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INVESTIGATING ORGANIZATIONAL COACHING THROUGH AN ATHLETIC COACHING COMPARISON: DETERMINING HIGH PERFORMANCE COACHING PRACTICES IN ORGANIZATIONS

Increasing emphasis on employee development has resulted in the emergence of coaching in organizations. Organizational coaching unites the various approaches and forms of coaching which currently exist within organizational boundaries. Though athletic coaching analogies are widespread within organizational coaching literature, a comprehensive comparison of athletic and organizational coaching has not been conducted. Omission of key athletic coaching practices in organizational coaching may hinder top employee performance.

Through a multi-phase, mixed-method design, a comparison of athletic and organizational coaching was completed. The initial phases of the study reviewed the emergence of organizational coaching and compared athletic with current forms of organizational coaching. The quantitative and qualitative responses provided by coaches helped explain why the athletic approach to coaching is not extensively used in organizations. Main categories of comparison were found which guided item construction for the high-performance coaching practices (HPCP) measure. A second study of athletic and organizational coaches allowed psychometric analyses which helped construct the final HPCP measure.

The HPCP may have great utility for researchers, coaches, and organizational stakeholders by helping to align the performance management system to the athletic coaching approach. Increased usage of HPCPs may also aid in coach selection, coach-coachee matching, and promote employee health and well-being. The coaching approach is placed on the consulting-to-counselling developmental spectrum, which helps define the formats and roles of organizational coaches in workplaces. A model for organizational coaching was produced, providing guidance on how HPCPs fit within the overall organizational coaching program. The coaching model provides a foundation for future coaching research and practice. With the constant and ongoing influences on organizational coaching from athletics, the athletic approach to coaching can no longer be ignored.

This comparative research project provides the preliminary steps to establish the coaching approach, based mainly on athletic coaching HPCPs, as a legitimate approach to coaching in organizations. Researchers, organizations, and coaches interested in employee and organizational development may discover that this approach to organizational coaching, utilizing HPCPs, is essential. For employees wishing to “go for gold” as athletes do, the coaching approach provides a comprehensive framework from which an individualized coaching program can be constructed.