training & support	Lack of familiarity/ experience with digital platforms
Cost of investment in online Technology, expert tech staff & limited budgets	Limited time to adapt methods to design of engaging & user-friendly learning content	Financial cost of acquiring necessary personal electronic equipment for connection & access

Organisational cultural & technological barriers	Coach's/Mentor's barriers	Coachee/Mentee's barriers
Participants' different levels of access to computers / necessary bandwidth / technology issues	Requirement to adapt methods to digital learning & work environment	Unavailability of home internet connection & technical support
Cyber-security concerns / risks	Cyber-security concerns / risks	Cyber-security concerns / risks
Low availability of adequate technical support	Doubt about suitability of task learning, skill development ability via online delivery	Lack of accountability, trust & insecurity in participants' relationship in the absence of physical presence
Cultural barriers to digitalisation, in terms of organisational and individual resistance	Difficulty in establishing trust, bonding and rapport in the absence of physical presence	Low academic background/ confidence level/ Feelings of isolation

Barriers identified by research studies to growth and application of online coaching/mentoring (own source)

Many respondents reported difficulty, either nonverbal communication, or different levels of engagement, in connecting in a meaningful way due to the sudden forced reliance on teleconferencing platforms. Additional challenge was presented in the cases of working with young mentors whom they had never met in person. Many cited the absence of informal and unplanned interactions, e.g. aisle conversations, guided lunches or cafes, and free access policies where and when there was a real need, that are now difficult to repeat remotely. Realising the importance of mentoring due to the escalated bonding and dynamics of already on-going processes between mentor and mentee, it is not surprising that 42% of participants preferred to maintain the traditional in-person contact, with or without taking precautionary measures of 6-feet social distancing (Figure 3).

Sharing similar principles and ideas of research studies since 2011, Palmer et al (2020) once more had commended favorably the positive and coaching psychology theory, research, strategies and technique INSIGHT© coaching, counseling and training model (Palmer et al, 2020). The acronym represents seven particularly useful pillars that can be cultivated in the process for personal growth and the pursuit of improved resilience and well-being, focusing on Increasing self-awareness, Normalizing any transitions, Supporting positive reflections, Integrating past, present and future, Giving time and space, Highlighting the bigger picture and Tailoring solutions to any problem. The INSIGHT was introduced as a framework of coaching/mentoring to strengthen transition resilience during the uncertain time of the pandemic, without underestimating the long-term future benefits it can have (Palmer et al, 2020).

Challenges that arose include the digital divide of the relationship mentoring participants and their ability to move in a virtual work and learning environment (Table 3). Another challenge is the existence of a home internet connection and an electronic device that responds to video-conferencing (EMCC, 2020) (Table 3). Despite these challenges, it is estimated from the literature that approximately 57% manage either way to maintain regular attendance at mentoring sessions successfully (Figure 3). As a result of these challenges, the digital media most used effectively for mentoring teleconferencing were either Zoom, FaceTime or Skype, but according to the findings of the survey, the use of telephony or internet audio communication also showed a significant percentage of 43% (Figure 3).

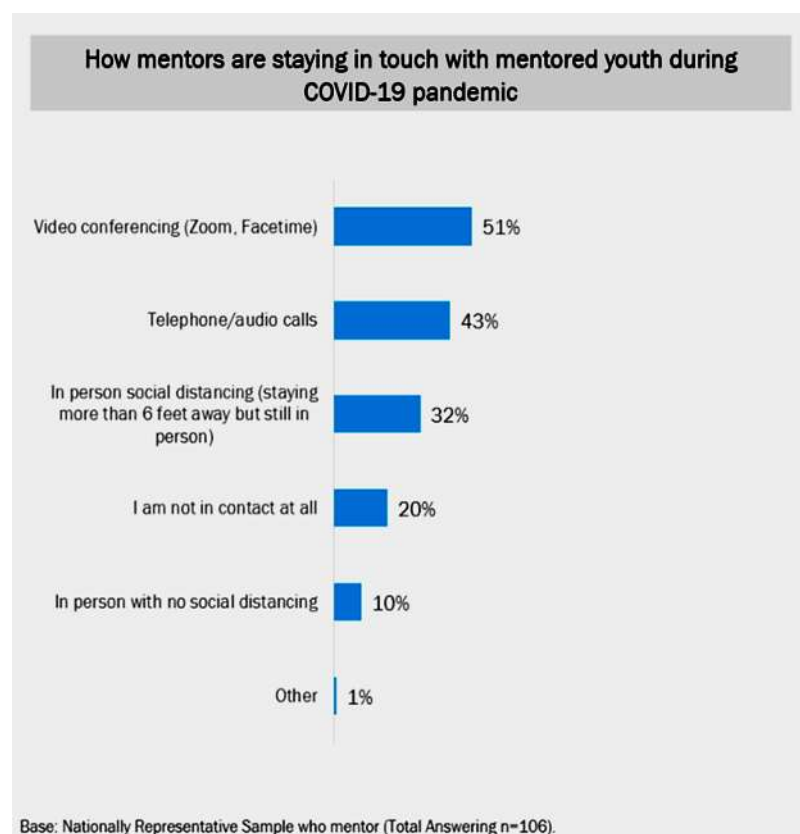


Figure 3. How mentored stayed in touch with mentored during the pandemic

Source: (Mentor, 2020)

