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## An Examination of Employee Coachability and Managerial Coaching in Organizations

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An Examination of Employee Coachability and Managerial Coaching in Organizations

A Dissertation

Presented in

Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

Jake Alexander Weiss

November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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### **Biography**

The author was born in Boca Raton, Florida, on July 20, 1993. He graduated from Jupiter Community High School, in Jupiter, Florida. He received his Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology from the University of Central Florida (UCF) in December of 2014. He received his Master of Arts degree in Industrial-Organizational Psychology from DePaul University in May of 2018.

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### **Abstract**

Volatile, complex, and ambiguous work environments require organizations to focus on continuous employee development and performance improvement across all organizational levels. As a result, organizational development (OD) practices for employee development rapidly increased throughout the past decade. One such vital individualized training intervention – organizational coaching – facilitates continuous behavioral change, development, and performance improvement across employees (Joo et al., 2012). Researchers, like practitioners, though, often examine coaching in isolation, focusing on the coach without considering the impact those being coached (i.e., coachees) have on the success of the coaching process. Coachees' ability to seek, thoughtfully consider, act, and change behavior based on feedback provided during coaching interactions (i.e., their coachability) remains a critical, yet understudied factor in the coaching equation. A targeted examination of employee coachability, therefore, offers a more in-depth understanding of the coaching dynamic. Thus, I extensively explored antecedents, behaviors, and outcomes of employee coachability. The goals of this research centered on contributing to the organizational coaching and coachability literatures through a thorough examination of employee coachability, which includes the interplay between managerial (i.e., organizational) coaching and employee coachability. While I initially examined employee coachability as a method through which organizations can maximize coaching interactions, the data indicates employee coachability functions independently of coaching behaviors. In other words, regardless of the quality of the coaching relationship, nature of feedback provided (i.e., quality and properly delivered), and environment (i.e., psychologically safe, feedback seeking supportive), coachable employees still seek, demonstrate receptivity to, and implement feedback to drive individual development and performance improvement. So,

while coachability behaviors (i.e., feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and transfer of coaching/feedback) surely remain important for optimizing coaching interactions (i.e., coaching cannot be effective without the coachee's willingness to receive and implement coaching), the findings suggest the importance and impact of coachability spans these interactions.

Specifically, employee coachability drives individual job performance, adaptability, and promotability. Research finds employee adaptability as a vital driver of organizational effectiveness to generate competitive advantages. As such, organizations may consider employee coachability a competency to which they hire or train employees in order to achieve and sustain competitive advantages.



### An Examination of Employee Coachability and Managerial Coaching in Organizations

Volatile, complex, and ambiguous work environments prompt organizational shifts from vertical, hierarchical structures to horizontal, flatter, more collaborative-based structures (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Miles & Snow, 1992; Walker & Lorsch, 1968). These shifts warrant organizational transitions from evaluative-focused performance appraisal systems to development-oriented performance management systems (Pulakos, Hanson, Arad, & Moya, 2015). These large-scale transformations require continuous employee development and improvement across organizational levels to adapt to the constantly changing dynamics of work in today's performance-driven environment (Joo, Sushko, & McLean, 2012; Ozkan, 2008; Pulakos et al., 2015). As a result, organizational development (OD) practices for employee development rapidly increased throughout the past decade (Joo, 2005; Noe, Clarke, & Klein, 2014). While organizations utilize a variety of employee development strategies (e.g., mentoring, formal education, counseling), many of these practices do not fully accomplish the intended goals of transfer of learning and sustained behavioral change (Joo et al., 2012). These shortcomings spearheaded the introduction of more individualized, engaging, ongoing, and context-specific training (Bacon & Spear, 2003).

One such individualized training intervention – organizational coaching – proves vital for facilitating continuous behavioral change, development, and performance improvement across employees (Joo et al., 2012; Ladyshevsky, 2010). Organizational coaching (i.e., managerial coaching) represents a paradigm shift from traditional command-and-control management to a facilitative-and-empowerment driven management style (Evered & Selman, 1989; Hamlin, Ellinger, & Beattie, 2006). This shift places coaching at the heart of managerial responsibilities. Thus, employees may view and regard managers as coaches (Evered & Selman, 1989; Hamlin et

al., 2006). Researchers define managerial coaching (i.e., manager-as-coach, coaching manager) as a managerial practice that facilitates employee learning, development, and performance improvement by providing guidance, encouragement, and support (Ellinger, Ellinger, Hamlin, & Beattie, 2010; Joo et al., 2012). In traditional managerial practices, managers focus heavily on ensuring control, order, and compliance with the consequence that employees become objectified, measured, and expended. Thus, managerial coaching practices differ from traditional managerial practices (Evered & Selman, 1989).

Managerial coaching practices also differ from executive coaching practices. Executive coaching practices focus exclusively on senior and executive-level employees. External coach-practitioners enact executive coaching practices on a scheduled-basis to elevate self-awareness, close skill-gaps, and increase leadership effectiveness (Joo et al., 2012; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Kilburg, 1996). On the other hand, internal managerial coaches (i.e., managers) engage in coaching practices on a daily-basis with all employees for whom they are responsible within their organization. In line with this managerial paradigm shift from command-and-control to facilitate-and-empower, I focus exclusively on managerial coaches and their coaching behaviors (i.e., organizational coaching).

Empirical examinations on organizational coaching demonstrate these practices facilitate employee learning, drive sustained behavioral change, accelerate development, and increase performance (Joo et al., 2012; Ladyshevsky, 2010; Park, Yang, & McLean, 2008). Researchers also regard organizational coaching as an instrumental avenue through which organizations can create and sustain competitive advantages (Pousa & Mathieu, 2015). As such, the use of coaching as a means of enhancing employee development and performance within organizations increased substantially in recent years (Theeboom, Beersma, & van Vianen, 2014). According to

the International Coaching Federation (ICF), over 64,000 organizational coaches practice worldwide, with about 33% working in North America. Furthermore, organizational coaching initiatives cost organizations roughly \$2.356 billion USD annually (International Coach Federation, 2016). Thus, it appears evident organizations place a premium on coaching practices and initiatives as drivers of continuous employee development.

Mirroring the boom in coaching practices within organizations, academic interest in coaching grew considerably over the past 35 years (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Hagen, 2012; Joo et al., 2012; Matsuo, 2018). Research findings support the value of coaching from within the organization as a driver of organizational success (Ellinger, 2013; Liu & Batt, 2010). Researchers, like practitioners, though, often examine coaching in isolation, focusing on the coach without considering the impact those being coached (i.e., coachees) have on the success of the coaching process (Gregory & Levy, 2010; Shannahan, Bush, & Shannahan, 2013; Shannahan, Shannahan, & Bush, 2013; Theeboom et al., 2014). Coachees are active, rather than passive, participants in the coaching process who can either enhance or undermine the effectiveness of coaching practices (Baker, 2007; Gregory & Levy, 2010; London & Smither, 2002). Coachees' ability to seek, receive, act on, and change behavior based on feedback provided during coaching interactions (i.e., their coachability) remains a critical, yet understudied factor in the coaching equation. A targeted examination of employee coachability allows for a more in-depth understanding of the coaching dynamic, which provides insights through which organizations may optimize coaching practices.

Research investigations on employee coachability suggest promising benefits for organizational performance. Shannahan et al. (2013a) found maximal sales performance occurs with coachable employees. Similarly, findings from the entrepreneurship literature suggest

employee coachability is one of the most important factors influencing an investor's willingness to invest in the entrepreneur's business venture(s) (Ciuchta, Letwin, Stevenson, McMahon, & Huvaj, 2018). Yet, employee coachability may importantly impact other individual and organizational outcomes. In today's ever-changing work environment (Ozkan, 2008), employee adaptability proves vital for regulating behavior and driving individual and organizational effectiveness to generate a competitive advantage (Cullen, Edwards, Casper, & Gue, 2014; Huang, Ryan, Zabel, & Palmer, 2014). Employee adaptability involves rapidly modulating ones' behavior to adjust to novel internal organizational issues and external environmental factors. Understanding how to effectively change behavior to cope with these internal and external organizational demands requires that employees possess role, process, and goal clarity. The receptiveness to and subsequent utilization of feedback positions employees to rapidly adjust behaviors as a result of this increased role, process, and goal clarity (Sawyer, 1992; Whitaker, Dahling, & Levy, 2007). As employee coachability fosters the seeking of, receptivity to, and implementation of feedback, it follows that coachability may influence employee adaptability.

Human resource management practitioners identify coachability of prospective employees as an important consideration in the recruiting process (Laabs, 2000). Management professionals encourage recruiters to improve their hiring efficiency by evaluating candidates' coachability during interviews (Larson & Comstock, 1994). To devise and implement effective human resource management practices targeted to identify coachable candidates, researchers and practitioners require an understanding of the traits and behaviors indicative of highly coachable individuals. Coachable individuals seek, thoughtfully consider, and subsequently implement coaching feedback. However, motivational disparities might exist, leading to differences in seeking, receptiveness to, and implementation of this coaching feedback. These motivational

disparities distinguish truly coachable individuals from those who strive to be perceived as coachable. Thus, optimization of organizational human resource management practices requires research conducted to determine the personality traits, behaviors, and motivational drivers of highly coachable employees.

The existing managerial coaching research literature (e.g., Agarwal, Angst, & Magni, 2009; Ellinger, Ellinger, Bachrach, Wang, & Bas, 2010) examines coaching in isolation by focusing exclusively on the coach without considering the impact coachees exude on the coaching process. Likewise, an examination of coachability cannot occur without considering the impact of the coach and his or her behaviors on employees' coachability. For example, determining how feedback should be provided to coachees to maximize employee coachability. A thorough understanding of the interplay between managerial coaching behaviors (e.g., high vs. low-quality coach-coachee relationships) and employee coachability (i.e., behaviors, motives, outcomes) provides insights that enable researchers and practitioners to enhance and advance the effectiveness of organizational coaching and coachability practices.

I, therefore, explore employee coachability. A more complete understanding of employee coachability and its interplay with managerial coaching provides researchers and practitioners with insights necessary to optimize organizational coaching practices. These findings also offer avenues through which organizations may establish a competitive advantage. Specifically, I aim to: (1) highlight the importance of coachability for both research and practice, (2) pinpoint the personality traits that underlie coachable employees, (3) determine the behaviors and motives of coachable individuals, (4) understand the impact of managerial coaching behaviors on employee coachability, and (5) examine individual outcomes driven by employee coachability.

### **Organizational Coaching**

Organizational coaching practices focus on driving employee development, behavioral change, learning, and performance improvement. This involves targeted behaviors to improve self-regulatory skills (e.g., self-monitoring, efficacy, evaluation, reactions; Cellar, Stuhlmacher, Young, Fisher et al., 2011) and task-related skills and capabilities (Joo et al., 2012). Coaches facilitate the attainment of these desired outcomes through the provision of continuous feedback, prompted self-reflection and critical thinking, and the assignment of challenging developmental work tasks (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). Additionally, coaches prompt coachees to examine their current goal attainment status, determine potential novel strategies for achieving said goals, and then devise tactics and action steps for realizing goal accomplishment (Ellinger, Ellinger, & Keller, 2003; Grant, 2011). Through coaching interactions, coachees receive important feedback regarding personal, performance (e.g., strengths vs. weaknesses), career, and organizational issues, which they otherwise would not typically receive. This leads to continuous employee development and improvement, which proves necessary for boosting organizational effectiveness (Beattie, Kim, Hagen, Egan, Ellinger, & Hamlin, 2014; Bommelje, 2015).

### **Literature on Managerial Coaching**

Researchers now focus greater attention on managerial coaching practices within organizations (Beattie et al., 2014; Gilley, Gilley, & Kouider, 2010; Hagen, 2012). This, and earlier research, identifies and defines effective managerial coaching behaviors (Ellinger, 1997; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Ellinger, Ellinger, & Keller, 2003; Gilley et al., 2010; Hagen, 2012). These studies also demonstrate positive effects of managerial coaching practices on individual and organizational outcomes. The ensuing sections detail the identified effective managerial coaching behaviors and resulting outcomes.

**Managerial coaching behaviors.** Over the past 35 years, researchers developed a variety of coaching competency taxonomies to pinpoint the most effective behaviors exhibited by successful managerial coaches (e.g., Allenbaugh, 1983; Ellinger, 1997; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Ellinger et al., 2003; Evered & Selman, 1989; McLean, Yang, Kuo, Tolbert, & Larkin, 2005; Peterson & Hicks, 1996). Ellinger and colleagues (i.e., Ellinger, 1997; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Ellinger, Watkins, & Bostrom, 1999) devised one of the most widely utilized and well-known taxonomies of managerial coaching behaviors. To develop this taxonomy, the researchers conducted qualitative critical incident research studies to specifically investigate the ways in which exemplary managers coached their direct reports (Ellinger, 1997; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Ellinger et al., 1999). Through these large-scale qualitative undertakings, a myriad of coaching themes or behaviors common across effective coaches emerged, many of which overlap with the numerous coaching behavior taxonomies developed by other researchers. Table 1 summarizes these findings.

***Personalized learning.*** Personalized learning tailors coaching to fit the needs of each specific individual. Exhibition of this facilitative behavior includes using analogies, scenarios, and examples specific to the individual receiving the coaching. These practices further reinforce the material discussed during coaching interactions and make the content relatable, which facilitates the transfer of coaching onto the job (Ellinger et al., 2003). This transfer of coaching onto the job provides experiential opportunities through which coachees may automate or master the learned knowledge or skills. This drives employee development and performance. Personalized learning also provides the coachee with a tangible, first-hand look at both the benefits and/or consequences of exhibiting certain behaviors. This enables development as

coachees can model and enact behaviors proven to drive effectiveness in their specific role and organization.

***Providing feedback.*** As managerial coaching is a daily, on-going process, the provision of feedback by the coach to the coachee may be the most critical, indispensable component of this practice. Feedback must not only be provided, but also, delivered properly. While various approaches to providing feedback exist, Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) identify three major approaches utilized by managerial coaches: observational, reflective, and third-party feedback. Observational feedback provides the most effective, instantaneous method through which to identify detrimental behavior, areas for future development, or provide feedback regarding observed strengths. The benefits of observational feedback occur because managers make unfiltered, direct assessments of the employee's job performance. Managers then offer specific, timely critiques, which fosters rapid and continuous employee development (Pulakos et al., 2015).

To facilitate coachee development, managers also engage in providing reflective feedback. In these instances, the coach "holds the mirror" so that coachees formulate their own assessments about how their behavior impacts their performance, as well as others' within the organization (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). Researchers demonstrate that self-reflection drives development and performance through behavioral change as it promotes greater integration of learned material into memory. This thoughtful information processing prompts the level of thinking necessary for understanding how to effectively modify behavior based on coaching feedback (Anseel, Lievens, & Schollaert, 2009). Self-reflection also drives employee development as it serves to enhance the self-regulatory skills of coachees.



An additional form of feedback identified in Ellinger and Bostrom's (1999) taxonomy was third-party feedback, in which managers solicit feedback from the employee's customers, or through anonymous survey feedback instruments created collectively by the manager and direct report. Due to their expansive responsibilities, managers may not always be in a position to assess coachees' performance first-hand. In these instances, third-party feedback proves crucial as it provides coachees with observed, real-time assessments of their performance (Pulakos et al., 2015). Additionally, research finds feedback from a variety of sources may be more beneficial as it provides the recipient with information not otherwise available through a single source (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000). As such, this method of feedback may be used in conjunction with observational and/or reflective feedback. Thus, effective coaching requires the provision of feedback to affect behavioral change, employee development, and performance improvement. Properly delivered feedback highlights discrepancies between current and desired performance/goals and identifies areas of improvement necessary for achieving valued goals and optimal levels of performance (Erez, 1977; Locke & Latham, 2002).

***Soliciting feedback.*** While providing feedback to coachees is often the most significant component of effective managerial coaching practices, soliciting feedback from employees also constitutes a crucial feature of effective coaching. This practice enables the coach to gather insights from coachees regarding their perceived progress. By soliciting feedback, a coach may evaluate the effectiveness of coaching interactions with a coachee. Information collected from the coachee can aid the coach in determining how to alter his or her coaching practices to ensure the attainment of optimal outcomes (e.g., development, adaptability, performance improvement). Additionally, by actively seeking feedback regarding their coaching, coaches signal their genuine concern for the development of the coachee. In turn, a coachee's likelihood of experiencing

elevated levels of engagement and investment in the coaching process increases, optimizing the coaching interaction (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). This fosters the environment necessary for facilitating learning, development, and performance.

***Being a resource.*** Throughout the coaching process, coaches must act as resources for their coachees. In doing so, coaches provide resources, information, and materials to coachees that enable them to attain the specified goals and desired outcomes, such as behavioral change and performance improvement. Examples of resources provided to coachees include outside written materials, industry conferences, and training workshops. Additionally, coaches' responsibilities include removing roadblocks and obstacles impeding coachees' growth and development, or that are perceived to be obstructing the coachee's path to success, such as interceding with management to move ideas and/or projects forward (Ellinger, 1997; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). The receipt of necessary information and creation of a safe, positive environment enables coachee implementation of newly acquired insights and skills. Thus, these practices serve to facilitate coachee empowerment, development, and performance improvement (Joo et al., 2012).

***Question framing to encourage critical thinking.*** To empower coachees and facilitate development, managerial coaches encourage coachees to think through issues and arrive at solutions on their own, rather than directing them to specific solutions and acting as subject matter experts (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). To induce the critical, self-reflective thinking necessary to achieve desired coaching outcomes, coaches enact question framing behaviors, wherein they pose outcome, results-oriented, or context-specific questions (Ellinger, 1997; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). Researchers regard this technique as essential for continuous growth, development, and performance improvement across a wide-range of organizational

tasks, as it enhances coachee self-regulatory skills (Anseel, Lievens, & Schollaert, 2009) and adaptive transfer (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008).

***Broadening coachee perspectives.*** In line with prompting critical thinking and fostering empowerment, an additional efficacious managerial coaching behavior is broadening coachee perspectives and getting them to see things differently. This behavior, similar to the intellectual stimulation component of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985), encourages divergent thinking, risk taking, and challenging of the status quo (i.e., their assumptions). In turn, this facilitates coachees' ability to generate alternative, more innovative, efficient, and effective strategies and solutions to task-related issues (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Grant, 2012). This behavior prompts deeper critical thinking on the part of the coachee, allowing for the development of elevated self-regulatory skills and, subsequently, novel methods through which to attack task-related issues. It also empowers coachees, as they are given increased autonomy and responsibility for their work (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999), which leads to greater coachee motivation, and ultimately, drives superior performance (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999; Deci, Olafsen, & Ryan, 2017).

***Participative goal-setting.*** Managerial coaches and coachees jointly participating in setting and communicating expectations regarding the coaching relationship, process, and goals also forms an important coaching behavior (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). Evidenced extensively throughout the goal-setting literature, participatively set goals lead to higher performance (Erez, 1986; Erez, Earley, & Hulin, 1985) compared to externally set goals due to differences in goal commitment (Locke & Latham, 2002). Although setting expectations provides a tangible goal for coachees to work toward, coachees must also understand the importance of these expectations and goals for achieving individual outcomes (e.g., development, performance

improvement, career progression) and organizational outcomes (i.e., how do my goals and the coach's expectations contribute to organizational objectives?). With participative goal-setting, coaches may clarify goals and expectations, and how achieving them can positively impact the coachee and the organization as a whole.

***Supporting and facilitating learning and development.*** Coaches creating, promoting, and supporting a learning environment for coachees forms another set of important managerial coaching behaviors (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). Employee development and learning receive an increasing focus as organizations shift from hierarchical structures to more team-based, flatter structures (Miles & Snow, 1992; Walker & Lorsch, 1968), and from evaluation-focused to development-focused performance management systems (Aguinis, 2009; DeNisi & Murphy, 2017; Pulakos et al., 2015). As a result, organizations place a greater emphasis on constant learning at all organizational levels to facilitate individual adaptability and the exchange of knowledge and ideas among employees. These practices promote the generation of new knowledge and innovation necessary for creating flexible, efficient, and effective organizations (Sung & Choi, 2014). This theme of promoting a learning environment corresponds to the literature on learning organizations, wherein managers are encouraged to create continuous and experiential learning opportunities for employees (Sung & Choi, 2014; Watkins & Marsick, 1993). Thus, to create and promote learning environments, managerial coaches can actively engage in department meetings and foster mentoring relationships among employees – enabling the spread and sharing of ideas, knowledge, and information (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999). Additionally, managers can create informal learning opportunities through providing challenging work tasks to their employees (Allen, Eby, Poteet, & Lentz, 2004) wherein they encourage risk taking and divergent thinking. These learning opportunities accelerate employee learning,

adaptive transfer of coaching (Bell & Kozlowski, 2008), and development. Thus, through their displayed support for learning and development, managers facilitate employee development and performance.

***Development of a high-quality relationship.*** Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) omitted from their taxonomy a crucial and necessary feature of any effective working relationship: the development of one based on mutual benefit, respect, and trust, akin to high-quality leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995; Longenecker & Neubert, 2005). In the context of coaching, researchers identify a quality coaching relationship as the single most important factor for achieving successful outcomes (Baron & Morin, 2009; Boyce, Jackson, & Neal, 2010). The formation of a high-quality working relationship between the coach and coachee engenders a sense of motivation and mutual obligation, which leads to coaches providing coachees with additional opportunities for learning and development (Rockstuhl, Dulebohn, Ang, & Shore, 2012). Such opportunities ultimately benefit the coachee and aid in their learning, personal development, and performance improvement. Key behaviors associated with the coach-coachee relationship include building and maintaining rapport, establishing and maintaining trust, and encouraging commitment (Boyce, Nelson, Zaccaro, Hernez-Broome, & Whyman, 2010; Ely et al., 2010; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007). To build rapport and a foundation of trust, coaches should provide support (e.g., emotional, safe work environments) and resources (e.g., job-related materials) to their coachees, while also demonstrating genuine concern for the coachee during the development process (Boyce et al., 2010). The presence of rapport and trust, characteristic of high-quality coach-coachee relationships, creates a safe environment that supports learning and personal growth (Colquitt, Scott, & LePine, 2007). Additionally, coaches demonstrate commitment through behaviors that

fulfill their coaching responsibilities, such as attending scheduled meetings with the coachee and identifying and creating motivators which enable the coachee to persevere through any perceived obstacles or setbacks (Boyce et al., 2010). The formation and maintenance of a high-quality coaching relationship is fundamental for promoting and facilitating continuous learning, development, and ultimately elevating performance (Boyce et al., 2010; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007).

Table 1.

*Managerial Coaching Behaviors and Descriptions*

Managerial Coaching Behaviors	Definition/Description
1. Personalize learning	Coaches personalize learning with examples, analogies, and scenarios
2. Provide feedback	Coaches provide observational, reflective, and third-party feedback to learners
3. Solicit feedback from employees	Coaches seek feedback from learners about their progress; Coaches ensure that coaching interactions are helpful for the coachee
4. Be a resource	Coaches provide resources, information, and material to learners; Coaches remove roadblocks and obstacles coachees perceive to be in their way
5. Question framing to encourage employees to think through issues	Coaches pose outcome, results-oriented questions, or context-specific questions to encourage learners to think through issues themselves; prompt self-reflection
6. Broaden employees' perspectives	Coaches prompt learners to think outside of the box by encouraging them to see other perspectives, and by providing other perspectives and experiences
7. Set and communicate expectations	Coaches set goals and expectations with learners and communicate the importance (of those goals and expectations) for the big picture
8. Promote and support a learning environment	Coaches create learning environments by actively engaging in department meetings, fostering mentoring relationships among employees, and providing challenging work tasks to employees

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 9. Develop a working relationship based on mutual benefit, respect, and trust | Coaches build and maintain rapport, establish and maintain trust, and encourage commitment to the coaching relationship |
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*Citation: (Ellinger, 1997; Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Ellinger et al., 2003)*

### **Managerial Coaching Outcomes**

The empirical research examining the impact of managerial coaching behaviors on individual coachee and organizational outcomes reveals a positive connection with employee and organizational outcomes (Ellinger et al., 2003; Joo et al., 2012; Longenecker & Neubert, 2005). Researchers establish that effective managerial coaching practices and behaviors lead to: elevated employee self-efficacy (Pousa & Mathieu, 2015), increased employee job satisfaction, greater job commitment, improved job performance (Ellinger, 1999; Ellinger et al., 2003; Ellinger et al., 2011), lower turnover intentions (Har, 2008), increased sales performance (Agarwal et al., 2009), and superior levels of employee learning (Matsuo, 2018; Park, 2007; Park, Yang, & McLean, 2008). Additionally, while many studies employ cross-sectional designs that limit our ability to understand how phenomena unfold over time (Kozlowski & Klein, 2000), Liu and Batt (2010) conducted a study wherein they examined the effect of managerial coaching on job performance longitudinally and found effective managerial coaching practices drive performance improvement over time. These studies demonstrate the positive impact of effective managerial coaching behaviors on individual outcomes.