4.2. Effects on Coaching

The challenges that followed the Covid-19 pandemic could not help but affect the relationship between coach and coachee. With the pandemic, it was more important than ever for coaches to delve into empathy, opening up new avenues in the coaching relationship, to deal effectively with the highly stressful aspects of the pandemic, which often exceeded even the skills of the coach himself, but also of the coachee (CIPD, 2020; EMCC, 2020).

The world of digital learning and development, which includes coaching/mentoring processes, has been accelerating rapidly over the past two decades. Some organisations had been quick to embrace change, deploying relevant technology, processes and capabilities to support in an effective, flexible and scalable way the growing need and exploit current capabilities.

When any positive or surprising aspects of mentoring during the pandemic were explored, coaching sessions were found to be extremely useful during pandemics and especially lockdowns, as consistency and perseverance were critical to effective guidance during the pandemic and mental support was extremely useful in managing the complexity of the new reality and managing stress. The coaching sessions managed to respond flexibly to the challenges presented but also to the gaps created by the pandemic. According to Tamiolaki & Kalaitzaki (2020), although conditions have become quite complex, coaching has helped to boost growth through innovation, which has led to basic financial security in the midst of the pandemic, helping both professionals and individuals to meet the needs of the new era (Thomas, 2020).

The coaches applied new ways of guiding, utilizing the technological means, in combination with the experience they possessed. Besides, the health crisis had a ‘positive’ effect on

coaching. The prevailing turmoil, uncertainty, new living conditions, the need for support for more competition in order to remain at the forefront have led to an increase in demand for coaching (Fleisher et al., 2020; EMCC, 2020). The need to form a relationship that will fill the gaps in the lockdown led to coaching teleconferences. The positive response received by this project led coaches to find the mood and motivation to solve any challenges caused by the pandemic. In fact, according to the literature, it turned out that the possibility of online interaction improved the relationship between the two parties due to the intensification of meetings (Jackson & Bourne, 2020).

5. Conclusions

Although the present coaching and mentoring research embraces the utilization of technology as highly necessary, nevertheless it still considers important for participants to find opportunities to meet in person, to maintain and reinforce connection, rapport, mutual respect, trust and commitment (Nguyen & Rhodes, 2019).

It emphasizes the importance of the role of coaching and mentoring practices, clarifying the terms individually and highlighting the usefulness of each at a different level, being efficient in empowering and enhancing performance of coaches and mentees during the pandemic (Figure 4). Also, this research showed that despite the adversities of the disruptive Covid-19 pandemic period, coaching and mentoring practices could give positive results, utilizing modern technological means. Concluding the study above, it can be assumed that organizations with more capable coaches and mentors would have a greater influence on performance, emphasizing the importance of both practices.

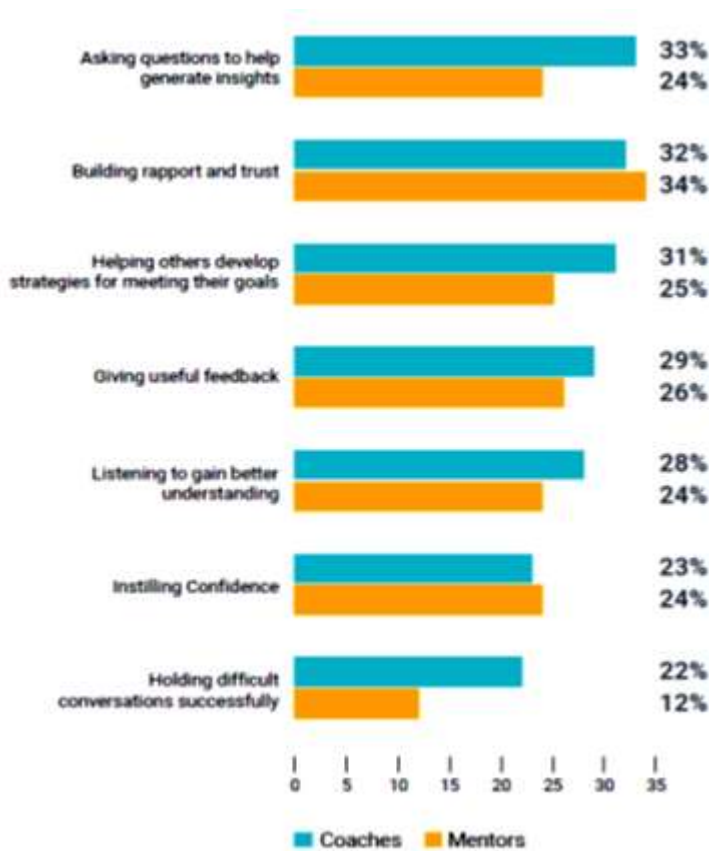


Figure 4. Effectiveness of coaches and mentors through pandemic
Source: (Mentor, 2020)