These positive outcomes result when managerial coaches continuously equip coachees with the necessary information (e.g., expectations and goals, performance feedback) and resources (e.g., learning material, learning environment) required to facilitate learning, behavioral change, individual development, and performance improvement (Ellinger et al., 2003; Park et al., 2008). Furthermore, as managerial coaches personalize learning situations and form high-quality relationships with their coachees, they engender feelings of trust, respect,

commitment, motivation, and empowerment on the part of the coachee. This, in turn, leads to improved individual affective (e.g., satisfaction, commitment) and motivational (e.g., self-efficacy, learning goal orientation) outcomes (Ellinger et al., 2003; Ellinger et al., 2011). Thus, research demonstrates managerial coaching can be effectively leveraged in organizations to facilitate individual employee learning, development, and performance improvement.

Focusing on the organizational level, research finds coaching practices engender greater employee commitment to the organization (Har, 2008) and lead to organizational cost-savings (Ellinger, 1999), which drives increased organizational functioning and effectiveness (Ellinger, 1999). Managerial coaching practices elevate employee self-efficacy, which increases employees' initiation of coping behaviors to persist in the face of challenges and problematic situations (Latham & Locke, 2007; Locke & Latham, 2002). The use of managerial coaching should promote and enable the development of employee self-regulatory capabilities, which drive organizational resilience. Consequently, effective managerial coaching practices can become a source of competitive advantage for organizations (Pousa & Mathieu, 2015).

### **Coachability**

Coachees' ability to seek, receive, act on, and change behavior based on feedback provided during coaching interactions (i.e., their coachability) remains a critical, yet understudied factor in the coaching equation. While research identifies optimal managerial coaching behaviors which positively affect individual coachee (Agarwal et al., 2009; Ellinger et al., 2003) and organizational (Ellinger, 1999; Har, 2008) outcomes, these studies appear to examine coaching in isolation by focusing exclusively on the coach without considering the impact that coachees have on the coaching process and the resulting effectiveness or lack thereof (Gregory & Levy, 2010; Shannahan et al., 2013a; 2013b; Theeboom et al., 2014). As such,



while the existing literature provides empirical support for the impact of specified managerial coaching behaviors, the receptiveness of the coachee to coaching plays a critical role in determining the effectiveness of the coaching practices and techniques employed.

A targeted examination of employee coachability, therefore, allows for a more in-depth understanding of the coaching dynamic. This understanding provides insights that facilitate the advancement and optimization of organizational coaching and coachability practices. Thus, this research contributes to the organizational coaching and coachability literatures through an examination of coachee traits, motives, and behaviors necessary for maximizing managerial coaching practices. This in-depth examination also includes an investigation of how specific managerial coaching behaviors/features impact individuals' coachability and the individual outcomes proposed to result from coaching interactions. The following sections provide a nuanced understanding of employee coachability, including a detailed description of the characteristics (e.g., personality traits, feedback motives) and external factors (e.g., managerial coaching behaviors) which indicate an individual's level of coachability.

### **Coachability as a Second-Order Factor**

Researchers define coachability as a multi-dimensional construct, which manifests in the exhibition of certain behaviors (Ciuchta et al., 2018; Giacobbi, 2000; Shannahan et al., 2013a; Shannahan et al., 2013b). Shannahan and colleagues (2013b) define salesperson coachability as an individual difference influencing the degree to which salespeople are open to seeking, receiving, and using external resources – most notably, feedback – to increase their sales performance in a personal selling context. Similarly, the entrepreneurial literature defines entrepreneur coachability as the degree to which entrepreneurs listen to key stakeholders, carefully consider feedback prior to responding, recognize their weaknesses, and willingly make

changes to address those weaknesses (Institute 4 Priority Thinking, 2009; Mitteness, Sudek, & Baucus, 2010). These studies suggest coachability manifests in the exhibition of feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and implementation of feedback behaviors. I, therefore, define employee coachability as a second-order factor, an individual difference influencing the degree to which employees are open to seeking, receiving, and using coaching feedback to drive individual development and improve performance. Succinctly, an individual's level of coachability drives feedback seeking, receptivity, and implementation behaviors.

**Feedback seeking.** Feedback seeking refers to the extent to which an individual solicits feedback from outside sources (e.g., peers, manager, clients) (Ashford et al., 2003). At its core, coachability captures an individual's willingness to develop and elevate performance. Fittingly, researchers propose feedback seeking as one of the most effective methods through which individuals can obtain the necessary information required to achieve behavioral change, individual development, and performance improvement (Anseel, Beatty, Shen, Lievens, & Sackett, 2015; Ashford et al., 2003). Furthermore, researchers suggest feedback seeking is a manifestation of coachability, as it signals one's willingness to learn, develop, and improve through the solicitation of development-related information (Shannahan et al., 2013b). Thus, feedback seeking is a behavioral indicator of employee coachability.

**Feedback receptivity.** The academic literature focused on feedback typically defines feedback receptivity as the extent to which individuals readily accept and value feedback (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010; London & Smither, 2002; Ryan, Brutus, Greguras, & Hakel, 2000). The receptiveness of individuals to feedback plays a critical role in determining the degree of development and performance improvement achieved (Rasheed, Khan, Rasheed, & Munir, 2015). If individuals resist, discount, or devalue the feedback provided, desired outcomes do not

emerge (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010; London & Smither, 2002). Thus, in the context of coachability, feedback receptivity proves crucial, as it preserves and facilitates the application of the informational component of feedback required for driving individual development and elevated performance.

**Implementation of feedback.** While researchers regard feedback seeking and receptivity as critical drivers of individual development and performance improvement (Ashford et al., 2003; Ryan et al., 2000), individuals cannot attain these desired outcomes without taking action to utilize the feedback. As such, the academic literature emphasizes the application or implementation of feedback as a manifestation of coachability (Ciuchta et al., 2018; Giacobbi, 2000; Shannahan et al., 2013a; Shannahan et al., 2013b). After receiving feedback, whether actively sought or unsolicited, coachable individuals apply this feedback in order to facilitate their development and elevate performance. Thus, the implementation or transfer of feedback indicates an individual's level of coachability.

### **Individual Differences Underlying Coachability**

I propose coachability as an individual difference driven by five traits, namely: learning goal orientation (LGO), feedback orientation (FBO), proactive personality, expressed humility, and achievement striving. These traits influence an individual's coachability. Thus, employees identified as possessing elevated levels of these traits are highly coachable.

**Learning goal orientation.** Goal orientations, which refer to individual differences in goal preferences, divide into three major categories – learning, performance prove, and performance avoid goal orientations (Cellar, Stuhlmacher, Young, Fisher, Adair, Haynes, et al., 2011; Payne, Youngcourt, & Beaubien, 2007; VandeWalle, 1997). Performance prove goal orientations (i.e., PPGO) refer to individuals' desire to demonstrate competence by seeking

favorable judgments, whereas those with performance avoid goal orientations (i.e., PAGO) focus on avoiding negative judgments about their competence (i.e., not demonstrating incompetence). In contrast, learning goal orientations (LGO) refer to individuals' disposition or tendency to seek to develop competencies by acquiring new skills and mastering new situations. In other words, individuals with a LGO engage in learning for the sake of learning and self-improvement (Cellar et al., 2011; Payne et al., 2007; VandeWalle, 1997).

Individuals' beliefs regarding the controllability of personal attributes, such as intellectual ability, underlie their goal orientations. These implicit theories predispose individuals to different goal orientations (Dweck, 1986; VandeWalle, 1997). Individuals with performance goal orientations (i.e., PPGO, PAGO) typically hold fixed (i.e., entity) theories about their abilities, such that they view ability as a stable, uncontrollable, and non-malleable attribute. Consequently, these individuals exhibit a greater propensity to validate and demonstrate the abilities they do possess, leading to the adoption of performance goal orientations (Dweck & Leggett, 1988). On the other hand, some individuals possess incremental, or growth, mindsets regarding their abilities; they view abilities as malleable attributes which can be shaped and developed through effort and experiences. As a result of perceiving abilities as developable, individuals holding growth-mindset beliefs exhibit a greater likelihood of adopting learning goal orientations (i.e., LGO) (Dweck, 1986; Dweck & Leggett, 1988; VandeWalle, 1997).

Individuals with elevated levels of LGO are perceived as more coachable as a result of their enacted behaviors. This postulation stems from the idea that individuals with LGOs desire to learn for the sake of learning and personal development. Research demonstrates individuals possessing higher trait levels of LGO view feedback as more useful (Brett & Attwater, 2001),

seek more feedback (Anseel, Beatty, Shen, Lievens, & Sackett, 2015; Tuckey, Brewer, & Williamson, 2002; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997), are more persistent, have higher expectancies with regard to the achievement of goals after receiving negative or constructive feedback (Colquitt & Simmering, 1998; Cron, Slocum, & VandeWalle, 2002), and are more likely to improve performance after receiving feedback (Heslin & Latham, 2004). Additionally, research suggests individuals with higher levels of LGO possess greater levels of self-efficacy, enabling them to persist in the face of obstacles and hardships and develop even after encountering initial failures (Wood & Bandura, 1989). Furthermore, high LGO individuals demonstrate a greater likelihood to implement received feedback to facilitate performance improvement (Ilgen, Fisher, & Taylor, 1979; Ilgen & Davis, 2000; Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). Increased implementation of coaching feedback and transfer of coaching results not solely from being concerned with demonstrating competence (i.e., PPGO), or a lack thereof (i.e., PAGO), but from a desire to develop and improve (i.e., LGO). As such, LGO is a significant trait that drives an individual's propensity to seek, be receptive to, and act upon coaching feedback – to wit, coachability.

**Feedback orientation.** Feedback orientation (FBO) refers to an individual's overall receptivity to feedback (London & Smither, 2002). FBO consists of six major dimensions that work together to determine an individual's overall receptivity to feedback and the extent to which the individual welcomes guidance and coaching (London & Smither, 2002). These dimensions compose FBO: (1) the extent to which an employee likes receiving feedback – overall positive affect toward feedback and low levels of evaluation apprehension; (2) the behavioral propensity to seek feedback; (3) cognitive propensity to process feedback mindfully; (4) sensitivity of others' views of oneself; (5) a belief in the value of feedback – specifically, that

feedback offers insights that may help the recipient become more effective and that actions taken in response to feedback can enhance personal development and effectiveness; and (6) feeling accountable to act on the feedback.

In more concise and explicit terms, individuals holding strong feedback orientations value, exhibit receptiveness to, and act on feedback provided (London & Smither, 2002). On the other hand, individuals possessing weaker feedback orientations demonstrate greater resistance to receiving, and therefore, often ignore or discount feedback, making them less likely to respond to or act on feedback provided (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Linderbaum and Levy (2010) tested the propositions hypothesized by London and Smither (2002), finding positive relationships between feedback orientation and feedback receptivity, feedback seeking behaviors, and intentions to implement the feedback into practice in order to drive individual improvement. Subsequent research efforts corroborated these findings (e.g., Dahling, Chau, & O'Malley, 2012).

Taken together, feedback orientation is an individual difference variable leading to elevated levels of coachability. In other words, individuals possessing stronger feedback orientations should be inherently more coachable. This proposition stems from the idea that individuals with a strong feedback orientation actively seek and exhibit receptiveness to feedback. As these individuals inherently value and feel accountable to act on feedback, they will implement the feedback provided by coaches (i.e., transfer of coaching) to aid in personal development and performance improvement.

**Proactive personality.** Researchers define proactive personality, conceptualized as a compound trait and individual difference, as a stable tendency to affect environmental change (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Individuals with proactive personalities are relatively unconstrained

by situational forces, tend to set higher standards, and focus available resources on accomplishing the high standards and goals they set (Bateman & Crant, 1993; Crant, 1996). Additionally, highly proactive individuals actively scan the environment for opportunities, show initiative, take action, and persevere until they reach closure by bringing about change (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Thus, highly proactive individuals are more likely to seek (Seibert, Kraimer, & Liden, 2001; Thompson, 2005) and demonstrate receptivity to feedback, as it will provide them with the necessary information required to effectuate change.

Empirical studies link proactive personality to both subjective (i.e., career satisfaction) and objective (i.e., salary, promotions) indicators of career success (Seibert, Crant, & Kraimer, 1999). Additionally, in a longitudinal study, researchers demonstrate that, through innovation and career initiative, proactive personality drives career satisfaction and progression (Seibert, Kraimer, & Crant, 2001). Proactive personality captures the willingness and determination to pursue a course of action, which constitute central characteristics of self-development models (Antonacopoulou, 2000), similar to coachability. In sum, proactive personality leads to increased feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and transfer of coaching behaviors, and therefore, leads to higher levels of coachability.

**Expressed humility.** Expressed humility refers to an individual difference that emerges in social contexts. Expressed humility connotes an individual's: (a) willingness to view oneself accurately; (b) teachability; and (c) displayed appreciation of others' strengths and contributions (Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2013). Researchers demonstrate expressed humility positively impacts individual (e.g., performance, prosocial behavior) and team performance (e.g., quality of team member contributions; team processes) (Owens et al., 2013; Owens, Rowatt, & Wilkins, 2010).

The first component of humility – a manifested willingness to see the self accurately – refers to a desire to engage in an ongoing process of achieving accurate self-awareness through interactions with others (Owens et al., 2013). Researchers suggest humble individuals (i.e., those expressing humility) actively engage in utilizing information gathered from interactions with others to capture a more accurate picture of themselves, as well as to aid in their personal development (Nielsen, Marrone, & Slay, 2010). Fittingly, humble individuals seek more feedback (Anseel et al., 2015; MacDonald, Sulsky, Spence, & Brown, 2013) in order to see themselves accurately through interactions with others (e.g., seeking feedback from a coach). Having a more accurate view of oneself provides individuals with more clarity regarding how to modify their behavior to achieve increased performance. In relation to coachability, humility fosters a more objective appraisal of one's strengths and weaknesses, which manifests in seeking realistic feedback about the self and subsequently exhibiting greater receptivity to the received feedback (Owens et al., 2013).

Researchers regard the second component of humility – teachability – as an indicator of developmental readiness (Avolio, Walumbwa, & Weber, 2009). Behaviorally, teachability manifests in individuals who display openness to learning, feedback, and new ideas from others. Thus, this aspect of expressed humility should manifest in behaviors through displayed receptiveness to others' feedback, ideas, and advice, as well as the willingness to ask for help (i.e., feedback seeking) (Owens et al., 2013). Regarding coachability, expressed humility promotes one's developmental readiness as evidenced by their increased openness to learning, feedback, and novel ideas from others. Individuals express this humility by seeking and demonstrating receptivity to developmental feedback.



The third component of humility – the appreciation of others’ strengths and contributions – refers to an increase in the valuation of others (Means, Wilson, Sturm, Biron, & Bach, 1990; Owens et al., 2013). This aspect of humility, in organizational contexts, leads to an individual’s acknowledgement that others (e.g., coaches) are valuable resources for learning (Owens et al., 2013; Tangney, 2002). As such, individuals demonstrate this appreciation through increased feedback seeking behaviors and consequent receptivity to that feedback. Humble individuals are less likely to discount, devalue, or distort feedback provided by coaches (Dotlich & Cairo, 2003). Further, as humble individuals behaviorally demonstrate their appreciation of others’ contributions, they will implement the received feedback to affirm these sentiments, similar to the mutual obligation evidenced in high-quality leader-member exchange (LMX) relationships (Graen & Scandura, 1987). Thus, expressed humility leads to higher levels of employee coachability.

**Achievement striving.** Achievement striving, a facet of conscientiousness (Goldberg, 1999), refers to an individual’s disposition to be highly motivated to succeed, work hard toward goals, and turn plans into actions (Costa & McCrae, 1992). In other words, achievement striving describes an individual’s disposition to strive for success through action-taking behaviors. In line with more recent trends in the personality psychology literature (e.g., Driskell, Goodwin, Salas, & O’Shea, 2006; Hough, 1992; Moberg, 1998), this research examines achievement striving as a trait indicator of coachability. Researchers demonstrate that when one trait sub-facet (e.g., achievement striving) correlates more strongly with an outcome (e.g., coachability) than the overall trait dimension itself (e.g., conscientiousness), evidence of less relevant sub-facets (e.g., orderliness) exist within that dimension. Thus, researchers suggest examination of trait sub-facets provides a more accurate assessment of the relationship with the criterion

(Moberg, 1998). In line with this argumentation, numerous researchers conceptually and empirically conclude sub-facets provide incremental validity over general personality dimensions (Driskell et al., 2006; Hough, 1992; John, 1990; McAdams, 1992).

Individuals high on achievement striving seek, listen to, and use feedback to develop and improve their performance (Krasman, 2010). Properly provided feedback conveys information regarding the discrepancy between current states and desired states. This informational feedback also allows individuals to understand how to reduce the identified discrepancies (Erez, 1977; Locke & Latham, 2002; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Thus, individuals who seek, listen to, and use feedback better position themselves to attain their goals.

Achievement striving individuals tend to be action-oriented, directing effort and resources to turning plans into actions (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Goldberg, 1990). After seeking and internalizing feedback, individuals possessing high levels of this action orientation exhibit a greater propensity to implement feedback they receive to change behaviors as needed to improve performance. Thus, achievement striving is a trait indicator of coachability leading to the greater display of feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and implementation of effective work behaviors.

### **Motives Underlying Feedback Seeking and Receptivity**

Even though highly coachable individuals actively seek, internalize and thoughtfully process, and then, apply the feedback provided by coaches, motivational differences between highly coachable and less coachable individuals exist which prompt the enactment of these behaviors. These motivational disparities distinguish truly coachable individuals from those who strive to be perceived as coachable. Researchers identify three motives that underlie feedback seeking and consequently feedback receptivity behaviors: instrumental motives, ego defense and

enhancement motives, and image defense and enhancement motives (Ashford, Blatt, & Vandewalle, 2003). Table 2 summarizes these motives.

**Instrumental motive.** Briefly, individuals holding an instrumental motive seek feedback because it contains informational value that enables them to meet their goals and regulate their behavior (Anseel, Lievens, & Levy, 2007; Ashford, 1986; Ashford & Tsui, 1991; Ashford et al., 2003), which facilitates personal development and job performance (Anseel et al., 2007; Ashford et al., 2003; Erez, 1977). Therefore, as the perceived diagnostic value of feedback increases, individuals holding an instrumental view of feedback more frequently engage in feedback seeking and receptivity behaviors (Ashford, 1986; Tuckey et al., 2002). Because individuals seek feedback for the purpose of acquiring information to facilitate goal attainment, those holding instrumental motives will likely implement the coaching feedback to achieve desired goals. Individuals seeking feedback with an instrumental motive exhibit elevated levels of feedback receptivity and transfer of coaching. In explicit terms, those holding an instrumental motive will, by definition, be more coachable.

**Ego defense and enhancement motive.** People are motivated to defend and protect their egos (Baumeister, 1999). Feedback proves emotionally charged as it contains information about the self (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). This leads to the emergence of different feelings, responses, and reactions across individuals. Even though self-relevant information proves central to goal attainment, behavioral change, and performance improvement, people have an overwhelming preference for favorable information about themselves which helps them maintain a positive self-view. Correspondingly, individuals employ various cognitive mechanisms to avoid or distort information that harms their self-image or conflicts with their current self-views (Baumeister, 1999). Generally, the self-protection drive underlying the ego defense and

enhancement motive generates a motive to avoid (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Wood, 1989), distort (Morrison & Cummings, 1992), or discount feedback (Baumeister, 1999; Mussweiler, Gabriel, & Bodenhausen, 2000). Unlike unsolicited feedback, which proves difficult to avoid and may be readily discounted (Roberson, Deitch, Brief, & Block, 2003), actively sought feedback differs in form across individuals. In other words, these individuals may only seek feedback that bolsters their current beliefs about themselves (Ashford et al., 2003). This motive and subsequent behaviors attenuate the informational component crucial to effective feedback (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). This ultimately decreases the ability of these individuals to attain personal development and superior performance. Thus, individuals predominately driven by ego defense and enhancement motives will be lower in coachability.

**Image defense and enhancement motive.** Similar to the ego defense and enhancement motive, the image defense and enhancement motive also drives feedback seeking behavior and its subsequent receptivity. When individuals perceive that seeking feedback would make them look bad, their tendency to seek feedback declines (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Such an individual may perceive that merely asking for feedback may be interpreted by their superior as an indication of uncertainty, incompetence, or insecurity (Ashford et al., 2003). Thus, even though these individuals perceive the feedback to have great informational value, some remain less likely to actively seek feedback (Ashford, 1986; Tuckey et al., 2002). However, others with the same disposition may actually exhibit elevated levels of feedback seeking. In an attempt to enhance their image, individuals actively seek positive feedback, even if it does not contain any tangible informational value, for a few reasons: it feels good to hear positive feedback; having a manager provide positive feedback solidifies a positive image of the feedback seeker in their mind (i.e., positive recollection is more salient); and individuals may be perceived as caring

about their personal development and performance improvement solely because they actively seek feedback (Morrison & Bies, 1991). Therefore, while individuals holding an image defense and enhancement motive may actively seek feedback, they do not do so for self-improvement purposes. In line with the ego defense and enhancement motive, individuals possessing image defense motives are less coachable, as they demonstrate an increased likelihood to discount and be less receptive to the feedback provided compared to those seeking feedback for instrumental purposes (Ashford et al., 2003).

Table 2.

*Feedback Seeking Motives*

Feedback Seeking Motives	<u>Feedback Seeking Motives</u>			Citation(s)
	Behavioral Differences	Type of Feedback Sought	Information Processing Differences	
Instrumental Motive	Feedback sought because of its informational value for regulating behavior and achieving goals	Constructive, informational feedback	Receptivity to and internalization of feedback	Ashford et al. (2003); Ashford & Tsui (1991)
Ego Defense and Enhancement Motive	FSB declines if it is perceived that feedback will be negative and harm the ego	Positive feedback	Discount OR avoid the feedback all together (i.e., less receptivity)	Ashford (1986); Ashford et al. (2003); Ashford & Tsui (1991)
	Feedback sought that will bolster or reaffirm the ego		Attentive to positive feedback that enhances one's ego	

Image Defense and Enhancement Motive	FSB declines when it is perceived that seeking feedback will make one look “bad”	Positive, non- informational feedback	Discount OR avoid the feedback all together	Ashford et al. (2003); Ashford & Tsui (1991); Morrison & Bies (1991)
	FSB increases when it is perceived that feedback will make one look “good”		Attentive to positive feedback that enhances one’s image to others and oneself	
	Feedback sought to be ‘seen’ seeking feedback to bolster one’s image and be perceived as invested in development			

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*Note.* FSB = Feedback Seeking Behaviors.

### **Integrating Coachability and Feedback Motives**

**LGO.** Another avenue through which LGO can influence coachability stems from an understanding of the instrumental motive underlying feedback seeking behaviors. From this perspective, LGO can bring the instrumental motive to the forefront, such that it increases its salience as a result of the individual’s focus on developing competence and mastering new situations. Because individuals holding LGOs are concerned with developing and improving performance, they perceive feedback to hold instrumental value for achieving these goals (Ashford et al., 2003; VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997; VandeWalle, Ganesan, Challagalla, & Brown, 2000). In line with this notion of instrumentality, researchers find that when individuals with LGOs perform poorly, their feedback seeking behaviors increase. Researchers attribute this finding to increased perceptions of feedback as crucial information for elevating performance (Tuckey et al., 2002).

The importance of LGO for driving coachability can be seen when compared to other goal orientations, such as PPGO. In this case, researchers demonstrate that because feedback has the potential to harm one's ego (i.e., ego defense and enhancement motive; Ashford et al., 2003) and conveys emotionally charged information (Baumeister, 1999), individuals with PPGOs reduce their feedback seeking behaviors (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Wood, 1989) or discount the feedback received (i.e., less receptivity; Baumeister, 1999; Mussweiler et al., 2000). The contrast in behaviors between LGOs and PPGOs (i.e., feedback seeking and receptivity) results from the need of those with PPGOs to be perceived by others as competent and knowledgeable (Cellar et al., 2011; Payne et al., 2007; VandeWalle, 1997). The mere act of seeking feedback, in their minds, undermines these desired perceptions (Ashford et al., 2003) and significantly diminishes the application of information that the feedback conveys. Hence, PPGO leads to the adoption of ego or image defense and enhancement motives, rendering these individuals less coachable than those seeking feedback with an instrumental motive. In sum, individuals with LGOs seek feedback with an instrumental motive and, as a result, are more coachable than their performance goal orientation (i.e., PPGO, PAGO) counterparts.

**Feedback orientation.** As individuals with feedback orientations (FBO) inherently seek and demonstrate receptivity to feedback, an instrumental feedback seeking motive guides these individuals. Individuals holding strong FBOs prove more likely to value, seek, and implement feedback to aid in personal growth and performance improvement (Anseel et al., 2015; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Accordingly, it follows an instrumental motive drives these individuals (i.e., Anseel et al., 2015), rather than an ego or image defense and enhancement feedback seeking motive, characteristic of less coachable persons. Thus, this suggests

individuals holding instrumental views of feedback possess stronger feedback orientations, making them highly coachable.

**Proactive personality.** Detailed previously, proactive individuals tend to set higher standards and subsequently focus available resources on accomplishing the high standards and goals they set (Crant, 1996). Additionally, they actively scan the environment for opportunities, show initiative, take action, and persevere until they reach closure by bringing about change (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Thus, while proactive individuals seek feedback due to their forward thinking and action-orientation, they also seek feedback with motives characteristic of highly coachable individuals. To explicate this point, proactive individuals focus available resources on achieving the high goals they set. Accordingly, feedback from coaches may be perceived as an informational resource which can provide direction toward achieving behavioral change and goal attainment. Furthermore, because proactive individuals have a greater propensity to take action, it follows that after seeking and receiving feedback, these individuals will likely implement the feedback to attain the desired goal of behavioral change, ultimately driving personal growth and performance improvement. As such, proactive personality, a proposed trait indicator of coachability, relates to the adoption of an instrumental motive to feedback seeking, leading to higher levels of coachability.

**Expressed humility.** Expressed humility, an individual difference that emerges in social contexts, describes one's willingness to view themselves accurately, appreciation of others' contributions, and openness to learning, feedback, and new ideas from others (Owens et al., 2013). Fittingly, humble individuals seem to seek feedback with an instrumental motive (Anseel et al., 2015; MacDonald, Sulsky, Spence, & Brown, 2013), as they strive to see themselves accurately through interactions with others (e.g., seeking feedback from a coach). Having a



more accurate view of oneself should provide individuals with increased clarity regarding how to modify their behavior to achieve elevated levels of performance. In relation to coachability, researchers find humility fosters a more objective appraisal of one's strengths and weaknesses, which manifests in seeking realistic feedback about the self from others who are perceived as valuable sources of information (Owens et al., 2013). Thus, individuals who express humility engage in increased feedback seeking and receptivity behaviors driven by an instrumental motive. This suggests humility as an integral feature of coachability.

**Achievement striving.** Achievement striving is an indicator of coachability, such that individuals high on this facet of conscientiousness exhibit greater feedback seeking, receptivity, and transfer of coaching behaviors to drive individual development and elevate performance (i.e., to achieve). This anticipated receptiveness to feedback may stem from an instrumental motive underlying coachability behaviors. Achievement orientation may underscore the instrumental motive such that individuals concerned with achieving and striving toward the attainment of goals view feedback as a means through which to aid personal development, improve performance, and goal attainment (Krasman, 2010). Properly provided feedback conveys information regarding the discrepancy between current states and desired states and it allows individuals to understand how to reduce the identified discrepancies (Erez, 1977; Locke & Latham, 2002; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Thus, individuals with greater levels of achievement orientation will more likely seek and receive feedback as a result of their instrumental motive, better positioning them to attain their goals and achieve success. This indicates achievement striving as a driver of coachability.

### **Coachability and Managerial Coaching**

The existing managerial coaching studies appear to examine coaching in isolation by focusing exclusively on the coach without considering the impact that coachees have on the coaching process. As such, this research would be incomplete were it to examine coachability without considering the impact of the coach on the employee's level of coachability. Thus, I examine three major managerial coaching behaviors/themes identified across studies. These include: perceived managerial support, the quality of the coach-coachee relationship, and the nature of feedback provided. Examination of these behaviors provides a more holistic understanding of the dynamics between managerial coaching and employee coachability.

**Perceived managerial support.** Understanding that learning, development, and coaching do not occur in a vacuum, Kram (1985) argued that organizational agents, especially managers, play a crucial role in encouraging, shaping, and reinforcing values which support the unfolding and maintenance of dyadic developmental relationships (e.g., managerial coach-coachee). In subsequent years, numerous research efforts examined the impact of social and/or environmental factors on the effectiveness of training transfer and participation in learning and development related activities (e.g., Birdi, Allan, & Warr, 1997; Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000; Noe, 1996; Noe & Wilk, 1993), as well as an individual's motivation to learn (Colquitt et al., 2000). Specifically, researchers found a positive relationship between perceived managerial support and an employee's motivation to learn, which they indicate as a crucial factor leading to the successful application and transfer of learned skills to the job (Aguinis & Kraiger, 2009; Bell, Tannenbaum, Ford, Noe, & Kraiger, 2017; Fecteau et al., 1995). Researchers establish motivation to learn as a prerequisite for the successful application and transfer of learned skills to the job as it directs individuals' effort toward the achievement of learning and development goals

(Colquitt & Simmering, 1998). The following sections further detail how perceived managerial support drives learning, development, and elevated performance.

***Psychological safety.*** A few avenues exist through which managers can demonstrate their support for coaching and employee development. Detailed in their managerial coaching behaviors taxonomy, Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) describe being a resource and removing obstacles as productive methods for demonstrating support. After receiving properly delivered feedback, the recipient must work to implement the feedback to actually achieve behavioral change, development, and ultimately, performance improvement. Thus, to facilitate growth and development, managers must express their support for this transfer of coaching (i.e., utilizing the feedback on the job) by creating a safe environment and being a resource for coachees. This entails providing additional information, means, and materials to coachees, while also knocking down barriers that may impede development (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999).

A psychologically safe environment, in which coaches encourage coachees to engage in risk-taking behaviors without fear of backlash (e.g., attempting to implement a new selling strategy), should facilitate learning and development. Such a workplace alleviates excessive concern about others' (i.e., the coach) reactions to actions that have the potential for embarrassment, threat, or failure, which often stifle learning (Edmondson & Lei, 2014). Therefore, coaches can foster learning and development and exhibit genuine support for the transfer of coaching by creating an atmosphere where employees feel safe to implement the feedback. Overall, as psychologically safe environments facilitate learning and development, feedback seeking and receptivity (Edmondson, 1999), and implementation of feedback (Edmondson & Lei, 2014), these settings enhance employee coachability.

***Feedback-supportive environment.*** Feedback-supportive environments, a form of managerial support for development, should influence the extent to which individuals engage in feedback seeking, receptivity, and transfer of coaching behaviors. To understand whether individuals engage in feedback seeking behaviors, most empirical studies use a cost-value framework. The general assumption underlying the cost-value framework suggests that employees make a conscious assessment of the costs and benefits associated with feedback seeking. For example, individuals may have a propensity to seek feedback because they believe it provides them with requisite information for driving development (i.e., values/benefits of feedback seeking). However, they may also perceive that, by seeking feedback, they will be regarded as incompetent or self-doubting in the eyes of their coach and/or peers. This cost may outweigh the perceived benefits of seeking feedback (Anseel et al., 2015; Ashford et al., 2003). Thus, if management does not support feedback seeking as a method through which employees can facilitate their personal development and performance improvement, the likelihood that employees exhibit these behaviors will drastically diminish.

Furthermore, if coaches emphasize the importance of certain behaviors such as feedback seeking for development and ultimately elevated performance, coachees may also exhibit greater receptivity to this information. This elevated receptivity may result because coachees see the information as increasingly valuable (Ryan et al., 2000), or because the feedback source may be perceived as more credible due to the genuine support (i.e., feedback seeking support) exhibited by the coach (Anseel et al., 2015). As coaches continue to promote a feedback seeking environment due to the positive impact feedback has on driving individual development and performance improvement, it logically follows that the utilization and implementation of feedback will also increase. Researchers find the presence of a feedback seeking environment

leads to increased motivation to use the feedback provided to elevate performance (Steelman, Levy, & Snell, 2004).

**Coach-coachee relationship.** Researchers propose the coach-coachee relationship as, perhaps, the most vital component contributing to coaching success, as it can enhance or undermine the effectiveness of coaching efforts depending on relationship quality (Baron & Morin, 2009; Boyce et al., 2010; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007). Studies demonstrate three major components driving high-quality coaching interactions: rapport, trust, and commitment (Boyce et al., 2010). Unsurprisingly, these dimensions of high-quality coach-coachee relationships mirror those evidenced to drive high-quality leader-member exchanges or relationships (i.e., LMX). In the case of LMX, a subordinate's relationship with a leader impacts his or her ability to perform work. Similarly, a coachee's relationship with a coach impacts his or her ability to perform work and develop.

An understanding of the three major contributors to high-quality coaching relationships provides insights regarding their importance for employee coachability. Rapport refers to reducing the differences between the coach and the coachee and building on similarities. It also includes the mutual understanding, agreement, and liking between the coachee and coach that allows each to appreciate, recognize, and respect one another on a personal level (Boyce et al., 2010). Researchers suggest coaching relationships with strong rapport increase satisfaction with the coach and the coaching (Boyce et al., 2010). Researchers describe such rapport as vital for achieving coaching outcomes, as it allows for the openness necessary for successful coach-coachee interactions (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007).

Similarly, trust, in coaching contexts, refers to the mutual confidence that supports the coachee's willingness to be open, honest, and vulnerable. This openness and vulnerability

enable the coach to be supportive, non-judgmental, and challenging, akin to psychologically safe environments. Mutual trust in coaching relationships provides a safe environment with open and honest dialogue that supports personal growth, whereas the absence of trust reduces the satisfaction with, and effectiveness of, coaching relationships and interactions (Boyce et al., 2010). Thus, trust in coaching relationships creates an environment in which optimal learning and development may occur.

Commitment, another identified driver of high-quality coach-coachee relationships, reflects the dedication of both the coachee and coach to perform the work associated with the coaching experience. It includes the mutual assurance to fulfill responsibilities in the relationship, which comprises both task (e.g., preparing for coaching meetings, being accessible, providing developmental opportunities) and social-emotional behaviors (e.g., persevering through setbacks, knocking down obstacles, creating motivators). Researchers suggest a strong commitment to the coaching relationship on the part of the coach and coachee translates directly into behavioral performance (Boyce et al., 2010).

When trust, rapport, and commitment exist (i.e., a high-quality coach-coachee relationship), coachees are likely to share sensitive information and coaches have greater influence over those being coached (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). The exhibition of feedback seeking (Krasman, 2010) and receptivity behaviors (Anseel et al., 2015) should also increase within a trusting coaching relationship. Research demonstrates that individuals exhibit a greater likelihood to seek feedback with an instrumental motive from their manager/leader if they maintain a high-quality relationship described by trust, rapport, mutual liking, and commitment (Chen, Lam, & Zhong, 2007). This occurs because such an interaction requires a high level of mutual trust, such that employees feel able to seek potentially

embarrassing or difficult information (i.e., constructive feedback) from their superior. Furthermore, because coachees perceive the information to hold instrumental value, their propensity to implement the feedback should also increase. Additionally, research demonstrates coaches engaged in high-quality coach-coachee relationships provide coachees with ample, challenging developmental opportunities (O'Donnell, Yukl, & Taber, 2012; Yukl, O'Donnell, & Taber, 2009) through which coachees can implement coaching feedback and accelerate their development. Thus, high-quality coach-coachee relationships should positively affect feedback seeking behaviors, feedback receptivity, and the implementation of coaching feedback. Alternatively, low-quality coach-coachee relationships should inhibit one's overall level of coachability, as the desire of the coachee to seek (Krasman, 2010), receive (Anseel et al., 2015), and act on feedback will considerably diminish. Overall, an employee's level of coachability varies depending on the quality of the relationship between the coach and coachee.

**Nature of feedback.** In a historical review of feedback interventions and performance, researchers demonstrated that not all feedback is “good” feedback, as performance actually decreased after 38% of the feedback interventions conducted (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). This statistic alone highlights the importance and impact of coaches properly providing feedback. Clearly, nuance exists regarding the provision of productive feedback, as the failure to do so appropriately drastically alters the effect of the feedback on performance. As a result of these findings, Kluger and DeNisi's (1996) feedback intervention theory (FIT) details the most effective methods for delivering feedback.

To expand on the nuance of feedback, multiple levels exist at which feedback can be directed (i.e., meta-task level – the self; task level – the focal task; task-learning level – the details of the focal task). Feedback directed toward the person, or the self (i.e., meta-task level),

can negatively impact performance if an individual perceives the information as personally attacking or controlling. From self-determination theory (SDT), individuals have three inherent psychological needs: competence, control, and connectedness (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Deci et al., 1999; Deci et al., 2017). Feedback directed at the individual level can affect all three psychological needs. For example, feedback targeted at the individual, such as “Your performance yesterday on that project was terrible,” does not contain any useful or constructive information on how to improve performance on future tasks, while also harming the individual’s need for competence (i.e., YOU are not capable of performing well). Such negative and non-constructive feedback may negatively impact intrinsic motivation, motivation to improve, and, as a result, performance (Deci et al., 1999). The same type of feedback may also harm one’s need for connectedness, such that the individual may feel disconnected from his or her coach due to the harsh, attacking nature of the feedback. To effectively provide feedback, Kluger and DeNisi (1996) explain that it should be provided at the task level and illuminate performance discrepancies, which, in turn, motivates individuals to strive for elevated performance (i.e., in line with social cognitive and control theories; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Wood & Bandura, 1989). Thus, the level at which individuals receive feedback, as well as the content of that feedback (i.e., informational feedback) proves vital.

Building off of FIT and SDT, the nature of feedback provided drives an individual’s coachability. Ineffective and improperly provided feedback (i.e., thwarts any of the three psychological needs and is not informational) negatively impacts coachability because the feedback will not be utilized to aid in development and performance improvement (i.e., will not be transferred); rather, it will be discounted (i.e., non-receptivity) and not viewed as instrumental for driving development and performance-related outcomes because the feedback source lacks



credibility and reliability (Anseel et al., 2015). Additionally, research demonstrates that coachees are less likely to actively seek and subsequently implement feedback from their coaches after experiencing low-quality exchanges, such as receiving poorly delivered feedback (Steelman et al., 2004). As such, the nature of feedback and the method of its delivery serves to either enhance or undermine an individual's level of coachability.

### **Coachability Outcomes**

**Performance.** Individuals exhibiting elevated levels of coachability engage in increased feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and transfer of the coaching feedback. The motive underlying these coachability behaviors is instrumental, such that individuals seek more accurate and critical feedback (Anseel et al., 2015; Ashford et al., 2003), and engage in behaviors with the belief and expectation they will more effectively be able to drive individual development and elevated performance. As long as they are receptive to the feedback provided, this more accurate feedback will help employees gain greater clarity about what others expect of them and how to perform their tasks in the organization. This greater understanding increases the likelihood that individuals will be able to meet and exceed expectations regarding their performance (Anseel et al., 2015). Thus, individuals exhibiting elevated levels of coachability achieve elevated levels of job performance.

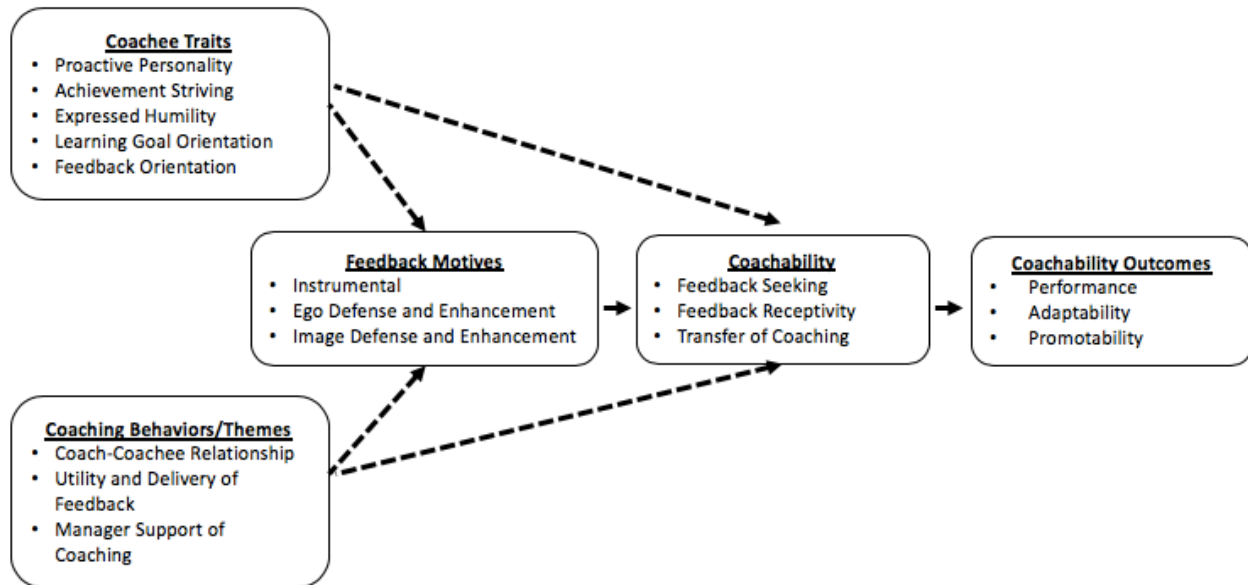
**Adaptability.** As a result of the provision of effective, informational feedback and its subsequent receptivity, employees experience increased role, process, and goal clarity (Sawyer, 1992; Whitaker, Dahling, & Levy, 2007). This should better position them to rapidly adjust their behaviors, especially in the face of unexpected environmental or situational jolts. Consequently, if coachable individuals encounter uncertain or unfamiliar situations, a greater likelihood exists that they will seek feedback, internalize it, and subsequently implement it, thereby facilitating

quicker adjustments (Anseel et al., 2015), behavioral change, and adaptability (Ashford, 1986).

Thus, coachable individuals are more adaptable than their less coachable counterparts.

Figure 1.

*Model of Employee Coachability*



*Note.* Coachees' responded to: Coachee Traits, Coaching Environment, and Feedback Motives; Coaches responded to: Coachability and Coachability Outcomes.

### Rationale

In order to adapt and remain successful in today's volatile, complex, and ambiguous work environment (Ozkan, 2008), many organizations are shifting from vertical, hierarchical structures to horizontal, flatter, more collaborative-based structures (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Miles & Snow, 1992; Walker & Lorsch, 1968). A trend of organizations moving from evaluative-focused performance appraisal systems to development-oriented performance management systems (Pulakos et al., 2015) mirrors this shift in organizational structures. These large-scale transformations require continuous employee development and improvement across

all organizational levels to adapt to the constantly changing dynamics of work (Joo, Sushko, & McLean, 2012; Ozkan, 2008; Pulakos et al., 2015).

As a result, organizational development (OD) practices for employee development rapidly increased throughout the past decade (Joo, 2005; Noe, 2011). While a variety of approaches exist to enable employee development (e.g., mentoring, formal education, counseling), they tend not to completely involve individualized, engaging, ongoing, and context-specific training (Bacon & Spear, 2003). One such individualized training intervention – organizational coaching – proves vital for facilitating continuous behavioral change, development, and performance improvements (Joo et al., 2012; Ladyshevsky, 2010). Researchers also regard organizational coaching as an instrumental avenue through which organizations can create and sustain competitive advantages (Pousa & Mathieu, 2015).

However, researchers, like practitioners, tend to examine coaching in isolation, focusing on the coach without considering the impact that the individuals being coached (i.e., coachees) have on the coaching process (Gregory & Levy, 2010; Shannahan, Bush, & Shannahan, 2013; Shannahan, Shannahan, & Bush, 2013; Theeboom et al., 2014). This creates a significant weakness in both literature and practice because coachees are not passive individuals in the coaching process. Rather, coachees actively contribute to the coaching process by either enhancing or detracting from the effectiveness of coaching practices (Baker, 2007; Gregory & Levy, 2010; London & Smither, 2002). Coachees' ability to seek, receive, act, and change behavior based on feedback provided during coaching interactions (i.e., their coachability) remains a critical, yet understudied factor in the coaching equation.

I, therefore, explore employee coachability. This includes the interplay between managerial (i.e., organizational) coaching and employee coachability. Specifically, I aim to: (1)

highlight the importance of coachability for both research and practice; (2) pinpoint the personality traits that underlie coachable employees; (3) determine the behaviors and motives exhibited by coachable individuals; (4) understand the impact of managerial coaching behaviors on employee coachability; and (5) examine individual outcomes affected by employee coachability.

### **Statement of Hypotheses and Research Questions**

Hypothesis I: LGO positively relates to an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis II: FBO positively relates to an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis III: Proactive personality positively relates to an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis IV: Expressed humility positively relates to an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis V: Achievement striving positively relates to an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis VI: The instrumental feedback seeking motive positively relates to an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis VII: The ego defense and enhancement feedback seeking motive negatively relates to an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis VIII: The image defense and enhancement feedback seeking motive negatively relates to an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis IX: The instrumental feedback seeking motive positively mediates the relationship between LGO and an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis X: The instrumental feedback seeking motive positively mediates the relationship between FBO and an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis XI: The instrumental feedback seeking motive positively mediates the relationship between proactive personality and an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis XII: The instrumental feedback seeking motive positively mediates the relationship between expressed humility and an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis XIII: The instrumental feedback seeking motive positively mediates the relationship between achievement striving and an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis XIV: Perceived managerial support, in the form of a psychologically safe environment, positively relates to an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis XV: Perceived managerial support, in the form of a feedback seeking supportive environment, positively relates to an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis XVI: The coach-coachee relationship positively relates to an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis XVII: Feedback positively relates to an employee's coachability.

Hypothesis XVIII: A positive relationship exists between coachability and employee job performance.

Hypothesis XIX: A positive relationship exists between coachability and employee adaptability.

RQ1: Which managerial coaching factor (i.e., coach-coachee relationship, nature of feedback, perceived managerial support) exhibits the strongest relationship with employee coachability?

RQ2: Does a high-quality coach-coachee relationship positively relate to the adoption of an instrumental feedback motive?

RQ3: Is employee coachability a stronger predictor of job performance than the quality of the coach-coachee relationship?

RQ4: Does employee coachability predict manager perceptions of employee promotability?

RQ5: Which goal orientation (i.e., LGO, PPGO, PAGO) exhibits the strongest relationship with employee coachability?

RQ6: What are the implications for coachability outcomes with different combinations of managerial coaching effectiveness and coachability (e.g., impact of high-quality coaching relationship and low coachability on performance)?

## **Method**

### **Context**

The organization from which I collected data employs coaching practices to facilitate employee development and performance. This organization regards its managers as manager-coaches. As such, daily and effective coaching constitutes the most critical responsibilities of managers in this organization. Similarly, employees in this organization understand the importance of coaching and being coached to drive individual development and performance improvement. Thus, this organization provided an optimal environment from which to collect employee coachability and managerial coaching data. At the same time, the strong coaching environment in this organization may serve as a generalizability limitation. This strong coaching culture may lead to range restriction, such that this environment increases the exhibition of effective coaching and coachability behaviors compared to organizations with weaker coaching environments. As a result, the relationships derived from this study may be stronger than expected in organizations without strong coaching cultures.