Furthermore, even organizations that have not yet invested in coaching and mentoring practices will surely realise the importance of placing emphasis and investing in this particular area, which is proven to positively impact organizations in the future, whether it is to ensure future profitability, higher performance, optimal governance and organic growth of the organization itself, but also the well-being and development of its employees individually, helping them to stretching to their full potential.

The cooperative and mutual nature of teleconferences in real time facilitated both participants being innovative and growing their mentorship and coaching skills. As Palloff & Pratt (1999) defined, "*collaborative learning that allows sharing of ideas among the students is very important in forming the foundation of a learning community*" (pp. 29). The coaches and mentors found the flexibility of joining a respective online program combining other responsibilities as a benefit. Participants from all over the world, without even the same time zone, took part, and it was convenient for all of the participants. Teleconferencing helped to maintain a stable relationship between coach/mentor and trainee, creating conditions of security and trust. The coaches offered ongoing support and critical feedback. The mentees gain from the mentor's knowledge and skills, and the mentors improve their teaching and leadership skills as they guide the mentees. There was a comfortable and goal-oriented environment where the coaches/mentor's provided guidance.

The pandemic brought new working conditions to the fore: remote and hybrid work, more competition. Businesses can take advantage of new conditions by investing in coaching and mentoring practices by utilizing technology and tools that make even teleconferencing an effective practice.

The results of this analysis address the challenges of mentoring in a wide range of academic research mentoring settings. The findings presented offer a unique and valuable contribution to the guidance literature and indicate strategies and opportunities for effective guidance in times of crisis.

In conclusion, the reported findings of the survey reveal a number of factors that were affected by the unprecedented pandemic that led to global disruption. The forced weight given to remote guidance, the globally shared experience of this unique and time-limited incident of the pandemic, and the resulting risks to the resources and well-being of the workforce, have tested the possibilities and most clearly shaped the future course and the frameworks for necessary improvement of guidance in general, under all circumstances, beyond even such incidents.

6. Suggestions

Future research and business applied policies might focus in on any one of the following orientations:

Contemplate strongly about maintaining coaching and mentoring consistently not only during, but even after the pandemic: In any case, when performed well, coaching and mentoring are excellent communication methods at a time when more efficient interaction is necessary. During a crisis like Covid-19, organizations and individuals have greater need to know they are appreciated and have an opportunity to share their worries and anxieties. Additionally, coaching and mentoring can be excellent examples of teaching basic skills on a timely basis, skills that can prove particularly challenging if they are practically difficult to disseminate through e-learning or other traditional programs.

Learn, adopt and apply virtual and remote technologies: Virtual technologies offer a platform for coaches and mentors to easily interface with employees anywhere in the world at lower

cost and safer connections. Relevant technology interventions, assisting in the process of mentoring and mentoring, may include evaluations of goals, as well as tools that measure their gradual achievement, emphasizing learning and personal career development. It is clearer now than ever that future research will cover into ways for online environments not to just facilitate but augment such interventions. Furthermore, employers are strongly striving for artificial intelligence to gradually meet the needs of employees and their respective career goals with "automated" and customized coaching or mentoring content. Exercise mentoring for achievement of objectives: Managers often jump into a mentoring role when it becomes apparent that an employee could handle a task or assignment in a better way. Although this is an important reason for intervention for guidance, it is nevertheless immediate. Leaders should be pushed to guide those with high competence and those facing challenges such as a new job. The goal should be preventive and developmental in nature, helping individuals to succeed.

Invest in creating coaches and mentors: Within an organization, coaches and mentors must utilize skills in thoughtful listening, reflecting, generating perceptions, facilitating and guiding rather than speaking, addressing the whole personality of coachee/mentee, skills that cannot be assumed easy to acquire or act upon at once. Businesses with more efficient mentors and coaches are also more likely to prepare coaches and mentors.

Create an organisational coaching and mentoring culture: When businesses communicate and promote well-thought-out mentoring programs, staffed by available, willing, competent and management-empowered effective coaches and mentors, have the corresponding allocation of adequate resources and clear goal-setting, then a strong culture of coaching and mentoring can easily be developed. Promising individuals willingly invest in such a culture with mutual trust, establishing honesty in top-down and bottom-up feedback, showing respect and acceptance of those who stand out in the process, which includes learning from mistakes and successes. Creating competent future business executives forms one of the most important roles of successful managers and leaders. The lack of their time to invest in the process is nothing more than an excuse.

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