### **Participants and Design**

I collected data from employees and managers of a medium-sized global pharmaceutical organization located in the United States. In total, I received 327 direct report responses and 413 manager responses (i.e., from 67 different managers). However, because I linked direct report and manager responses, 327 responses remained available for analysis. After cleaning the data, linking employee and manager responses, and removing participants with unusable data (i.e.,

more than half of the survey missing responses), I analyzed data from 287 employees. The total potential number of participants was 450. Thus, the final sample constitutes a 64% response rate. Forty-four percent of participants indicated their sex as male, 52% indicated their sex as female, and 4% preferred not to indicate their sex. A break-down of participant ethnicity shows the percentage of respondents reporting the following ethnicities: 4% American Indian or Pacific Islander; 8% Black or African American; 2% Hispanic or Latino; 83% White or Caucasian; 10% preferred not to answer; and 1% reported other. Participants' ages ranged from under 18 years old to over 65 years old. Participants' tenure with the organization ranged from less than 1 year to more than 10 years. On average, managers (i.e., coaches) and direct reports (i.e., coachees) report working together for 16 months.

### **Procedure**

To collect the data, I created two questionnaires using the Survey Monkey platform. The Director of Field Leadership Development of the participating organization distributed the questionnaires to participants via email. Specifically, I created two separate questionnaires: one completed by direct reports (i.e., the coachee) and the other completed by the managers (i.e., the coach). The questionnaire for coachee completion comprised the following measures: learning goal orientation, performance prove goal orientation, performance avoid goal orientation, feedback orientation, proactive personality, achievement striving, feedback seeking motives, coach-coachee relationship, nature of feedback provided, and perceived managerial support. The coach questionnaire included the following measures: expressed humility, feedback seeking behaviors, feedback receptivity, transfer of coaching (i.e., coachability), job performance, adaptability, and promotability. Please see Appendix A for a detailed visual of the measures responded to by each participant-type (i.e., coach vs. coachee). To view each measure utilized in

this study, please see Appendix B. Each coachee completed one survey, whereas coaches completed one survey for each of their coachees. For example, a manager with eight direct reports completed eight surveys, one for each direct report.

The data collection effort occurred in two waves. The first wave took place over the course of one week, wherein managers (i.e., coaches) completed measures about their direct reports (i.e., coachees). During the second wave, direct reports (i.e., coachees) completed measures in reference to themselves and their coaches. Both direct reports and managers were provided one week to complete their respective questionnaires. The order and timing of the data collection waves facilitated the linking of coach and coachee questionnaire responses. The collected data remains housed on this researcher's personally-owned, password-protected Survey Monkey account.

To link coach and coachee questionnaires while maintaining participant anonymity and confidentiality, I used an online random-digit generator to generate 500 unique five-digit linking numbers. I compiled all of these five-digit numbers into an excel file. The Director of Field Leadership provided me with a de-identified reporting structure file. This file showed the number of managers in the participating organization, as well as the number of direct reports reporting into each manager. Based on this information, I assigned a specific number of five-digit linking codes to each manager (i.e., a manager with 8 direct reports received 8 five-digit linking codes) in the existing excel file housing the five-digit linking codes. I, then, provided this excel file to the Director of Field Leadership to include in the survey link distribution e-mail. The email sent to all coaches instructed them to enter a different five-digit linking code for each of their direct reports. After completion of their surveys, I instructed coaches to provide the five-digit number to each of their respective coachees. Upon receipt of this five-digit number, each



coachee then entered the five-digit number at the beginning of their survey. This allowed the coach and coachee responses to be linked without the provision of any identifying information.

## **Materials**

**Learning goal orientation (LGO).** This dissertation conceptualizes and operationalizes learning goal orientation (LGO) as a desire to develop the self by acquiring new skills, mastering new situations, and improving one's competence. The measure utilized in this study was constructed by VandeWalle (1997) and subjected to rigorous testing wherein construct validity was established. Researchers widely use this measure throughout the psychological literature (e.g., Heslin & Latham, 2004; Tuckey et al., 2002). For the LGO scale, Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) is 0.92, omega hierarchical ( $\omega_h$ ) is 0.91, and omega total ( $\omega_t$ ) is 0.94. Questionnaire responses were measured on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include: "I am willing to select a challenging work assignment that I can learn a lot from" and "For me, development of my work ability is important enough to take risks." In total, the measure comprises five items.

**Feedback orientation (FBO).** Feedback orientation is an individual's overall receptivity to feedback (London & Smither, 2002). To assess FBO, this study uses the Feedback Orientation Scale (FOS) developed by Linderbaum and Levy (2010). The scale comprises four factors. However, only three of the four (i.e., utility, accountability, feedback self-efficacy) dimensions were utilized in this study, as they more directly assess an individual's dispositional receptivity to feedback. The social awareness component appears more closely related to feedback as an impression management tool, which should be captured by the feedback seeking motives scale that will be included in this study. The FOS was used to measure the following three dimensions: Utility, which refers to an individual's tendency to perceive feedback as

instrumental for achieving goals or obtaining desired outcomes at work; accountability describes an individual's tendency to feel a sense of obligation to act on feedback; and feedback self-efficacy refers to an individual's tendency to have confidence in dealing with feedback situations and feedback (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Researchers determine the FOS exhibits convergent, discriminant, and criterion-related validity (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Each dimension of the feedback orientation scale, as well as the global scale, exhibited strong internal consistency. The reliabilities for the dimensions and overall scale: utility ( $\alpha = 0.87$ ;  $\omega_h = 0.84$ ;  $\omega_t = 0.90$ ); accountability ( $\alpha = 0.77$ ;  $\omega_h = 0.7$ ;  $\omega_t = 0.83$ ); self-efficacy ( $\alpha = 0.82$ ;  $\omega_h = 0.57$ ;  $\omega_t = 0.86$ ); overall ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ;  $\omega_h = 0.57$ ;  $\omega_t = 0.91$ ). Questionnaire responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include: "Feedback contributes to my success at work," "It is my responsibility to apply feedback to improve my performance," and "I feel competent when responding to both positive and negative feedback."

**Proactive personality.** Proactive personality is a stable tendency to affect environmental change that differentiates people based on the extent to which they take action to influence their environments (Bateman & Crant, 1993). Bateman and Crant (1993) initially developed a 17-item Proactive Personality Scale (PPS), wherein they established convergent, discriminant, and criterion-related validity. This study utilized a shortened version of the PPS, subsequently developed by Seibert and colleagues (1999). The condensed version of the measure was created by selecting the 10 items with the highest average factor loadings across the three studies reported by Bateman and Crant (1993). Seibert and colleagues (1999) conducted a study to assess the validity and reliability of the shortened measure and found the correlation between the two scales was 0.96, and the deletion of seven items had little effect on the reliability of the scale

(i.e., reduced from 0.88 to 0.86). Thus, the abbreviated version of the scale proves comparable to the full version and it is used in this study. The PPS scale exhibited strong reliability in this study; Cronbach's alpha is 0.9, omega hierarchical is 0.76, and omega total is 0.93.

Questionnaire responses were measured using a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include: "Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change" and "Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality."

**Expressed humility.** Expressed humility is an individual difference that connotes an individual's willingness to view oneself accurately, display appreciation of others' strengths and contributions, and demonstrate teachability (Owens et al., 2013). To assess expressed humility, researchers developed a 9-item scale, which they further validated through an extensive eight-study process, wherein convergent, discriminant, and criterion-related validity were established. In this study, the global expressed humility scale, as well as its dimensions, demonstrated strong internal consistency reliability. Because omega hierarchical ( $\omega_h$ ) is not a useful index for 3-item measures (Gignac, 2015; Viladrich, Angulo-Brunet, & Doval, 2017), I only report Cronbach's alpha and omega total for the sub-dimensions of expressed humility. The reliabilities for the dimensions and overall scale: willingness to view oneself accurately ( $\alpha = 0.9$ ;  $\omega_t = 0.9$ ); teachability ( $\alpha = 0.91$ ;  $\omega_t = 0.91$ ); display appreciation of others' strengths and contributions ( $\alpha = 0.88$ ;  $\omega_t = 0.89$ ); overall ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ;  $\omega_h = 0.85$ ;  $\omega_t = 0.96$ ). Questionnaire responses were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include: "This person actively seeks feedback, even if it is critical," "This person is willing to learn from others," and "This person shows appreciation for the unique contribution of others."

**Achievement striving.** Achievement striving, a facet of conscientiousness, is an individual's disposition to strive for success through taking action (Costa & McCrae, 1992). To assess achievement striving, a 10-item sub-scale of the IPIP 300 is utilized, which demonstrates both validity and reliability (Goldberg, 1999), and has been used extensively throughout psychological research. For this scale, Cronbach's alpha is 0.84, omega hierarchical is 0.72, and omega total is 0.88. Questionnaire responses were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include: "I plunge into tasks with all my heart" and "I do more than what's expected of me."

**Feedback seeking motives.** Feedback seeking motives are individual differences influencing the motivation underlying an individual's feedback seeking behavior (Ashford et al., 2003). Researchers identify three major feedback seeking motives: instrumental motive, ego defense and enhancement motive, and image defense and enhancement motive. These three motives comprise the three dimensions of the feedback seeking measure. To assess feedback seeking motives, I utilized a combination of two measures. Tuckey and colleagues (2002) developed a scale to examine individuals' feedback seeking motives. However, their measure of instrumental motives demonstrates low internal consistency, and their image defense and enhancement measure included some impression management that does not appear related to feedback seeking behaviors (e.g., "I like people to hear about my good performance at work"; Dahling et al., 2015). Additionally, their measure only exhibits "moderately good" fit statistics evidenced by the confirmatory factor analysis conducted (Tuckey et al., 2002). Thus, the ego defense and enhancement motive scale from the Tuckey et al. (2002) measure was utilized, as it demonstrates construct and criterion-related validity. To examine the instrumental and image defense and enhancement feedback seeking motives, the two scales developed by Dahling and

colleagues (2015) were administered, which exhibit strong pattern coefficients (i.e., an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to assess the factor structure of the measure, as well as a confirmatory factor analysis which confirmed the factor structure) and internal consistency above the 0.70 threshold. In this study, all three feedback motive scales demonstrated acceptable internal consistency reliability. Specifically, for the instrumental motive scale, Cronbach's alpha is 0.88, omega hierarchical is 0.76, and omega total is 0.91. For the ego defense and enhancement motives scale, Cronbach's alpha is 0.83, omega hierarchical is 0.61, and omega total is 0.88. For the image defense and enhancement scale, Cronbach's alpha is 0.91, omega hierarchical is 0.8, and omega total is 0.95. Questionnaire responses were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include: "My job-related skills can be improved if I ask for feedback," "Asking for feedback is a good way to emphasize my good qualities to others," and "It's hard to feel good about myself when I receive negative feedback."

**Coach-coachee relationship.** The coach-coachee relationship is a relationship between a coach and a coachee characterized by genuineness, effective communication, comfort with the relationship, and facilitative of development (Gregory & Levy, 2010). The 12-item Perceived Quality of the Coaching Relationship (PQECR) scale developed by Gregory & Levy (2010) was utilized in this study. Reflecting their operational definition, results of a confirmatory factor analysis demonstrate a four-factor structure, comprising the four features noted above. Further, this scale demonstrates strong internal consistency reliability. Because omega hierarchical ( $\omega_h$ ) is not a useful index for 3-item measures (Gignac, 2015; Viladrich et al., 2017), I only report Cronbach's alpha and omega total for the sub-dimensions of the PQECR scale. The reliabilities for the dimensions and overall scale: genuineness ( $\alpha = 0.95$ ;  $\omega_t = 0.95$ ); effective communication

( $\alpha = 0.94$ ;  $\omega_t = 0.94$ ); comfort ( $\alpha = 0.94$ ;  $\omega_t = 0.94$ ); facilitative of development ( $\alpha = 0.95$ ;  $\omega_h = 0.85$ ;  $\omega_t = 0.95$ ); overall ( $\alpha = 0.98$ ;  $\omega_h = 0.93$ ;  $\omega_t = 0.98$ ). Questionnaire responses were measured using a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include: “I believe that my supervisor truly cares about me,” “My supervisor is easy to talk to,” “I feel safe being open and honest with my supervisor,” and “My supervisor enables me to develop as an employee of our organization.”

**Nature of feedback.** The nature of feedback provided to the coachee refers to the quality (i.e., informational) and delivery (i.e., supportive) of the feedback offered by the coach. To assess these two features of the feedback provided, the 10-item (i.e., 5-items per dimension) feedback quality and feedback delivery dimensions of the Feedback Environment Scale (FES), constructed by Steelman and colleagues (2004), was administered. The FES demonstrates adequate internal consistency, test-retest reliability, as well as convergent, discriminant, and external validity (Steelman et al., 2004). For the feedback quality dimension of the FES, Cronbach’s alpha is 0.95, omega hierarchical is 0.92, and omega total is 0.96. For the feedback delivery dimension, Cronbach’s alpha is 0.85, omega hierarchical is 0.81, and omega total is 0.89. Questionnaire responses were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include: “My manager gives me useful feedback about my job performance” and “My manager is supportive when giving me feedback about my job performance.”

**Perceived managerial support.** Perceived managerial support refers to the extent to which managers demonstrate support for coaching and development. This dissertation examines two forms of perceived managerial support: psychological safety and feedback-supportive

environments. The following sections detail the two perceived managerial support measures utilized in this dissertation.

***Psychological safety.*** Psychological safety is the degree to which coachees' believe their work environment is safe to engage in risk-taking behaviors (e.g., implementing a new strategy). To examine this construct, the team psychological safety measure developed by Edmondson (1999) was utilized. The psychological safety measure demonstrates adequate internal consistency, as well as convergent, discriminant, and external validity. Cronbach's alpha for this scale is 0.83, omega hierarchical is 0.72, and omega total is 0.89. Questionnaire responses were measured on a 7-point Likert type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include: "If you make a mistake on this [work] team, it is often held against you" and "It is safe to take a risk on this [work] team."

***Feedback seeking environment.*** Feedback seeking environment is the promotion of or support for feedback seeking behaviors to drive individual development and performance improvement. To examine this construct, the "promotes feedback seeking" dimension from the FES detailed above was administered. The FES demonstrates adequate internal consistency, test-retest reliability, as well as convergent, discriminant, and external validity. Further, the promotes feedback seeking dimension exhibits strong internal consistency, evidenced by Cronbach's alpha of 0.89, omega hierarchical of 0.85, and omega total of 0.92. Questionnaire responses were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include: "My manager is often annoyed when I directly ask for performance feedback" and "I feel comfortable asking my manager for feedback about my work performance."

**Coachability.** Coachability is the degree to which individuals are open to seeking, receiving, and using coaching feedback to drive individual development and improve performance. While an established measure in the literature does not exist to assess coachability as it has been defined above, a combination of three measures was utilized to examine employees' level of coachability.

**Feedback seeking.** To assess the feedback seeking component of coachability, the feedback seeking measure presented by Dahling and colleagues (2012), which demonstrates adequate internal consistency was used. Cronbach's alpha is 0.93, omega hierarchical is 0.84, and omega total is 0.96. Questionnaire responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*very infrequently*) to 5 (*very frequently*). Sample items include: "[This coachee] seeks feedback on their performance after assignments?" and "[This coachee] solicits critiques from you?"

**Feedback receptivity.** To examine the feedback receptivity component of coachability, the feedback receptivity measure developed by Ryan and colleagues (2000), demonstrating strong internal consistency was administered. Cronbach's alpha is 0.82, omega hierarchical is 0.71, and omega total is 0.88. Questionnaire responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include: "The recipient saw the feedback as accurate" and "The recipient was receptive to the feedback."

**Transfer of coaching.** To measure the transfer of coaching/feedback component of coachability, the perceived transfer of training measure developed by Fecteau and colleagues (1995) was distributed. Cronbach's alpha is 0.94, omega hierarchical is 0.88, and omega total is 0.95. Questionnaire responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The referent of this measure was modified so the



coach could assess the coachee's transfer of coaching. The context of the questions was also adjusted to reflect the coaching context. Sample items include: "This employee's behavior has improved followed our coaching interactions" and "This employee's actual job performance has improved due to the skills/principles learned during coaching interactions."

**Coachee job performance.** Coachee job performance is the overall effectiveness of the coachee. Due to restrictions imposed by the participating organization, coaches utilized the coachee's last performance review to indicate the relative level of the coachee's performance (vs. the true rating of the coachee's performance). The one-item coachee job performance measure read: "This employee's performance falls in which of the following tiers?" Response options ranged from 1 (bottom third of the company) to 3 (top third of the company).

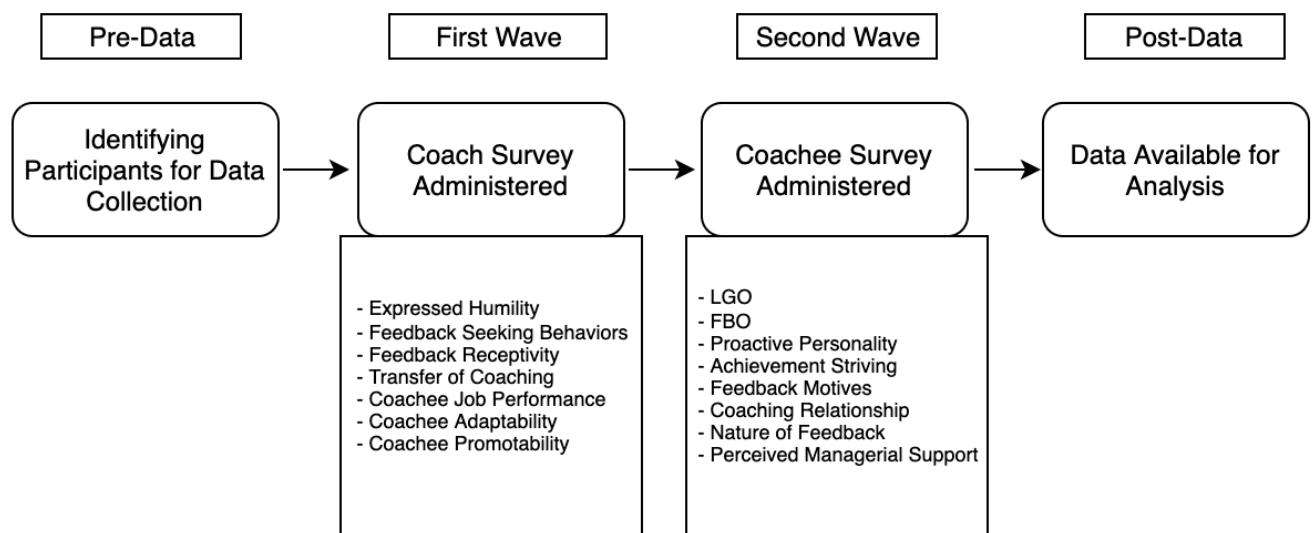
**Coachee adaptability.** Coachee adaptability is changing or modifying oneself or one's behavior to better fit the new environment (Alavi, Wahab, Muhamad, & Shirani, 2014). To examine this outcome, adaptability was assessed through a 4-item adaptability measure developed by Alavi and colleagues (2014), which demonstrates adequate construct validity and reliability. Cronbach's alpha for this measure is 0.93, omega hierarchical is 0.92, and omega total is 0.94. Questionnaire responses were measured on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include: "At work, this employee adjusts to new work procedures" and "At work, this employee can quickly switch from one project to another."

**Promotability.** While this dissertation did not explicate promotability as a hypothesized outcome of coachability, it was collected and analyzed as part of an exploratory effort. Promotability is the supervisor's impressions of whether the coachee will, or should, achieve career advancement within their current organization (Thacker & Wayne, 1995). To examine

this outcome, promotability was assessed through a 3-item measure developed by Thacker and Wayne (1995), which demonstrates strong internal consistency. Since omega hierarchical ( $\omega_h$ ) is not a useful index for 3-item measures (Gignac, 2015; Viladrich et al., 2017), I only report Cronbach's alpha and omega total for this measure. Cronbach's alpha is 0.86 and omega total is 0.87. Questionnaire responses were measured on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). Sample items include: "If I had to select a successor for my position, it would be this employee" and "I believe that this employee has high potential."

Figure 2.

*Data Collection Process and Flow*



## Results

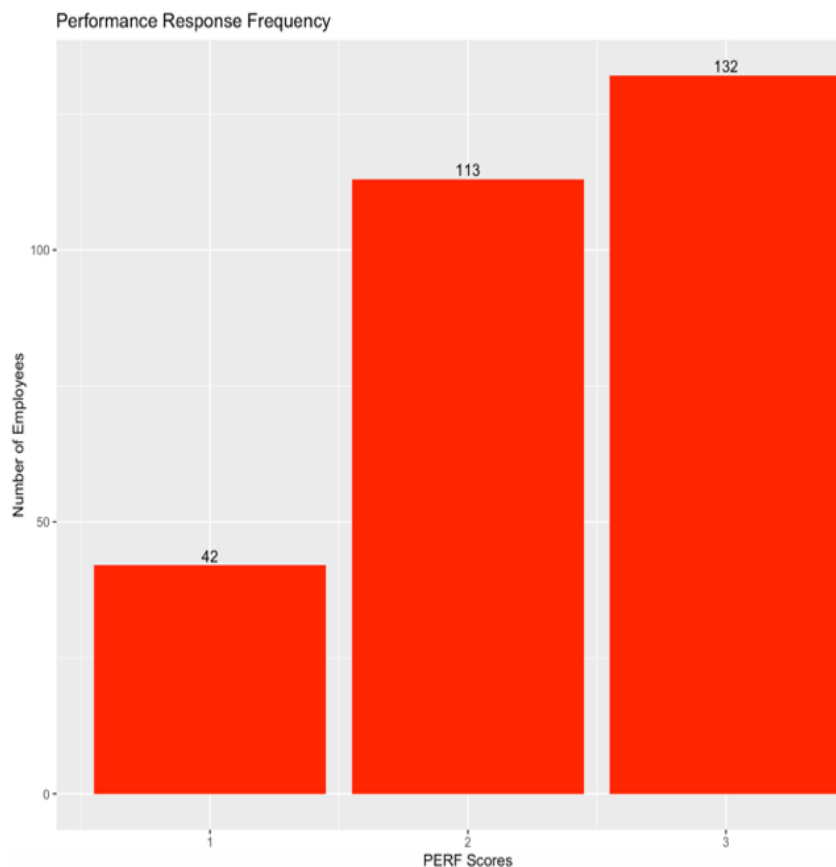
### Data Quality

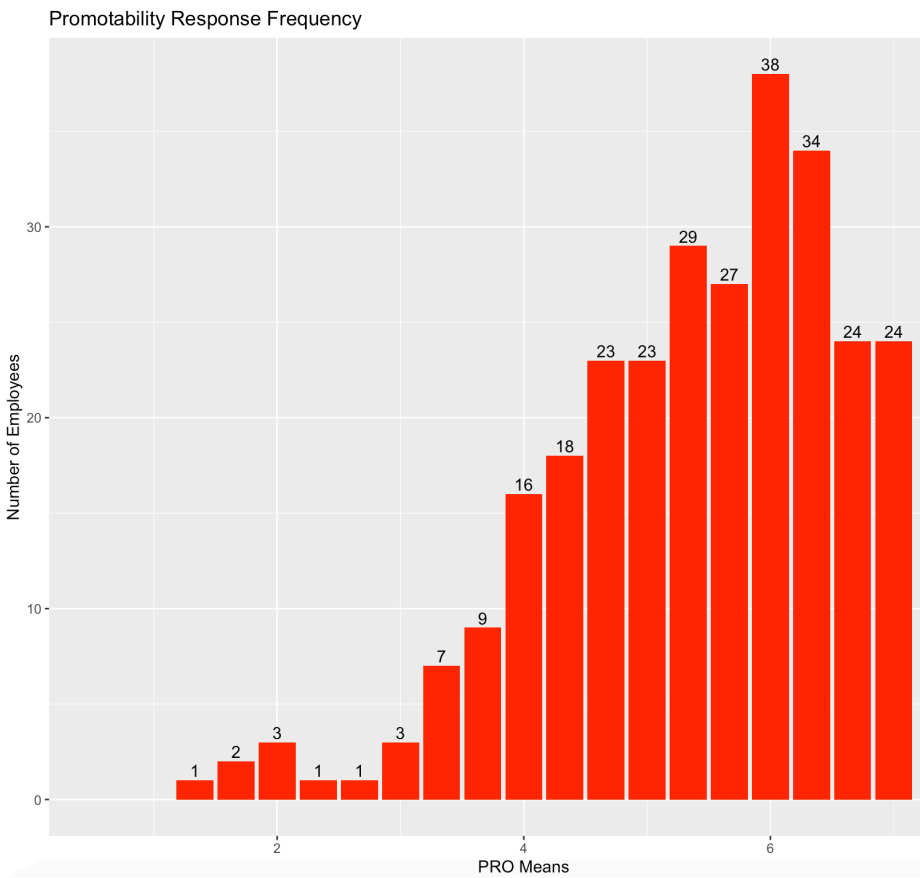
Understanding the quality of data (e.g., participant response tendencies and biases) collected proves vital for interpretation of this dissertation's results. To examine the quality of the data, I employed descriptive analyses within and across groups, participants, and constructs using the *R* software environment (R Core Team, 2019) and the *RStudio* graphical user interface (RStudio Team, 2016). Managers assume responsibility for varying numbers of direct reports

(e.g., some managers oversee six direct reports, while others oversee nine direct reports). To account for the nested structure of this data, I intended to run multilevel analyses (i.e., to control for scores being more similar within-coaches than between-coaches). However, after a thorough examination of the data, I determined multilevel analyses cannot be completed due to a lack of variance in response distributions within and across managerial groups. This lack of variance appears to stem from strong, positive leniency biases in both manager (i.e., coach) and direct report (i.e., coachee) responses. To highlight the strong leniency biases contributing to data invariance, I provide data visualizations on both coach (i.e., performance, promotability) and coachee (i.e., LGO, achievement striving, proactive personality) responses.

Figures 3a and 3b.

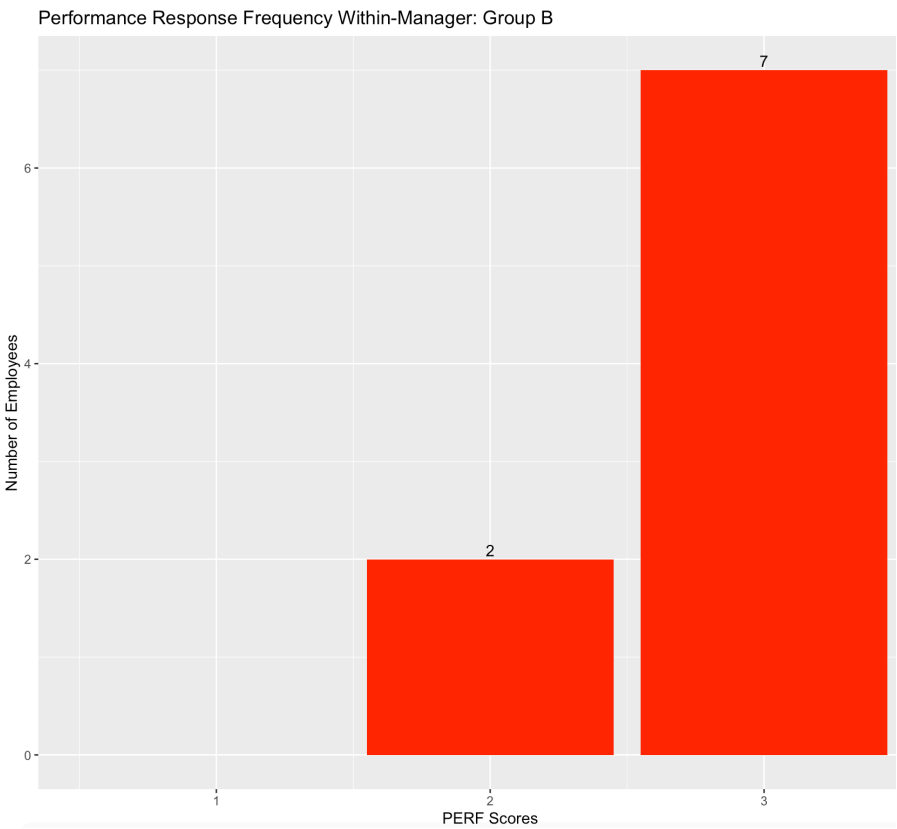
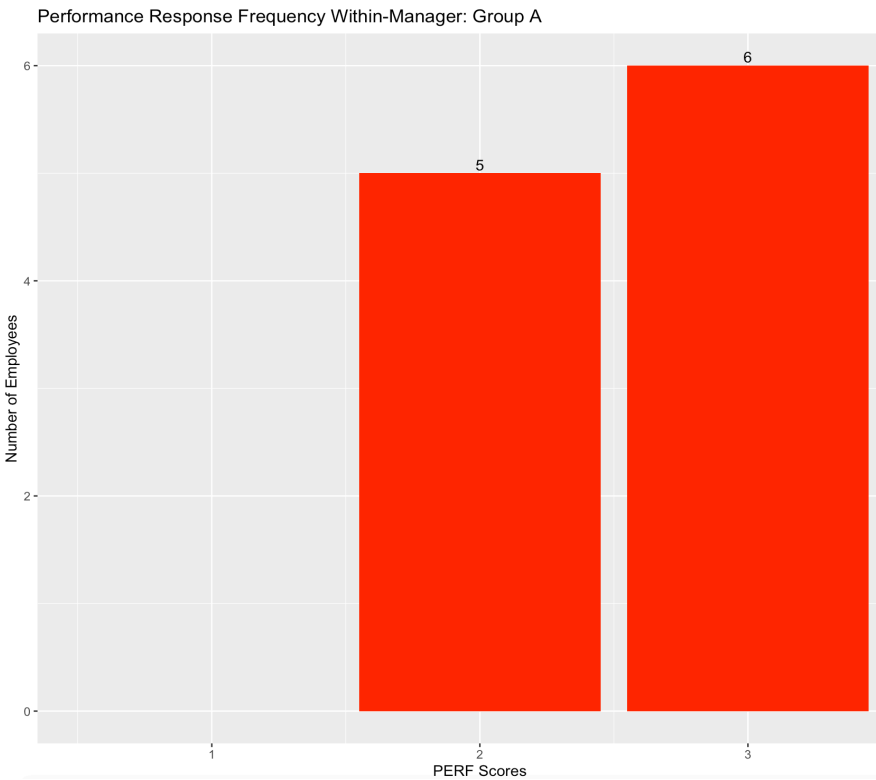
*Between-Coach Rating Distributions: Coachee Performance and Promotability*





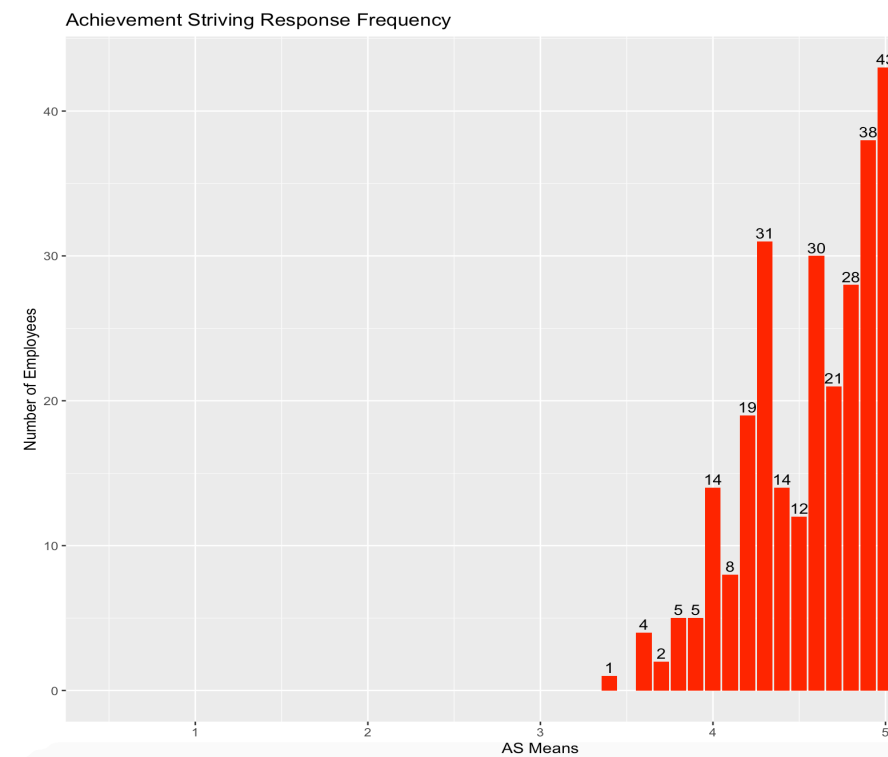
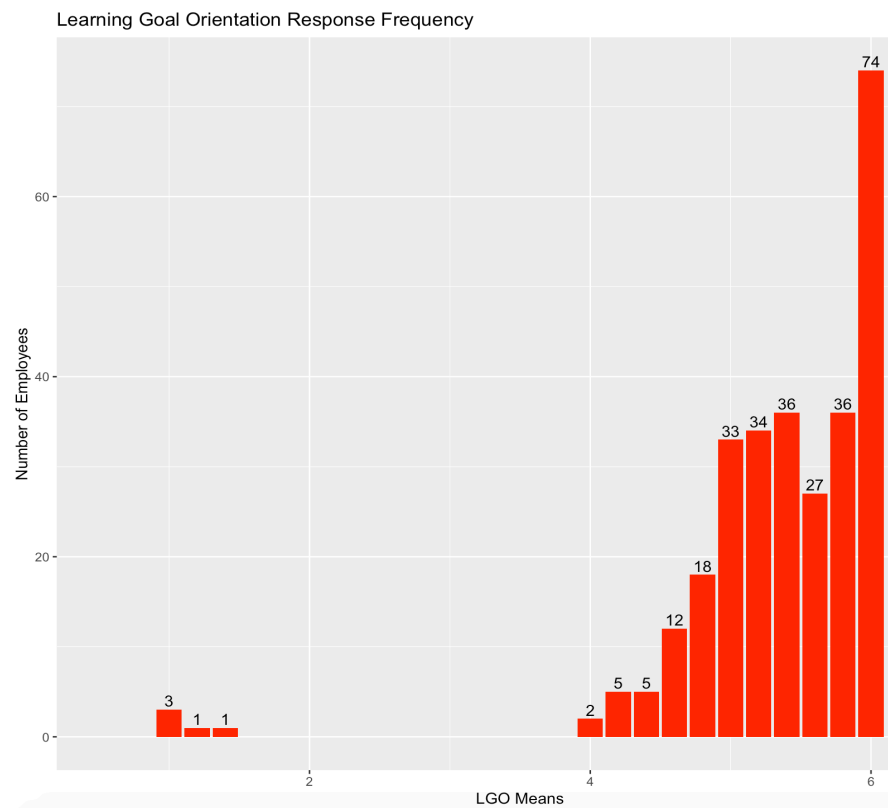
Figures 4a and 4b.

*Within-Coach Rating Distributions: Coachee Performance*



Figures 5a and 5b.

*Coachee Self-Report Rating Distributions: Learning goal orientation and achievement striving*



Figures 3a and 3b provide clear examples of the strong, positive leniency biases in manager responses. The “Coachee job performance” survey item asked managers to rate the tier of performance (i.e., bottom, middle, or top third of the company) into which each direct report fell. Examination of Figure 3a reveals managers could not accurately place employees into thirds. Rather, the distribution of responses clearly demonstrates that managers consistently provided highly favorable performance ratings for direct reports. Managers reported 46% of employees fall in the top third of performance, 39% fall in the middle third of performance, and only 15% fall in the bottom third of performance.

Figure 3b shows manager ratings of direct report promotability. This distribution exhibits a similar pattern to that of Figure 3a regarding the large proportion of inflated responses. These strong, positive leniency biases (i.e., consistent, inflated ratings) reduce variance across participants and groups. This lack of variance eliminates the possibility of conducting multilevel analyses.

Evaluation of Figures 4a and 4b demonstrates the same phenomenon (i.e., lack of variance; strong, positive leniency biases) occurs within-coaches. These figures provide examples of managers with large spans of control (i.e., responsible for eight or more direct reports/coachees). Figure 4a shows a manager with 11 coachees. This manager could not accurately place the coachees on his or her team into thirds of performance. Rather, these responses demonstrate a strong, positive leniency bias and lack of variance. Correspondingly, Figure 4b displays the same pattern. This figure reflects the performance rating distribution of a manager with nine coachees. Clearly, the strong, positive leniency biases exist within and between-managers.

An examination of the distributions of coachee responses also provides evidence of strong, positive leniency biases. Figures 5a and 5b depict this. The negatively skewed distributions highlight the strong leniency biases. These biases reduce variance across participants and groups (i.e., almost all coachees rate their LGO and achievement striving as high). Thus, I cannot conduct multilevel analyses, as responses between-coaches show high similarity.

Furthermore, to assess potential carelessness, or insufficient effort, of responses leading to this substandard data quality, I calculated the average time participants spent completing the surveys. Coachees finished surveys in roughly 20 minutes, while coaches completed surveys in six minutes. Coachees responded to a total of 121 items. Thus, coachees responded to roughly 6 items per minute. Coaches responded to a total of 42 items. As such, coaches responded to roughly 7 items per minute. Researchers suggest these survey response times do not indicate careless responding (DeSimone, Harms, & DeSimone, 2015). To further assess potential carelessness of responses, I employed the long-string, or invariant responding, technique using the “careless” package in R. This method relies on the assumption that too many consecutive identical responses indicates a lack of respondent effort. Researchers suggest 6 to 14 invariant responses in a row as an indication of careless responding (DeSimone, Harms, & DeSimone, 2015). Thus, I employ a conservative threshold of 14 invariant responses in a row to suggest careless responding. Examination of the long-string analysis results indicate roughly 36% of respondents engaged in careless responding, such that they selected the same response at least 14 consecutive times. Research suggests this percentage of invariant responding indicates a relatively high level of careless responding (DeSimone et al., 2015). Additionally, to provide a range of probable careless responding, I also examined the percentage of respondents selecting 6



consecutive repeated values. Evaluation of this analysis shows 99% of respondents selected the same response at least 6 consecutive times. Thus, most respondents exhibited extreme response patterns according to this standard.

Taken together, the data shows strong, positive leniency biases in coach and coachee responses. The possibility exists that these biases resulted from carelessness in participant responses, indicated by the long-string analysis results. As a result of the strong, positive leniency biases, the data reveals a lack of variance across responses. This lack of variance eliminates the possibility of controlling for the nested structure of the data and also may lead to biased and inconsistent results and conclusions (e.g., SEM fit indices, relationships between variables). Table 3 provides descriptive statistics for all constructs collected in this dissertation.

Table 3.

*Descriptive Statistics of All Study Constructs*

Variable	n	Mean	SD	Min	Q1	Q2	Q3	Max	Skew	Kurtosis
Learning Goal Orientation	287	5.36	0.75	1.00	5.00	5.40	6.00	6.00	-3.18	15.21
Feedback Orientation	287	4.09	0.43	2.53	3.80	4.07	4.40	5.00	-0.09	-0.15
Proactive Personality	287	5.78	0.72	3.90	5.40	5.90	6.30	7.00	-0.44	-0.36
Achievement Striving	287	4.56	0.37	3.40	4.30	4.60	4.90	5.00	-0.64	-0.41
Expressed Humility	287	3.90	0.68	1.44	3.44	4.00	4.33	5.00	-0.48	0.14
Instrumental Motive	287	4.14	0.58	1.60	3.80	4.00	4.60	5.00	-0.40	0.52
Ego Motive	287	2.19	0.65	1.00	1.86	2.14	2.61	4.00	0.27	-0.37
Image Motive	287	2.61	0.84	1.00	2.00	2.67	3.17	5.00	0.06	-0.39
Feedback Seeking Behaviors	287	4.19	0.66	1.67	3.83	4.17	4.83	5.00	-0.83	0.77
Feedback Receptivity	287	3.88	0.62	1.50	3.50	4.00	4.33	5.00	-0.62	0.93
Transfer of Coaching	287	4.01	0.61	1.20	3.80	4.00	4.40	5.00	-0.58	1.53
Coachability	287	4.03	0.56	1.59	3.77	4.06	4.41	5.00	-0.85	1.30
Feedback Seeking Environment	287	6.01	1.08	1.50	5.50	6.25	7.00	7.00	-1.29	1.55
Psychological Safety	287	5.75	1.03	1.00	5.17	6.00	6.50	7.00	-1.24	2.57
Coach-Coachee Relationship	287	4.23	0.80	1.00	3.83	4.33	5.00	5.00	-1.32	2.24
Feedback Quality	287	5.98	1.13	1.00	5.75	6.20	7.00	7.00	-1.75	3.76

Feedback Delivery	287	5.88	1.03	1.00	5.40	6.00	6.80	7.00	-1.14	1.45
Adaptability	287	4.14	0.70	1.75	3.75	4.00	4.75	5.00	-0.59	0.14
Promotability	287	5.39	1.17	1.33	4.67	5.67	6.33	7.00	-0.82	0.51
Performance	287	2.31	0.71	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	3.00	-0.54	-0.92

### Measure Quality

To determine the quality of measures utilized in this dissertation, I calculated the internal consistency reliability for each scale. Additionally, I ran confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) on each scale to confirm the factor structures established through previous research on the data collected for this dissertation. In the following sections, I report the findings from these analyses.

**Reliability.** To assess internal consistency, I calculated omega coefficients and Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ). Specifically, I calculated omega hierarchical ( $\omega_h$ ) and total ( $\omega_t$ ), as these metrics prove superior to Cronbach's alpha. For example, omega overcomes the internal consistency inflation and attenuation issues associated with alpha (Dunn, Baguley, & Brunsten, 2014). Omega hierarchical examines the unidimensionality of scales, while omega total estimates the total reliability of the test (Revelle, 2019). Despite the issues associated with Cronbach's alpha, I report this metric because it remains an important and widely utilized reliability statistic in applied research (Sijtsma, 2009).

All measures administered in this study demonstrate acceptable to strong internal consistency reliability. For multidimensional scales collected in this study, I calculated internal consistency reliability on each scale dimension (e.g., utility, accountability, self-efficacy), as well as the general, omnibus measure (e.g., feedback orientation). Furthermore, researchers suggest omega hierarchical ( $\omega_h$ ) is not a useful index for 3-item measures (Gignac, 2015; Viladrich et al., 2017). Thus, for scales with three or fewer items (e.g., expressed humility –

teachability), I only report Cronbach's alpha and omega total. In the following sections, I describe the scale reliabilities calculated on each set of measures. Table 3 provides a detailed report of reliability metrics for each scale.

***Individual differences underlying coachability.*** To assess the individual differences underlying coachability, I administered the following measures: learning goal orientation, performance prove goal orientation, performance avoid goal orientation, feedback orientation, proactive personality, expressed humility, and achievement striving. Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for the individual difference measures ranged from 0.77 to 0.94. Omega hierarchical ( $\omega_h$ ) ranged from 0.57 to 0.91 and omega total ( $\omega_t$ ) ranged from 0.84 to 0.94. All individual difference measures administered in this study demonstrate strong internal consistency reliability.

***Feedback motives.*** To evaluate employee feedback motives, I administered the following measures: instrumental, ego defense and enhancement, and image defense and enhancement motives. Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for the feedback motives measures ranged from 0.83 to 0.91. Omega hierarchical ( $\omega_h$ ) ranged from 0.61 to 0.8 and omega total ( $\omega_t$ ) ranged from 0.88 to 0.95. Overall, the calculated metrics suggest strong reliability for all feedback motives measures.

***Coaching behaviors and themes.*** To assess the coaching behaviors/themes impacting coachability, I administered the following measures: coach-coachee relationship quality, feedback quality and feedback delivery (i.e., utility and delivery of feedback), and psychological safety and feedback seeking environment (i.e., manager support of coaching). Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for coaching behaviors and themes measures ranged from 0.83 to 0.98. Omega hierarchical ( $\omega_h$ ) ranged from 0.72 to 0.93 and omega total ( $\omega_t$ ) ranged from 0.89 to 0.98. The calculated metrics indicate strong reliability for all coaching behaviors and themes measures.

**Coachability.** To capture employee coachability, I administered three measures: feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and transfer of coaching. Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for the coachability measures ranged from 0.82 to 0.94. Omega hierarchical ( $\omega_h$ ) ranged from 0.71 to 0.85 and omega total ( $\omega_t$ ) ranged from 0.88 to 0.96. Thus, all metrics suggest strong reliability for the measures assessing coachability.

**Coachability outcomes.** To determine outcomes of employee coachability, I collected data on the following measures: adaptability and promotability. Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha$ ) for the coachability outcome measures ranged from 0.86 to 0.93. The promotability measure consists of three items. Thus, I do not report omega hierarchical ( $\omega_h$ ) for this scale. However, omega hierarchical ( $\omega_h$ ) for the adaptability measure is 0.93. Omega total for the coachability outcome measures ( $\omega_t$ ) ranged from 0.87 to 0.94. Both measures exhibit strong reliability.

Table 4.

*Scale Reliability*

Variable / Scale	Alpha	Omega Hierarchical	Omega Total
Learning Goal Orientation	0.92	0.91	0.94
Performance Prove Goal Orientation	0.79	0.74	0.84
Performance Avoid Goal Orientation	0.89	0.86	0.91
Feedback Orientation – Utility	0.87	0.84	0.90
Feedback Orientation – Accountability	0.77	0.70	0.83
Feedback Orientation – Self-Efficacy	0.82	0.57	0.86
Feedback Orientation – Overall	0.88	0.57	0.91
Proactive Personality	0.90	0.76	0.93
Expressed Humility – Willingness	0.90	—	0.9
Expressed Humility – Teachability	0.91	—	0.91
Expressed Humility – Appreciation	0.88	—	0.89
Expressed Humility Overall	0.94	0.85	0.96
Achievement Striving	0.84	0.72	0.88
Instrumental Feedback Motive	0.88	0.76	0.91
Image Defense and Enhancement Motive	0.91	0.80	0.95

Ego Defense and Enhancement Motive	0.83	0.61	0.88
Coach-Coachee Relationship Genuineness	0.95	——	0.95
Coach-Coachee Relationship Communication	0.94	——	0.94
Coach-Coachee Relationship Comfort	0.94	——	0.94
Coach-Coachee Relationship Facilitate Dev.	0.95	——	0.95
Coach-Coachee Relationship Overall	0.98	0.93	0.98
Feedback Quality	0.95	0.92	0.96
Feedback Delivery	0.85	0.81	0.89
Psychological Safety	0.83	0.72	0.89
Feedback Seeking Environment	0.89	0.85	0.92
Feedback Seeking Behavior	0.93	0.84	0.96
Feedback Receptivity	0.82	0.71	0.88
Transfer of Coaching	0.94	0.88	0.95
Coachability	0.96	0.82	0.97
Adaptability	0.93	0.92	0.94
Promotability	0.86	——	0.87

**Factor analysis.** To confirm the factor structure of each scale collected in this dissertation, I ran confirmatory factor analyses (CFAs) using the lavaan package in R studio (Rosseel, 2019). I used the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method of CFA. To assess model fit, researchers (e.g., Kline, 2015; Schreiber, Stage, King, Nora, & Barlow, 2006) recommend examining and reporting the following fit (i.e., goodness-of-fit indicators) statistics: Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Thus, I report these fit statistics. The CFI and TLI compare the fit of the specified model to that of the baseline or independence model (i.e., the worst possible model; null model). Researchers suggest CFI and TLI indices above 0.90 signal acceptable fit, while values greater than 0.95 indicate good fit. The RMSEA is a parsimony-adjusted index (i.e., rewards model parsimony). Values below 0.08 suggest good fit. The SRMR is the square-root of the difference between residuals of the sample

covariance matrix and the hypothesized model. In other words, the SRMR provides a measure of residual variance. SRMR values under 0.08 indicate good fit (Kline, 2015; Schreiber et al., 2006).

In the following sections, I highlight noteworthy findings from the CFAs to provide readers a lens through which they can interpret the results of this dissertation. To assess model fit, I employed a holistic approach wherein I examined all fit statistics (i.e., CFI, TLI, SRMR, RMSEA) in conjunction. I utilized this approach because researchers advocate good fit exists if the majority of indices indicate good fit (Schreiber et al., 2006).

***Individual differences underlying coachability.*** Fit indices for most of the individual difference measures suggest good fit. However, I detail a few of the measures potentially exhibiting sub-optimal fit. For example, fit indices for the proactive personality scale (PPS) seem relatively low: CFI = 0.882, TLI = 0.848, RMSEA = 0.129, SRMR = 0.058. Based on the CFI, TLI, and RMSEA indices, the PPS exhibits poor fit. Yet, the SRMR index suggests good fit. Similarly, the fit indices for the achievement striving measure appear low: CFI = 0.862, TLI = 0.822, RMSEA = 0.119, SRMR = 0.076. Examination of the CFI, TLI, and RMSEA signal poor fit. However, the SRMR indicates good fit. These poor fit indices seem to stem from the strong, positive leniency bias (i.e., lack of variance) evidenced in the data. Researchers find limited variance impacts model fit (Kline, 2015). In sum, while most fit indices for the individual difference measures provide evidence in support of the factor structures, I importantly note a few measures with substandard fit indices.

***Feedback motives.*** Model fit statistics for two of the feedback motive measures demonstrate acceptable to good fit, with the ego defense and enhancement scale exhibiting relatively poor fit. Most fit indices for the instrumental motives scale provide evidence

suggesting poor fit: CFI = 0.893, TLI = 0.787, RMSEA = 0.235, SRMR = 0.064. However, the SRMR value indicates good fit, as it falls under the 0.08 threshold. The image defense and enhancement motives scale fit indices signal acceptable to good fit: CFI = .907, TLI = 0.845, RMSEA = 0.205, SRMR = 0.057. Both CFI and SRMR values meet threshold requirements for model fit. Fit statistics for the ego defense and enhancement scale prove most noteworthy: CFI = 0.842, TLI = 0.763, RMSEA = 0.166, SRMR = 0.088. Clearly, none of these values achieve acceptable or good fit thresholds. However, a high likelihood exists that these poor fit indices resulted from the strong, positive leniency bias in the data. Additionally, evaluation of the omega statistics supports the established factor structure of these measures.

***Coaching behaviors and themes.*** Most of the coaching behaviors/themes measures exhibit good model fit. Still, I bring attention to one of these measures with a few substandard fit indices. The fit indices for the feedback seeking environment scale: CFI = 0.956, TLI = 0.869, RMSEA = 0.232, SRMR = 0.042. Evaluation of the TLI and RMSEA signal poor fit. However, the CFI and SRMR demonstrate good fit. While some of these fit indices seem concerning, this appears to stem from the nature of response distributions (i.e., lack of variance). Furthermore, examination of the omega statistics provides sufficient support for the factor structure of this measure.

***Coachability.*** Based on my conceptualization and definition of employee coachability, I suggested coachability as a second-order factor influencing the degree to which employees are open to seeking, receiving, and using coaching feedback to drive individual development and improve performance. Thus, to measure coachability as a second-order factor, I administered three scales: feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and transfer of coaching. Fit indices for these three measures provide good evidence supporting their factor structures. Furthermore,

results from the CFA demonstrate coachability as a second-order factor achieved acceptable to good model fit: CFI = 0.930, TLI = 0.918, RMSEA = 0.092, SRMR = 0.054. The RMSEA index suggests sub-optimal fit. However, examination of the CFI and TLI indicate acceptable fit, while the SRMR index shows good fit. These findings suggest coachability is a second-order factor influencing an individual's willingness to seek, receive, and use coaching feedback to drive development and improve performance.

***Coachability outcomes.*** In this section, I only report the CFA fit statistics for the adaptability scale. Running CFA for three-item measures is not useful, as these models are just-identified (Kline, 2015). In other words, the fit indices suggest perfect model fit (i.e., CFI, TLI = 1.00; RMSEA, SRMR = 0.000). Thus, for the promotability scale, I do not report fit statistics. However, the data and fit indices offer support for the factor structure of the adaptability measure: CFI = 0.998, TLI = 0.994, RMSEA = 0.056, SRMR = 0.009.

In summary, based on the confirmatory factor analyses findings and in-depth understanding of the data quality, I proceed with hypothesis testing utilizing all measures and corresponding items. Table 5 reports correlations between all study variables collected.

Table 5.

*Correlations*



Table 5

*Means, standard deviations, and correlations*

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
1. Learning Goal Orientation																			
2. Feedback Orientation	.22**																		
3. Proactive Personality	.27**	.46**																	
4. Achievement Striving	.26**	.41**	.48**																
5. Expressed Humility	-.05	.12*	0.05	0.1															
6. Instrumental Motive	.16**	.67**	.28**	.42**	0.11														
7. Ego Motive	-.23**	-.28**	-.17**	-.29**	0.02	-.27**													
8. Image Motive	0.04	.14*	.20**	0.02	0	0.03	.22**												
9. Feedback Seeking Behaviors	0.02	.20**	0.07	.13*	.80**	.16**	-0.06	-0.02											
10. Feedback Receptivity	0	0.06	-0.01	0.02	.69**	0.08	-0.01	-0.04	.75**										
11. Transfer of Coaching	-0.06	0.11	0.03	.14*	.74**	.13*	-0.04	-0.01	.66**	.59**									
12. Coachability	-0.01	.14*	0.03	0.11	.84**	.14*	-0.04	-0.02	.92**	.89**	.83**								
13. Feedback Seeking Environment	.21**	.28**	0.11	.23**	.41**	.20**	-0.04	-0.04	.45**	.39**	.35**	.45**							
14. Psychological Safety	.23**	.14*	0.08	0.11	.26**	0.11	-.23**	-.14*	.27**	.30**	.20**	.29**	.66**						
15. Coach-Coachee Relationship	.18**	.25**	0.1	.20**	.46**	.21**	-0.20**	-0.04	.52**	.44**	.40**	.52**	.85**	.67**					
16. Feedback Quality	.17**	.27**	0.06	.18**	.38**	.23**	-.16**	-0.06	.44**	.39**	.36**	.45**	.82**	.61**	.87**				
17. Feedback Delivery	.14*	.25**	0.05	.17**	.38**	.19**	-.16**	-0.06	.40**	.39**	.34**	.43**	.77**	.59**	.78**	.77**			
18. Adaptability	0.07	.16**	.12*	.20**	.61**	.15*	-0.04	-0.05	.63**	.61**	.60**	.69**	.35**	.18**	.41**	.34**	.38**		
19. Promotability	0.03	.15*	.12*	0.08	.63**	0.09	0	-0.03	.62**	.59**	.52**	.66**	.30**	.24**	.39**	.30**	.34**	.66**	
20. Performance	0.01	.14*	0.06	0.04	.23**	.14*	0.02	-0.02	.26**	.21**	.28**	.28**	.14*	0.1	.19**	.16**	.20**	.30**	.53**

*Note.* *M* and *SD* are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

## Hypothesis Testing

To test the hypotheses proposed in this dissertation, I utilized structural equations modeling (SEM). Specifically, I used the lavaan package in R studio (Rosseel, 2019) to run SEM. Researchers employ SEM analyses to test theories regarding the relationships between variables and/or constructs. They also regard SEM as an invaluable tool as it allows for the modeling of complex and multivariable phenomena (Kline, 2015).

**Measurement model.** To test the full structural model (i.e., the regressions among latent/observed variables), a valid measurement model proves necessary. The measurement model specifies the relationships between indicators (i.e., items) and latent variables (i.e., the construct on which the items load) (Rosseel, 2019). Thus, prior to discussing the full structural model, I report model fit statistics for the measurement model.

To estimate the measurement model, I used the Maximum Likelihood (ML) method. To handle missing data, I utilized the full-information maximum likelihood (FIML) approach. This method uses the observed responses to supplement the loss of information due to missing responses. Researchers find FIML produces estimates that correctly describe the entire sample. Additionally, research indicates FIML yields unbiased estimates of both parameters and standard errors (Little, Jorgensen, Lang, & Moore, 2013). To assess model fit, researchers (e.g., Kline, 2015; Schreiber et al., 2006) recommend examining and reporting the following fit (i.e., goodness-of-fit indicators) statistics: Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), and the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR). Thus, I report these fit statistics.

The measurement model fit statistics: CFI = 0.847, TLI = 0.842, RMSEA = 0.045, SRMR = 0.057. Evaluation of the CFI and TLI indices suggest suboptimal fit. However,

examination of the RMSEA and SRMR indicate good fit. While some of the fit indices (i.e., CFI and TLI) raise concerns about model fit, these values appear to stem from the lack of variance in response distributions. Therefore, I proceed with estimation of the full SEM model.

**Full SEM model.** After testing and evaluating the measurement model and determining model fit, I tested the full SEM model. This model includes both the measurement and structural model. To estimate the model and handle missing data, I employed FIML.

Examination of the fit indices prompt questions regarding model fit: CFI = 0.845, TLI = 0.840, RMSEA = 0.045, SRMR = 0.058. The CFI and TLI values suggest poor fit. Yet, evaluation of the RMSEA and SRMR indicate good fit.

Researchers suggest discrepant CFI/TLI and RMSEA indices result because they evaluate the magnitude of the model's fit function from different theoretical perspectives (Lai & Green, 2016; Rigdon, 1996). The CFI and TLI are comparative fit indices. As such, they describe how well the proposed model (e.g., model of employee coachability) explains the covariance matrix above and beyond the independence model (i.e., baseline model). This baseline model assumes all manifest variables are uncorrelated. Controversy exists over these indices because almost all proposed models fit better than the baseline, or null, model (Lai & Green, 2016; Rigdon, 1996). The RMSEA is a statistical index that evaluates the difference between the observed covariance matrix per degree of freedom and the hypothesized covariance matrix. Researchers suggest the RMSEA avoids issues of sample size and rewards model parsimony, as it includes model degrees of freedom in the calculation (Cangur & Ercan, 2015; Chen, 2007). Clearly, these indices evaluate model fit from alternative lenses. As a result, researchers urge caution when interpreting fit indices and concluding "good", "acceptable", or "bad" fit (Lai & Green, 2016; Rigdon, 1996).

Results from the SEM analysis I ran show discrepant CFI/TLI and RMSEA indices. Researchers demonstrate the low (i.e., “bad”) CFI and TLI values but “good” RMSEA values (i.e., extreme disagreement) may result from sampling variability (Lai & Green, 2016). In this sample, the nature of response distributions (i.e., strong, positive leniency biases) may not reflect that of other samples or the true population (assuming the population is normally distributed). As such, the discordant indices in this dissertation may result from the nature of the data, as opposed to the model itself. Rather than concluding good model fit by reporting only favorable indices, I present all fit indices and continue with model testing. Thus, I ran an additional SEM analysis to evaluate the structural model.

**Path model.** Following the calculation and assessment of the full SEM model, I conducted a path analysis. The path analysis examines the relationship between observed variables. More specifically, the path model I ran tested the proposed model of employee coachability (see Figure 2). I ran this path analysis because the measurement model indicated lower CFI and TLI. Thus, I wanted to evaluate the structural model (i.e., regressions among observed variables) on its own. To estimate this model, I used the ML method. To handle missing data, I employed multiple imputation. To do this, I utilized the multivariate imputation by chained equations (mice) function in R. The approach for multiple imputation, fully conditional specification (FCS), underlies the mice function in R (van Buuren & Groothuis-Oudshoorn, 2011). The FCS method specifies a multivariate imputation model on a variable-by-variable basis by a set of conditional imputations. This imputation occurs for each incomplete variable. FCS then pulls the imputations by iterating over the conditional densities. Researchers suggest iterations from 10-20 prove sufficient (van Buuren & Groothuis-Oudshoorn, 2011). Thus, to impute the data, I specified 10 iterations. Additionally, I instructed the function to

calculate four imputed data sets. Then, I used the “complete” function in R studio to average these four imputed data sets. This formed one, final imputed data set to utilize for the path analysis.

Evaluation of the model fit indices indicate good fit: CFI = 0.978, TLI = 0.963, RMSEA = 0.044, SRMR = 0.028. All of these indices signal good fit (Kline, 2015; Schreiber et al., 2006). Table 6 provides the regression coefficients (i.e., standardized and unstandardized) for each path estimated in the path model. Table 7 provides the R-squared values for each endogenous variable included in the path model. Additionally, Figures 6 and 7 display path diagrams visualizing the estimated relationships. Figure 6 shows the standardized regression coefficients, whereas Figure 7 displays the unstandardized regression coefficients. For readability purposes, I only include the regression coefficients for the relationships reaching significance in these path diagrams.

Table 6.

*Regression Results for All Estimated Paths*

Regression	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	SE	z-value	<i>p</i>
Instrumental Motive ~					
Learning Goal Orientation	-0.000	-0.001	0.045	-0.010	0.992
Feedback Orientation	0.846**	0.632	0.050	12.378	0.000
Proactive Personality	-0.087*	-0.108	0.052	-2.080	0.038
Expressed Humility	0.009	0.011	0.043	0.223	0.824
Achievement Striving	0.334**	0.212	0.051	4.158	0.000
Coach-Coachee Relationship	0.039	0.053	0.108	0.490	0.490
Feedback Quality	0.049	0.095	0.094	1.009	0.313
Feedback Delivery	-0.019	-0.034	0.074	-0.457	0.647
Psychological Safety	0.009	0.016	0.060	0.260	0.795
Feedback Seeking Environment	-0.067	-0.124	0.090	-1.384	0.166
Coachability ~					
Learning Goal Orientation	-0.005	-0.006	0.034	-0.184	0.854
Feedback Orientation	-0.015	-0.012	0.047	-0.253	0.800

Proactive Personality	-0.016	-0.021	0.039	-0.543	0.587
Expressed Humility	0.626**	0.765	0.036	21.479	0.000
Achievement Striving	-0.012	-0.008	0.039	-0.204	0.838
Instrumental Motive	0.034	0.035	0.043	0.825	0.407
Image Motive	-0.007	-0.011	0.033	-0.339	0.735
Ego Motive	-0.024	-0.028	0.035	-0.789	0.430
Coach-Coachee Relationship	0.083	0.118	0.079	1.504	0.132
Feedback Quality	0.025	0.051	0.069	0.746	0.455
Feedback Delivery	0.004	0.007	0.054	0.127	0.899
Feedback Seeking Environment	0.008	0.015	0.065	0.235	0.814
Psychological Safety	-0.019	-0.036	0.044	-0.811	0.417
Adaptability ~					
Coachability	0.865**	0.693	0.043	16.301	0.000
Promotability ~					
Coachability	1.374**	0.658	0.044	14.816	0.000
Performance ~					
Coachability	0.358**	0.280	0.057	4.935	0.000

*Note.* b represents unstandardized regression weights.  $\beta$  indicates the standardized regression weights. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .

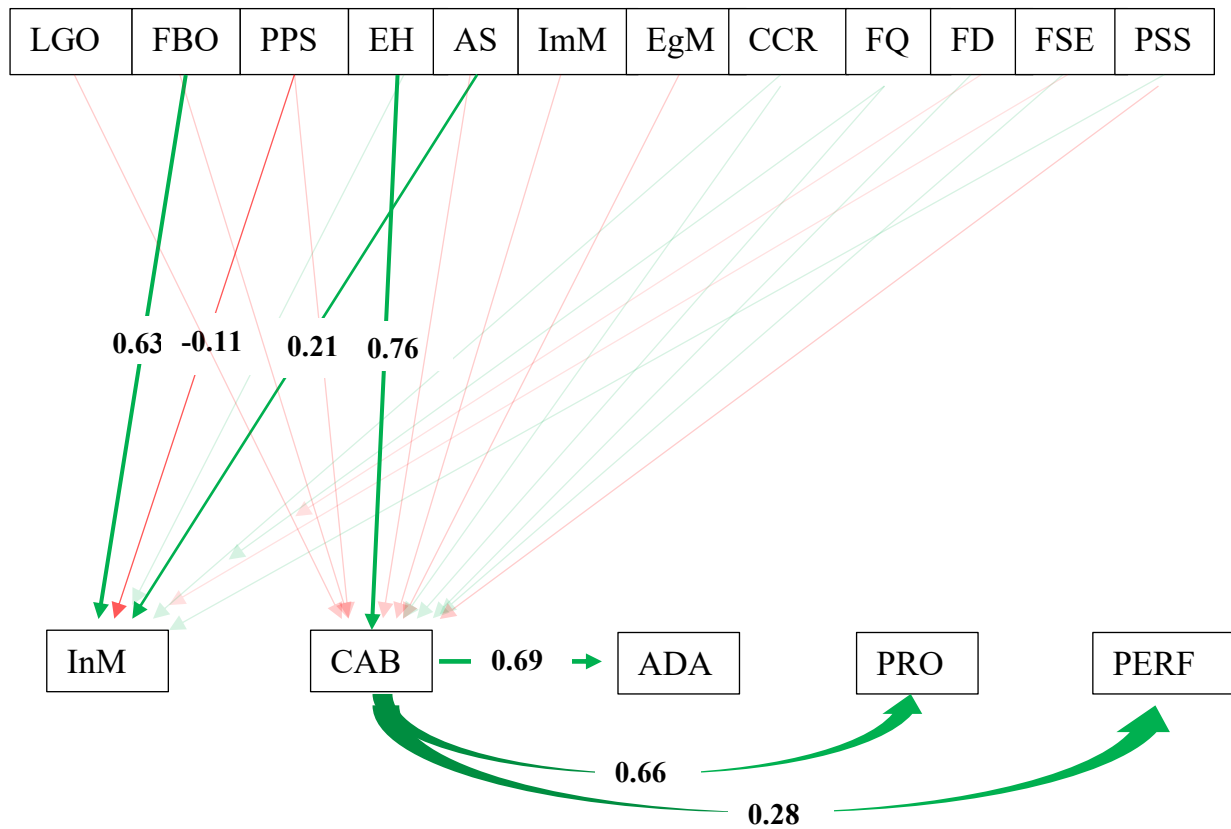
Table 7.

*R-squared for All Endogenous Variables in the Path Model*

Variable / Scale	R <sup>2</sup>
Instrumental Motive	.486
Employee Coachability	.729
Adaptability	.481
Performance	.078
Promotability	.433

Figure 6.

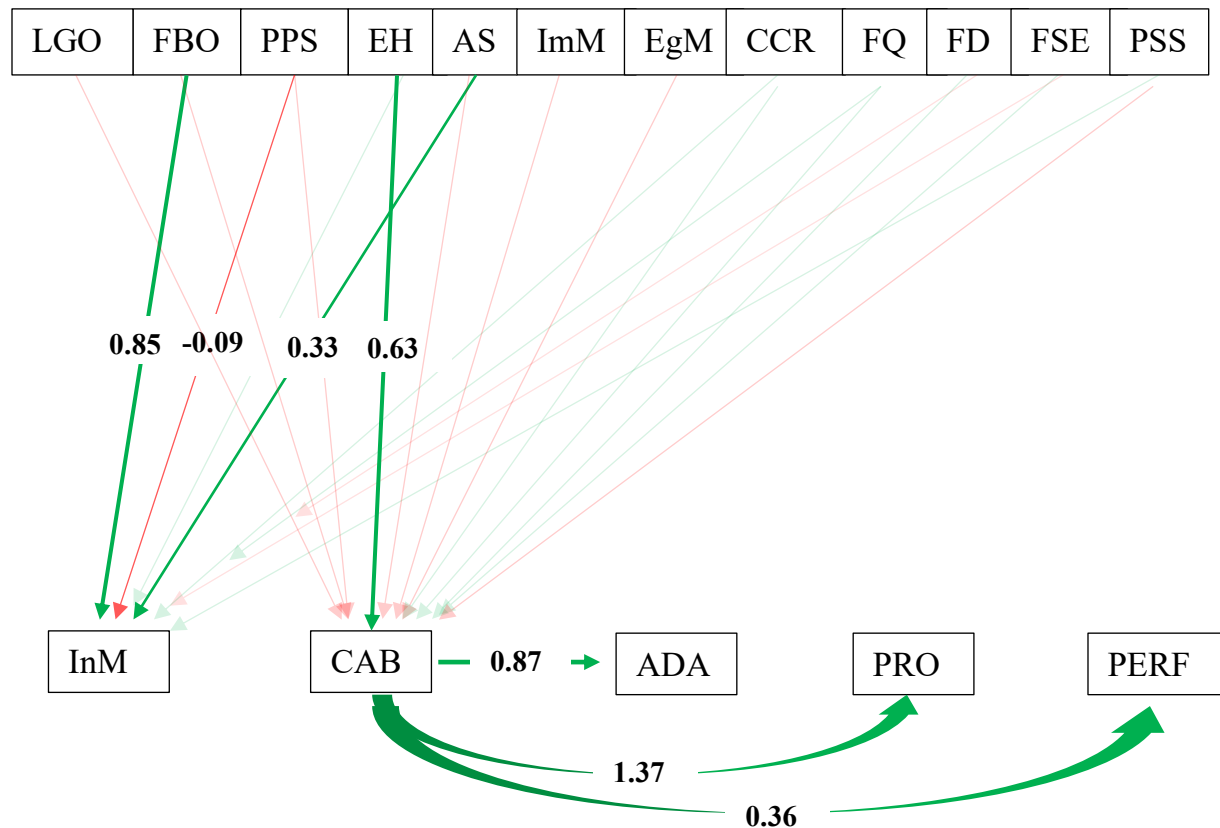
*Path Diagram with Standardized Regression Coefficients*



*Note.* Green arrows indicate positive relationships. Red arrows indicate negative relationships. LGO = Learning goal orientation. FBO = Feedback orientation. PPS = Proactive personality. EH = Expressed humility. AS = Achievement striving. ImM = Image motive. EgM = Ego motive. InM = Instrumental motive. CCR = Coach-coachee relationship. FQ = Feedback quality. FD = Feedback delivery. FSE = Feedback seeking environment. PSS = Psychological safety. CAB = Coachability. ADA = Adaptability. PRO = Promotability. PERF = Performance.

Figure 7.

*Path Diagram with Unstandardized Regression Coefficients*



*Note.* Green arrows indicate positive relationships. Red arrows indicate negative relationships. LGO = Learning goal orientation. FBO = Feedback orientation. PPS = Proactive personality. EH = Expressed humility. AS = Achievement striving. ImM = Image motive. EgM = Ego motive. InM = Instrumental motive. CCR = Coach-coachee relationship. FQ = Feedback quality. FD = Feedback delivery. FSE = Feedback seeking environment. PSS = Psychological safety. CAB = Coachability. ADA = Adaptability. PRO = Promotability. PERF = Performance.

The first group of hypotheses focus on the traits underlying coachability. These hypotheses state learning goal orientation (Hypothesis I), feedback orientation (Hypothesis II), proactive personality (Hypothesis III), expressed humility (Hypothesis IV), and achievement striving (Hypothesis V) positively relate to an employee's coachability. The data do not support



hypotheses I, II, II, or V. However, the data demonstrate expressed humility positively relates to an employee's coachability. Thus, these findings provide support for hypothesis IV.

This set of hypotheses center on the feedback seeking motives related to an employee's coachability. These hypotheses state the instrumental feedback seeking motive positively relates to an employee's coachability (Hypothesis VI). In contrast, the ego (Hypothesis VII) and image (Hypothesis VIII) defense and enhancement motives negatively relate to an employee's coachability. The data do not support these hypotheses.

This grouping of hypotheses proposes the instrumental feedback seeking motive mediates the relationship between learning goal orientation (Hypothesis IX), feedback orientation (Hypothesis X), proactive personality (Hypothesis XI), expressed humility (Hypothesis XII), achievement striving (Hypothesis XIII), and an employee's coachability. Examination of the path model and regression output demonstrate the instrumental motive does not relate to an employee's coachability. Thus, the data do not support these hypotheses.

The next category of hypotheses focuses on the managerial coaching behaviors/themes related to an employee's coachability. These hypotheses posit the following: perceived managerial support (i.e., psychologically safe environment [Hypothesis XIV] and feedback seeking supportive environment [Hypothesis XV]), coach-coachee relationship (Hypothesis XVI), and feedback (i.e., feedback quality and delivery [Hypothesis XVII]) positively relate to an employee's coachability. The data do not support these hypotheses.

The last set of hypotheses propose the outcomes driven by an employee's coachability. These hypotheses suggest a positive relationship exists between an employee's coachability and job performance (Hypothesis XVIII) and adaptability (Hypothesis XIX). The data strongly supports both of these hypotheses.

RQ1 poses: Which managerial coaching factor (i.e., coach-coachee relationship, nature of feedback, perceived managerial support) exhibits the strongest relationship with employee coachability? To assess this research question, I ran a multiple regression analysis. After this, I conducted a relative weights analysis to determine which of these managerial coaching factors displays the strongest relationship with employee coachability. To run the relative weights analysis, I used the “relaimpo” package in R studio. This package refers to and calculates the relative importance of predictors/regressors in linear models (Groemping, 2018). The output from the relative weights analysis provides the raw relative weights and the relative importance of each predictor in the regression model as a percentage. These relative importance percentages sum to 100%. Table 8 reports the results from the relative weights analysis.

Table 8.

*Relative Contribution of Managerial Coaching Predictors of Employee Coachability*

Variable / Scale	Raw Relative Weights	Relative Weights as a % of R	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	SE
Coach-Coachee Relationship	0.1052	37.99	0.3658	0.5220	0.0506
Feedback Seeking Environment	0.0541	19.54	0.0376	0.0726	0.1064
Feedback Quality	0.0518	18.71	-0.0234	-0.0474	0.1119
Feedback Delivery	0.0451	16.29	0.0351	0.0649	0.0885
Psychological Safety	0.0207	7.48	-0.0608	-0.1124	0.0702
$R^2 = .2769$					

Thus, the results indicate the coach-coachee relationship exhibits the strongest relationship with employee coachability.

RQ2 poses: Does a high-quality coach-coachee relationship positively relate to the adoption of an instrumental feedback seeking motive? The data shows a high-quality coach-coachee relationship does not positively relate to the adoption of an instrumental feedback seeking motive ( $\beta = 0.020$ ,  $SE = 0.050$ ,  $p = 0.697$ ).

RQ3 poses: Is employee coachability a stronger predictor of job performance than the quality of the coach-coachee relationship? To evaluate this research question, I ran a multiple regression analysis. After this, I conducted a relative weights analysis. Table 9 reports the results from the relative weights analysis.

Table 9.

*Relative Contribution of Employee Coachability and Coach-Coachee Relationship on Job Performance*

Variable / Scale	Raw Relative Weights	Relative Weights as a % of R	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	SE
Coach-Coachee Relationship	0.0199	24.49	0.0577	0.0644	0.0665
Employee Coachability	0.0613	75.44	0.3150	0.2463	0.0665
$R^2 = .08126$					

Clearly, employee coachability is a much stronger predictor of job performance than the quality of the coach-coachee relationship.

RQ4 poses: Does employee coachability predict manager perceptions of employee promotability? The data shows employee coachability predicts manager perceptions of employee promotability ( $\beta = 0.658$ ,  $SE = 0.044$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ).

RQ5 poses: Which goal orientation (i.e., LGO, PPGO, PAGO) exhibits the strongest relationship with employee coachability? To examine this research question, I ran a multiple regression analysis. Then, I conducted a relative weights analysis. The output from the multiple regression analysis shows PAGO exhibits a significant, positive relationship with employee coachability ( $\beta = 0.124$ ,  $SE = 0.062$ ,  $p = 0.047$ ). Neither LGO nor PPGO exhibit a significant relationship with employee coachability. Correspondingly, Table 10 provides the relative weights analysis findings.

Table 10.

*Relative Contribution of Goal Orientations on Employee Coachability*

Variable / Scale	Raw Relative Weights	Relative Weights as a % of R	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	SE
Learning Goal Orientation	0.0003	2.13	0.0179	0.0241	0.0628
Performance Prove Goal Orientation	0.0006	4.26	-0.0204	-0.0355	0.0616
Performance Avoid Goal Orientation	0.0132	93.75	0.0693	0.1241	0.0623
$R^2 = .01408$					

Thus, PAGO exhibits the strongest relationship with employee coachability. However, note the small total R-square value. Overall, this suggests the goal orientation variables do not explain much variance in employee coachability.

RQ6 poses: What are the implications for coachability outcomes with different combinations of managerial coaching effectiveness and coachability (e.g., impact of high-quality coaching relationship and low coachability on performance)?

To assess this research question, I ran a series of moderated regression analyses. In these analyses, I examined the interaction between employee coachability and the various managerial coaching behaviors/themes (i.e., coach-coachee relationship, feedback seeking supportive environment, psychological safety, feedback quality, and feedback delivery) on coachability outcomes (i.e., performance, adaptability, and promotability). Examination of the output from all of these regressions shows only two significant interaction effects. Surprisingly, employee coachability and coach-coachee relationship interact to decrease performance ( $\beta = -0.1392$ ,  $SE = 0.0435$ ,  $p = 0.047$ ). Similarly, employee coachability and feedback seeking supportive environments interact to decrease performance ( $\beta = -0.1663$ ,  $SE = 0.0498$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ). Table 11 reports all findings from these analyses. Figures 8 and 9 display the interaction effects. These

figures show coachability becomes more critical for performance when low levels of coach-coachee relationships and feedback seeking environments exist.

Table 11.

*Moderated Regression Results for Employee Coachability and Managerial Coaching Effectiveness*

Regression	b	$\beta$	p	SE
Performance ~				
Employee Coachability	0.8678	0.2174	0.0015**	0.0677
Coach-Coachee Relationship	0.5841	0.0255	0.7116	0.069
Employee Coachability * Coach-Coachee Relationship	-0.1392	-0.0868	0.0471*	0.0435
Adaptability ~				
Employee Coachability	0.7047	0.6673	0.0000***	0.0511
Coach-Coachee Relationship	-0.0594	0.0714	0.1710	0.0520
Employee Coachability * Coach-Coachee Relationship	0.0302	0.0193	0.5570	0.0328
Promotability ~				
Employee Coachability	1.9470	0.6019	0.0000***	0.0531
Coach-Coachee Relationship	0.7177	0.0410	0.4488	0.0541
Employee Coachability * Coach-Coachee Relationship	-0.1631	-0.0623	0.0688	0.0341
Performance ~				
Employee Coachability	1.2936	0.2297	0.0005***	0.065
Feedback Seeking Environment	0.6489	-0.0327	0.6178	0.0654
Employee Coachability * Feedback Seeking Environment	-0.1663	-0.0140	0.0051**	0.0498
Adaptability ~				
Employee Coachability	0.8723	0.6700	0.0000***	0.0494
Feedback Seeking Environment	0.0542	0.0462	0.3530	0.0497
Employee Coachability * Feedback Seeking Environment	-0.0061	-0.0052	0.8900	0.0378
Promotability ~				
Employee Coachability	2.1755	0.6325	0.0000***	0.0514

Feedback Seeking Environment	0.5543	-0.0180	0.7273	0.0517
Employee Coachability *				
Feedback Seeking Environment	-0.1423	-0.0736	0.0621	0.0393
Performance ~				
Employee Coachability	0.8570	0.2539	0.0000***	0.0611
Psychological Safety	0.3728	-0.0008	0.9890	0.0602
Employee Coachability *				
Psychological Safety	-0.0926	-0.0748	0.1260	0.0487
Adaptability ~				
Employee Coachability	0.8794	0.7000	0.0000***	0.0460
Psychological Safety	-0.0121	-0.0240	0.5970	0.0454
Employee Coachability *				
Psychological Safety	-0.0010	-0.0008	0.9820	0.0367
Promotability ~				
Employee Coachability	1.6523	0.6351	0.0000***	0.0480
Psychological Safety	0.2809	0.0457	0.3350	0.0473
Employee Coachability *				
Psychological Safety	-0.0569	-0.0281	0.4630	0.0383
Performance ~				
Employee Coachability	0.8381	0.2341	0.0004***	0.0647
Feedback Quality	0.3665	0.0055	0.9345	0.0674
Employee Coachability *				
Feedback Quality	-0.0900	-0.0795	0.0597	0.0420
Adaptability ~				
Employee Coachability	0.7809	0.6814	0.0000***	0.0489
Feedback Quality	-0.0225	0.0393	0.4410	0.0509
Employee Coachability *				
Feedback Quality	0.0116	0.0105	0.7420	0.0318
Promotability ~				
Employee Coachability	2.0169	0.6358	0.0000***	0.0508
Feedback Quality	0.4391	-0.0251	0.6352	0.0529
Employee Coachability *				
Feedback Quality	-0.1153	-0.0624	0.0596	0.0330
Performance ~				
Employee Coachability	0.8084	0.2150	0.0009***	0.0638

Feedback Delivery	0.4031	0.0546	0.4111	0.0663
Employee Coachability *				
Feedback Delivery	-0.0906	-0.0733	0.0670	0.0398
Adaptability ~				
Employee Coachability	0.7074	0.6553	0.0000***	0.0480
Feedback Delivery	-0.0015	0.1098	0.0285*	0.0499
Employee Coachability *				
Feedback Delivery	0.0187	0.0155	0.6050	0.0299
Promotability ~				
Employee Coachability	1.8406	0.6134	0.0000***	0.0502
Feedback Delivery	0.4323	0.0428	0.4120	0.0521
Employee Coachability *				
Feedback Delivery	-0.0953	-0.0472	0.1330	0.0313

*Note.* b represents unstandardized regression weights.  $\beta$  indicates the standardized regression weights. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ . \*\*\* indicates  $p < .001$ .

Figure 8.

*Interaction between Employee Coachability and Coach-Coachee Relationship on Performance.*

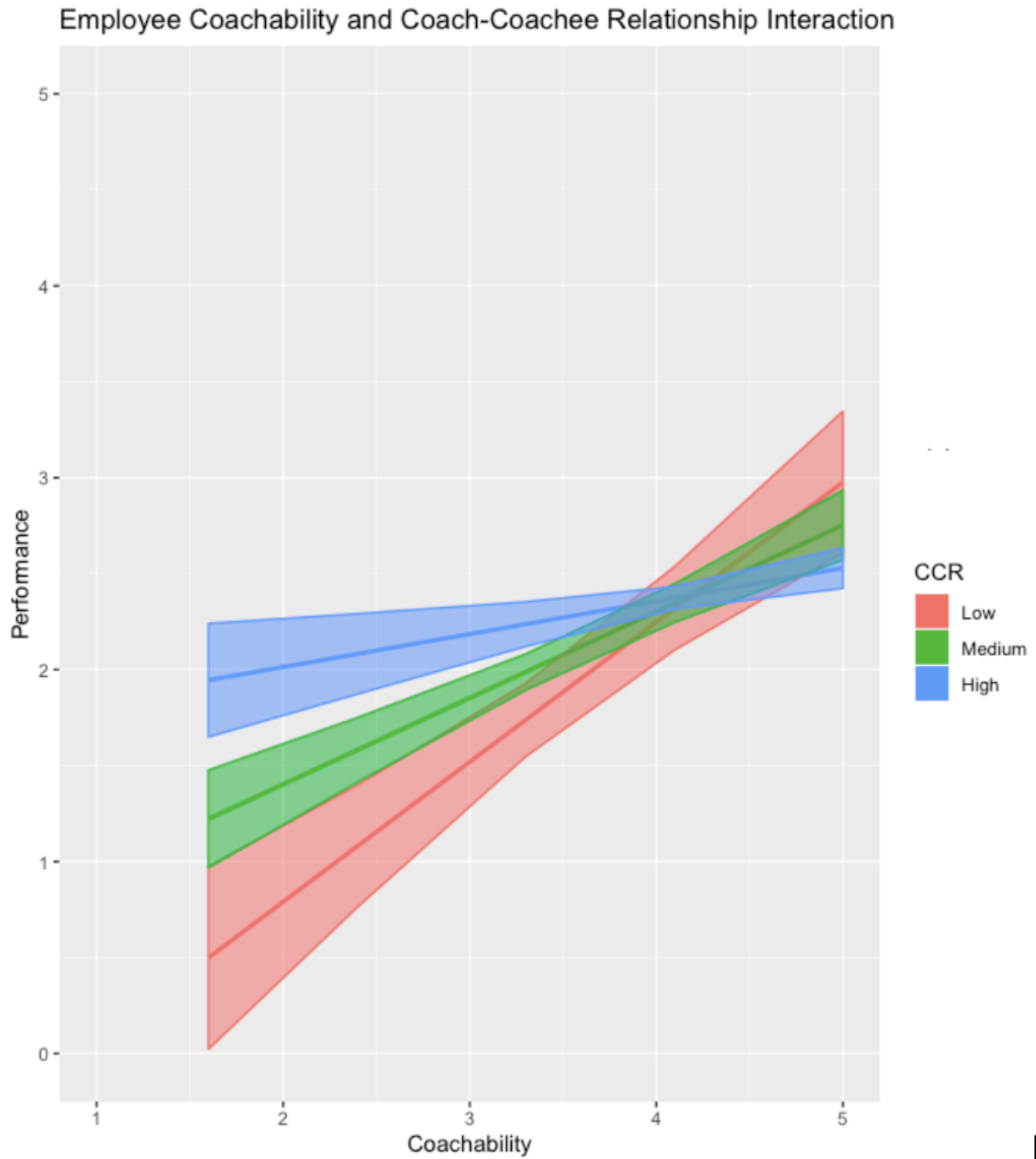
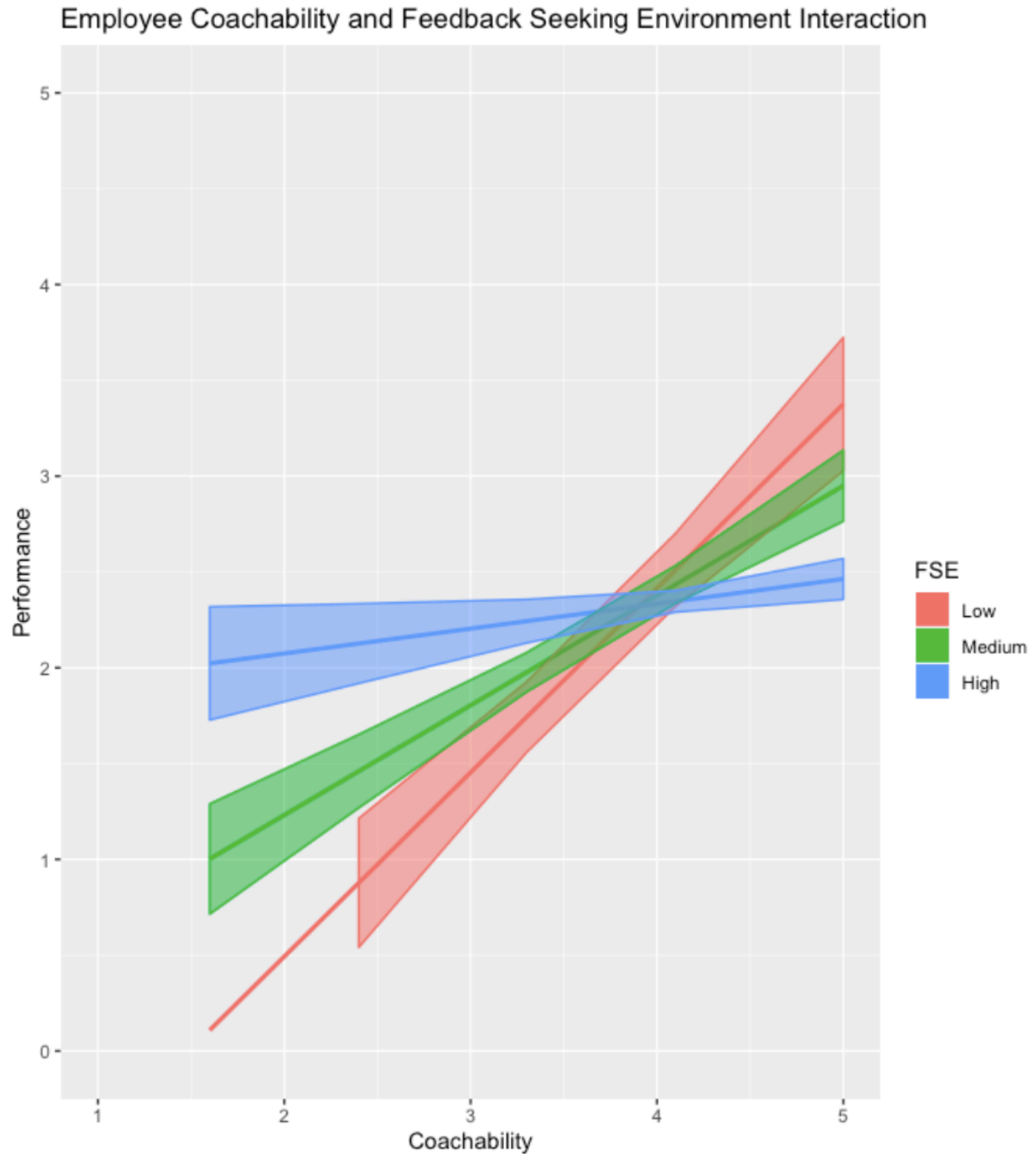


Figure 9.

*Interaction between Employee Coachability and Feedback Seeking Environment on Performance.*





**Additional analyses.** To further explore the relationships and initial findings in this dissertation, I conducted additional analyses. Given the data quality issues (i.e., careless responding), I ran an additional path model with only respondents exhibiting non-careless response tendencies. I also conducted relative weights analyses for all endogenous variables included in the

full path model (i.e., all respondents). Furthermore, for each coachability outcome (i.e., performance, adaptability, promotability), I ran relative weights analyses using all predictors collected to determine their relative importance.

**Path analysis.** To evaluate the relationships between variables using only participants exhibiting non-careless responding tendencies, I ran an additional path model. More specifically, I set a threshold of 14 invariant responses in a row to suggest careless responding. Thus, I ran a path model without the 36% of participants who engaged in careless responding, indicated by 14 consecutive invariant responses. Removal of careless respondents left a sample size of 184 for this path analysis.

To estimate this model, I used the ML method. To handle missing data, I employed multiple imputation, using the mice function in R studio. To impute the data, I specified 10 iterations. Additionally, I instructed the function to calculate four imputed data sets. Then, I used the “complete” function in R studio to average these four imputed data sets. This formed one, final imputed data set to utilize for the path analysis.

Evaluation of the model fit indices suggest good fit: CFI = .989, TLI = .983, RMSEA = .029, SRMR = .033. All of these indices signal good fit (Kline, 2015; Schreiber et al., 2006). These findings mirror those of the initial path model estimated, which included all 287 participants. Table 12 reports the R-squared value for all endogenous variables included in the path model analysis.

Table 12.

*R-squared for All Endogenous Variables in the Non-Carelessness Path Model*

Variable / Scale	R <sup>2</sup>
Instrumental Motive	.419
Employee Coachability	.697
Adaptability	.482
Performance	.123
Promotability	.427

**Relative weights analysis.** To further examine the importance of predictors in relation to the endogenous variables in the path model and coachability outcomes, I conducted a relative weights analysis. To provide a deeper examination, I ran two relative weights analyses for each coachability outcome. In one, I included the coachability variables separately (i.e., feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, transfer of coaching). In the other, I aggregated the coachability variables to create one coachability variable. I report the analyses and findings in the following sections.

*Instrumental feedback seeking motive.* I ran a relative weights analysis to determine the relative importance of each predictor on the instrumental feedback seeking motive. Table 13 reports the findings from this analysis.

Table 13.

*Relative Contribution of Predictors of the Instrumental Feedback Seeking Motive*

Variable / Scale	Raw Relative Weights	Relative Weights as a % of R	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	SE
Learning Goal Orientation	0.0080	1.66	-0.0008	-0.0011	0.0455
Feedback Orientation	0.3543	73.69	0.8473	0.6335	0.0503
Proactive Personality	0.0285	5.93	-0.0878	-0.1098	0.0524
Expressed Humility	0.0045	.94	0.0108	0.0127	0.0435
Achievement Striving	0.0856	17.80	0.3258	0.2063	0.0512
R <sup>2</sup> = .4808					

Feedback orientation demonstrates the strongest relationship with the instrumental feedback seeking motive.

*Employee coachability.* I ran a relative weights analysis to determine the relative importance of each predictor on employee coachability. Table 14 reports the findings from this analysis.

Table 14.

*Relative Contribution of Predictors of Employee Coachability*

Variable / Scale	Raw Relative Weights	Relative Weights as a % of R	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	SE
Learning Goal Orientation	0.0037	.51	-0.0046	-0.0062	0.0346
Feedback Orientation	0.0030	.41	-0.0152	-0.0118	0.0478
Proactive Personality	0.0005	.07	-0.0162	-0.0212	0.0397
Expressed Humility	0.5094	69.92	0.6255	0.7645	0.0365
Achievement Striving	0.0017	.23	-0.0120	-0.0079	0.0396
Instrumental Motive	0.0038	.52	0.0340	0.0354	0.0442
Ego Motive	0.0015	.21	-0.0237	-0.0277	0.0361
Image Motive	0.0003	.04	-0.0075	-0.0113	0.0342
Coach-Coachee Relationship	0.0707	9.70	0.0829	0.1184	0.0807
Feedback Seeking Environment	0.0423	5.81	0.0080	0.0154	0.0673
Psychological Safety	0.0154	2.11	-0.0193	-0.0357	0.0452
Feedback Quality	0.0410	5.63	0.0255	0.0515	0.0707
Feedback Delivery	0.0352	4.83	0.0037	0.0069	0.0554
$R^2 = .7285$					

*Performance.* In the first relative weights analysis, I included all predictors to determine their relative importance on performance. In this analysis, I kept the coachability variables separate (i.e., feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and transfer of coaching). Table 15 reports all findings from this analysis.

Table 15.

*Relative Contribution of Predictors, with All coachability Variables, of Performance*

Variable / Scale	Raw Relative Weights	Relative Weights as a % of R	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	SE
Learning Goal Orientation	.0002	.17	0.0145	0.0153	0.0628
Feedback Orientation	.0071	5.86	0.1270	0.0773	0.0875
Proactive Personality	.0015	1.24	0.0429	0.0437	0.0720

Expressed Humility	.0116	9.58	-0.0673	-0.0644	0.1104
Achievement Striving	.0014	1.16	-0.1163	-0.0600	0.0721
Instrumental Motive	.0069	5.70	0.0837	0.0682	0.0802
Ego Motive	.0036	2.97	0.0938	0.0857	0.0655
Image Motive	.0014	1.16	-0.0477	-0.0564	0.0619
Coach-Coachee Relationship	.0076	6.28	0.1161	0.1296	0.1148
Feedback Seeking Environment	.0050	4.13	-0.0958	-0.1450	0.1218
Psychological Safety	.0013	1.07	-0.0092	-0.0133	0.0826
Feedback Quality	.0041	3.39	-0.0434	-0.0686	0.1282
Feedback Delivery	.0120	9.91	0.1083	0.1568	0.1010
Feedback Seeking Behaviors	.0167	13.79	0.1202	0.1110	0.1141
Feedback Receptivity	.0090	7.43	0.0077	0.0068	0.0916
Transfer of Coaching	.0316	26.09	0.2533	0.2156	0.0881
$R^2 = .1211$					

Thus, transfer of coaching exhibits the strongest relationship with performance, followed by feedback seeking behaviors and feedback delivery.

The next analysis I ran included coachability as an aggregate of feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and transfer of coaching, as analyses show these indicate coachability as a second-order factor. Table 16 details the findings from this analysis.

Table 16.

*Relative Contribution of Predictors, with Coachability as an Aggregate, of Performance*

Variable / Scale	Raw Relative Weights	Relative Weights as a % of R	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	SE
Learning Goal Orientation	0.0002	0.18	0.0056	0.0059	0.0571
Feedback Orientation	0.0073	6.59	0.1237	0.0754	0.0627
Proactive Personality	0.0014	1.26	0.0408	0.0415	0.0721
Expressed Humility	0.0179	16.16	-0.0239	-0.0228	0.1069
Achievement Striving	0.0010	0.9	-0.0874	-0.0451	0.0718
Instrumental Motive	0.0074	6.68	0.0875	0.0713	0.0802
Ego Motive	0.0034	3.07	0.0873	0.0797	0.0655
Image Motive	0.0014	1.26	-0.0453	-0.0535	0.0620
Coach-Coachee Relationship	0.0092	8.3	0.1128	0.1260	0.1469

Feedback Seeking Environment	0.0054	4.87	-0.0956	-0.1445	0.1220
Psychological Safety	0.0017	1.53	-0.0166	-0.0240	0.0820
Feedback Quality	0.0048	4.33	-0.0367	-0.0581	0.1283
Feedback Delivery	0.0130	11.73	0.1051	0.1521	0.1004
Employee Coachability	0.0367	33.12	0.3224	0.2522	0.1097
$R^2 = .1108$					

*Adaptability.* In the first relative weights analysis, I included all predictors to determine their relative importance on adaptability. In this analysis, I kept the coachability variables separate. Table 17 reports these findings.

Table 17.

*Relative Contribution of Predictors, with All Coachability Variables, of Adaptability*

Variable / Scale	Raw Relative Weights	Relative Weights as a % of R	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	SE
Learning Goal Orientation	0.0035	0.66	0.0647	0.0698	0.0460
Feedback Orientation	0.0034	0.64	0.0146	0.0091	0.0641
Proactive Personality	0.0059	1.12	0.0624	0.0651	0.0527
Expressed Humility	0.088	16.64	0.0735	0.0720	0.0808
Achievement Striving	0.0127	2.4	0.1717	0.0908	0.0528
Instrumental Motive	0.0028	0.53	-0.0091	-0.0076	0.0587
Ego Motive	0.0011	0.21	0.0490	0.0459	0.0479
Image Motive	0.0037	0.7	-0.0659	-0.0798	0.0453
Coach-Coachee Relationship	0.0259	4.9	0.1024	0.1171	0.1084
Feedback Seeking Environment	0.0163	3.08	-0.0232	-0.0359	0.0892
Psychological Safety	0.0093	1.76	-0.0878	-0.1301	0.0605
Feedback Quality	0.0152	2.87	-0.0625	-0.1013	0.0939
Feedback Delivery	0.0272	5.14	0.1106	0.1640	0.0739
Feedback Seeking Behaviors	0.1006	19.02	0.1655	0.1566	0.0835
Feedback Receptivity	0.1093	20.66	0.3003	0.2675	0.0671
Transfer of Coaching	0.1043	19.72	0.2879	0.2512	0.0645
$R^2 = .5290$					

Feedback receptivity exhibits the strongest relationship with adaptability, followed by feedback seeking and transfer of coaching.

The next analysis I ran included coachability as an aggregate of feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and transfer of coaching. Table 18 details these findings.

Table 18.

*Relative Contribution of Predictors, with Coachability as an Aggregate, of Adaptability*

Variable / Scale	Raw Relative Weights	Relative Weights as a % of R	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	SE
Learning Goal Orientation	0.0030	0.57	0.0610	0.0658	0.0458
Feedback Orientation	0.0036	0.68	-0.0063	-0.0040	0.0633
Proactive Personality	0.0055	1.05	0.0625	0.0652	0.0527
Expressed Humility	0.1380	26.26	0.0691	0.0677	0.0781
Achievement Striving	0.0133	2.53	0.1758	0.0929	0.0524
Instrumental Motive	0.0033	0.63	-0.0034	-0.0028	0.0586
Ego Motive	0.0014	0.27	0.0479	0.0449	0.0479
Image Motive	0.0037	0.7	-0.0634	-0.0769	0.0453
Coach-Coachee Relationship	0.0337	6.41	0.0853	0.0976	0.1073
Feedback Seeking Environment	0.0206	3.92	-0.0254	-0.0394	0.0891
Psychological Safety	0.0104	1.98	-0.0839	-0.1243	0.0599
Feedback Quality	0.0190	3.61	-0.0590	-0.0956	0.0937
Feedback Delivery	0.0323	6.15	0.1174	0.1741	0.0733
Employee Coachability	0.2379	45.26	0.7471	0.5988	0.0802
$R^2 = .5256$					

Clearly, coachability exhibits the strongest relationship with adaptability, followed by expressed humility and the coach-coachee relationship.

*Promotability.* In the first relative weights analysis, I included all predictors to determine their relative importance on promotability. In this analysis, I kept the coachability variables separate. Table 19 provides findings from this analysis.

Table 19.

*Relative Contribution of Predictors, with All Coachability Variables, of Promotability*

Variable / Scale	Raw Relative Weights	Relative Weights as a % of R	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	SE
Learning Goal Orientation	0.0009	0.18	0.0510	0.0329	0.0479
Feedback Orientation	0.0049	1.00	0.2106	0.0786	0.0668
Proactive Personality	0.0089	1.82	0.1670	0.1041	0.0549
Expressed Humility	0.1153	23.60	0.4323	0.2532	0.0842
Achievement Striving	0.0012	0.25	-0.0843	-0.0266	0.0550
Instrumental Motive	0.0017	0.35	-0.1173	-0.0585	0.0612
Ego Motive	0.0021	0.43	0.0964	0.0540	0.0500
Image Motive	0.0019	0.39	-0.0860	-0.0623	0.0472
Coach-Coachee Relationship	0.0286	5.85	0.2935	0.2008	0.1129
Feedback Seeking Environment	0.0144	2.95	-0.1827	-0.1694	0.0929
Psychological Safety	0.0077	1.58	0.0299	0.0265	0.0630
Feedback Quality	0.0134	2.74	-0.1369	-0.1326	0.0978
Feedback Delivery	0.0187	3.83	0.1247	0.1106	0.0770
Feedback Seeking Behaviors	0.1048	21.45	0.3030	0.1714	0.0871
Feedback Receptivity	0.1002	20.51	0.4129	0.2199	0.0699
Transfer of Coaching	0.0637	13.04	0.1543	0.0805	0.0672
$R^2 = .4885$					

Thus, expressed humility exhibits the strongest relationship with promotability, followed by feedback seeking behaviors and feedback receptivity.

The next analysis I ran included coachability as an aggregate of feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and transfer of coaching. Table 20 reports the findings from this analysis.

Table 20.

*Relative Contribution of Predictors, with Coachability as an Aggregate, of Promotability*

Variable / Scale	Raw Relative Weights	Relative Weights as a % of R	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	SE
Learning Goal Orientation	0.0012	0.25	0.0574	0.0371	0.0476
Feedback Orientation	0.0051	1.05	0.2099	0.0783	0.0658



Proactive Personality	0.0088	1.81	0.1687	0.1052	0.0548
Expressed Humility	0.1631	33.55	0.3972	0.2327	0.0812
Achievement Striving	0.0013	0.27	-0.1067	-0.0337	0.0546
Instrumental Motive	0.0018	0.37	-0.1194	-0.0596	0.0610
Ego Motive	0.0025	0.51	0.1014	0.0568	0.0498
Image Motive	0.0020	0.41	-0.0876	-0.0635	0.0471
Coach-Coachee Relationship	0.0368	7.57	0.2935	0.2008	0.1117
Feedback Seeking Environment	0.0173	3.56	-0.1833	-0.1699	0.0928
Psychological Safety	0.0091	1.87	0.0364	0.0322	0.0624
Feedback Quality	0.0165	3.39	-0.1416	-0.1372	0.0975
Feedback Delivery	0.0225	4.63	0.1284	0.1139	0.0763
Employee Coachability	0.1982	40.77	0.9157	0.4389	0.0834
$R^2 = .4862$					

Clearly, coachability exhibits the strongest relationship with promotability, followed by expressed humility and the coach-coachee relationship.

**Confirmatory factor analysis.** Due to the strong, positive relationships evidenced between expressed humility, coachability, and the coachability outcomes, I ran an additional CFA to examine whether expressed humility forms an additional indicator of employee coachability. Thus, in this CFA, I tested feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, transfer of coaching, and expressed humility as indicators of employee coachability as a second order factor. Evaluation of the CFA output demonstrates poor fit. Thus, I conclude employee coachability is a second order factor indicated only by feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and transfer of coaching. Table 21 reports the fit statistics from this CFA.

Table 21.

*Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) Fit Indices for Coachability*

Variable / Scale	CFI	TLI	RMSEA	SRMR
Coachability	.874	.861	.100	.074

### Discussion

Volatile, complex, and ambiguous work environments prompt organizational shifts from vertical, hierarchical structures to horizontal, flatter, more collaborative-based structures (Burns & Stalker, 1961; Miles & Snow, 1992; Walker & Lorsch, 1968). These shifts warrant organizational transitions from evaluative-focused performance appraisal systems to development-oriented performance management systems (Pulakos et al., 2015). These large-scale transformations require continuous employee development and improvement across organizational levels to adapt to the constantly changing dynamics of work in today's performance-driven environment (Joo et al., 2012; Ozkan, 2008; Pulakos et al., 2015). As a result, organizational development (OD) practices for employee development rapidly increased throughout the past decade (Joo, 2005; Noe et al., 2014). While organizations utilize a variety of employee development strategies (e.g., mentoring, formal education, counseling), many of these practices do not fully accomplish the intended goals of transfer of learning and sustained behavioral change (Joo et al., 2012). These shortcomings spearheaded the introduction of more individualized, engaging, ongoing, and context-specific training (Bacon & Spear, 2003).

One such individualized training intervention – organizational coaching – proves vital for facilitating continuous behavioral change, development, and performance improvement across employees (Joo et al., 2012; Ladyshevsky, 2010). Empirical examinations on organizational coaching demonstrate these practices facilitate employee learning, drive sustained behavioral change, accelerate development, and increase performance (Joo et al., 2012; Ladyshevsky, 2010; Park et al., 2008). Researchers also regard organizational coaching as an instrumental avenue through which organizations can create and sustain competitive advantages (Pousa & Mathieu, 2015). As such, the use of coaching as a means of enhancing employee development and

performance within organizations increased substantially in recent years (Theeboom et al., 2014).

Mirroring the boom in coaching practices within organizations, academic interest in coaching grew considerably over the past 35 years (Ellinger & Bostrom, 1999; Hagen, 2012; Joo et al., 2012; Matsuo, 2018). Research findings support the value of coaching from within the organization as a driver of organizational success (Ellinger, 2013; Liu & Batt, 2010). Researchers, like practitioners, though, often examine coaching in isolation, focusing on the coach without considering the impact those being coached (i.e., coachees) have on the success of the coaching process (Gregory & Levy, 2010; Shannahan et al., 2013a; Shannahan et al., 2013b; Theeboom et al., 2014). Coachees are active, rather than passive, participants in the coaching process who can either enhance or undermine the effectiveness of coaching practices (Baker, 2007; Gregory & Levy, 2010; London & Smither, 2002). Coachees' ability to seek, receive, act on, and change behavior based on feedback provided during coaching interactions (i.e., their coachability) remains a critical, yet understudied factor in the coaching equation. A targeted examination of employee coachability allows for a more in-depth understanding of the coaching dynamic, which provides insights through which organizations may optimize coaching practices.

I, therefore, explored employee coachability. A more complete understanding of employee coachability and its interplay with managerial coaching provides researchers and practitioners with insights necessary to optimize organizational coaching practices. These findings also offer avenues through which organizations may establish a competitive advantage. Specifically, I aimed to: (1) highlight the importance of coachability for both research and practice, (2) pinpoint the personality traits that underlie coachable employees, (3) determine the behaviors and motives of coachable individuals, (4) understand the impact of managerial

coaching behaviors on employee coachability, and (5) examine individual outcomes driven by employee coachability. In the following sections I detail the findings from this dissertation. I also provide theoretical, methodological, and statistical reasoning for the results. Additionally, I discuss limitations, future research directions, and practical implications.

### **Individual Differences Underlying Coachability**

The first group of hypotheses focus on the individual differences underlying coachability. These hypotheses state learning goal orientation (Hypothesis I), feedback orientation (Hypothesis II), proactive personality (Hypothesis III), expressed humility (Hypothesis IV), and achievement striving (Hypothesis V) positively relate to an employee's coachability. The data do not support hypotheses I, II, II, or V. However, the data demonstrate expressed humility positively relates to an employee's coachability. Thus, these findings provide support for hypothesis IV. In the following sections, I provide theoretical, methodological, and statistical reasoning for the results.

**Learning goal orientation.** I hypothesized individuals with LGOs are more coachable (Hypothesis I). The data does not support this assertion. To explain potential reasoning for these results, I further examined the data, the scales used to measure this construct, and employed additional analyses to empirically support my suggestions. Individuals with LGOs desire to learn for the sake of learning and personal development. As such, research demonstrates individuals possessing higher trait levels of LGO view feedback as more useful (Brett & Atwater, 2001), seek more feedback (Anseel et al., 2015), and are more likely to implement received feedback to improve (Heslin & Latham, 2004). Thus, I suggested individuals with LGOs are more coachable as a result of their enacted behaviors (i.e., feedback seeking, receptivity, and transfer of coaching). However, the data shows a negligible, non-significant relationship with coachability. Furthermore, I examined the relationship between LGO and the individual indicators of coachability (i.e.,

feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and transfer of coaching) to assess whether it exerts a greater impact on a specific component. To do this, I evaluated the bivariate correlations. Examination of these correlations shows the same pattern of results; trivial, non-significant relationships. Additionally, I ran multiple regression analyses including all individual differences proposed to underlie coachability and each coachability behavior. These results show the same pattern; LGO does not relate to any coachability behavior.

These findings may have emerged for a variety of reasons. For example, individuals with a LGO may seek feedback from sources outside of their manager to receive the information necessary for development and improving performance such as voluntarily attending a training session at a National Sales Meeting to improve sales closing skills. These individuals possess a high LGO and exhibit coachability. However, managers rated coachability of their employees solely based on observation (and recall of past interactions). Thus, the possibility exists highly coachable employees seek, internalize (i.e., demonstrate receptivity), and implement information to drive their development and improve performance from sources outside of their direct manager. As such, managers may not capture these coachability behaviors in their ratings.

Another reason for these unexpected findings may stem from the LGO scale and items utilized. Evaluation of the items used to capture LGO demonstrate they tap into an individual's trait level learning goal orientation. However, researchers find state (vs. trait) goal orientations exert stronger relationships with distal outcomes, such as learning and performance (Payne, et al., 2007). Thus, an assessment of state goal orientation (vs. trait goal orientation) may provide greater insights regarding the factors underlying employee coachability, as the coachability behaviors seem more distal in nature. Utilizing a trait goal orientation scale limited the ability to understand how one's trait level LGO manifests at work (i.e., state LGO).

Additionally, the proposed model of employee coachability may benefit from a mediating variable linking the individual differences and coachability behaviors. For example, researchers demonstrate motivation to learn, which indicates an individual's desire and willingness to exert effort toward development, mediates the relationship between individual differences (e.g., achievement striving, proactive personality) and engagement in developmental activities (e.g., feedback seeking) (Major, Turner, & Fletcher, 2006). Inclusion of an additional path in the coachability model makes theoretical sense, as unmotivated individuals, regardless of their standing on specific traits, will not direct their effort toward development and performance improvement (Major et al., 2006). As such, this may explain why LGO did not positively, significantly relate to employee coachability.

Lastly, the strong, positive leniency biases lead to data invariance. Specifically, LGO demonstrates extreme invariance, such that the median LGO score is 5.4. I report the median because it provides a better assessment of the central tendency than the mean, as outliers do not exert as great an effect on this value (Tabachnick, Fidell, & Ullman, 2007). Thus, this lack of variance provides a plausible explanation for the data not supporting the proposed positive relationship between LGO and coachability, as the ability to differentiate between respondents becomes severely limited.

**Feedback orientation.** Following LGO, I proposed FBO positively relates to an employee's coachability (Hypothesis II). Examination of the results from the SEM analysis do not support this hypothesis. Thus, I conducted additional analyses to explain why these results emerged. I analyzed the bivariate correlations between FBO and each coachability indicator, as well as FBO and employee coachability as a whole. Evaluation of these relationships show FBO significantly, positively relates to feedback seeking behaviors, but does not relate to feedback

receptivity or transfer of coaching. However, when examining coachability as a whole, the data shows FBO significantly, positively relates to employee coachability. Findings from a simple regression analysis show FBO explains 2% of the variance in coachability. Thus, the inclusion of additional variables (e.g., expressed humility, LGO, PPS) in the prediction of coachability (i.e., structural, path model) masks this variance, leading to the non-significant findings.

Furthermore, I ran a multiple regression analysis regressing feedback seeking on all traits collected. Results from this analysis show FBO and expressed humility positively, significantly relate to feedback seeking behaviors. These findings signal FBO may not relate to coachability as a whole, but exclusively the feedback seeking dimension, especially when considered in conjunction with additional predictors. Still, the strong, positive leniency bias limits the ability to derive relationships between variables in this study. Thus, this methodological issue may explain why the data do not support this hypothesis (Hypothesis II), as the FBO responses indicate an extreme positive leniency bias.

**Proactive personality.** I proposed PPS positively relates to an employee's coachability (Hypothesis III). The data do not support this hypothesis. I ran additional analyses (i.e., simple and multiple regressions) and found PPS does not relate to coachability nor any of its components. Evaluation of the PPS scale shows most items speak to a general proactive orientation across all contexts. Thus, the items do not exclusively tap into proactivity at work. Researchers suggest contextualizing personality measures by adding "at work" to items provides greater predictive power when investigating organizational phenomena (Ryan & Ployhart, 2014; Ployhart, Schmitt, & Tippins, 2017). Thus, these findings may stem from methodological issues regarding the nature of items utilized to assess proactive personality.

Furthermore, I argued individuals with proactive personalities are coachable because they actively scan the environment for opportunities, show initiative, take action, and persevere until they effectuate change. Research also finds highly proactive individuals are more likely to seek feedback (Seibert et al., 2001; Thompson, 2005). Based on this, I hypothesized proactive individuals demonstrate receptivity to feedback as it provides them with the necessary information to create desired change. However, if these individuals do not believe they need to develop or improve performance, their proactive personality likely will not manifest into feedback seeking behaviors, feedback receptivity, or subsequent transfer of that coaching/feedback. Thus, they may exhibit proactivity, albeit for purposes unrelated to development or performance improvement (e.g., OCBs). Previous research provides support for these suggestions. Specifically, Major and colleagues (2006) found proactive personality positively relates to motivation to learn. In turn, this leads to engagement in developmental activities. This explains why proactive personality may not directly relate to an employee's coachability; employees must not only be proactive, but their proactivity must be directed toward development and performance improvement.

**Expressed humility.** While the data do not support Hypotheses I-III, the data show expressed humility positively relates to an employee's coachability (Hypothesis IV). This aligns with expectations. Thus, the data shows individuals possessing and expressing humility are more coachable. Research indicates humble individuals (i.e., those expressing humility) seek more feedback in order to see themselves more accurately through interactions with others (e.g., seeking feedback from a coach) (Anseel et al., 2015; MacDonald et al., 2013). A component of expressed humility – teachability – manifests in individuals who display an openness to learning, feedback, and new ideas from others. As such, these individuals display receptiveness to others' feedback, ideas, and advice (i.e., receptivity) (Owens et al., 2013). Furthermore, research finds humble



individuals are less likely to discount, devalue, or distort feedback provided by coaches; again, they exhibit receptivity (Dotlich & Cairo, 2003). The last factor of expressed humility – the appreciation of others’ strengths and contributions – speaks to the implementation of feedback component of coachability. Humble individuals regard others (e.g., coaches) as valuable resources for learning. Those expressing humility behaviorally demonstrate their appreciation of others’ contributions. As such, they implement the received feedback to affirm these sentiments, similar to the mutual obligation evidenced in high-quality LMX relationships (Graen & Scandura, 1987). In summary, the finding that expressed humility underlies employee coachability aligns with theory and expectations.

**Achievement striving.** Achievement striving forms the last individual difference I hypothesized underlies employee coachability (Hypothesis V). The data do not support this assertion. To understand these findings, I examined the bivariate correlations between achievement striving and each coachability component. Evaluation of the correlations show achievement striving significantly, positively relates to feedback seeking and transfer of coaching. However, achievement striving does not relate to feedback receptivity. The CFA I ran shows feedback receptivity (and feedback seeking) as a strong indicator of employee coachability, evidenced by its 0.91 factor loading. In contrast, the CFA displays transfer of coaching as the weakest of the three indicators (i.e., factor loading of 0.75). Thus, because achievement striving does not relate to the feedback receptivity component of employee coachability, it follows achievement striving does not relate to employee coachability. Furthermore, when assessing the results from the simple regression and SEM analyses together, it appears other predictors (i.e., FBO, expressed humility) account for the variance achievement striving explains in coachability, when examined in combination. I explored this more through a series of multiple regression

analyses where I regressed each coachability behavior on the individual differences. Findings show achievement striving does not significantly relate to any coachability behavior. In sum, it seems evident achievement striving does not demonstrate a positive relationship with employee coachability, as other predictors account for its variance (i.e., more strongly relate to employee coachability).

Additionally, similar to the PPS and employee coachability findings, it appears the general nature of the achievement striving items may explain the lack of relationship between achievement striving and coachability (Ryan & Ployhart, 2014; Ployhart, Schmitt, & Tippins, 2017). Contextualizing these items provides a better indicator of one's level of achievement striving in the workplace. As such, this contextual addition to the items may lead to findings reflecting expectations; achievement striving positively relates to employee coachability. Nevertheless, the general nature of the achievement striving items may explain the finding that achievement striving does not positively relate to an employee's coachability.

In summary, the data shows expressed humility positively relates to an employee's coachability (Hypothesis IV). However, the data does not support Hypotheses I, II, III, or V. To explain how these results may have emerged, I offer various theoretical, methodical, and computational suggestions.

### **Feedback Motives**

This set of hypotheses center on the feedback seeking motives related to an employee's coachability. These hypotheses state the instrumental feedback seeking motive positively relates to an employee's coachability (Hypothesis VI). In contrast, the ego (Hypothesis VII) and image (Hypothesis VIII) defense and enhancement motives negatively relate to an employee's

coachability. The data do not support these hypotheses. I explain these findings in the ensuing sections.

**Instrumental Feedback Seeking Motive.** To further understand why the instrumental feedback seeking motive does not positively relate to an employee's coachability, I examined the bivariate correlations between employee coachability, its components, and the instrumental motive. The correlations show the instrumental feedback seeking motive positively, significantly relates to an employee's coachability. Furthermore, the instrumental motive positively, significantly relates to feedback seeking and transfer of coaching behaviors. However, the instrumental motive does not relate to feedback receptivity. Building off previous literature (e.g., Ashford et al., 2003; Ashford & Tsui, 1991), I hypothesized the instrumental motive drives coachability not only because individuals holding an instrumental motive seek feedback in order to grow and improve, but because literature suggests they also demonstrate greater receptivity to feedback (Ashford, 1986; Tuckey et al., 2002). Thus, as individuals view feedback as instrumental to growth, development, and performance improvement, it follows they not only seek, but exhibit receptivity to the feedback. Otherwise, the informational component which proves vital to implementing the feedback/coaching becomes lost, hindering individuals' ability to transfer the feedback/coaching. However, the data do not support this proposition. Examination of the items administered to assess the instrumental feedback seeking motive shows they almost exclusively focus on whether individuals seek feedback with an instrumental motive. No mention of feedback receptivity exists in these items. Thus, while theory and empirical findings point to the instrumental feedback seeking motive impacting feedback seeking and receptivity, the nature of the items used to assess this motive limit the ability to draw links to the feedback receptivity component of employee coachability. This explains the lack of support for Hypothesis VI.

Exploring this finding more, I ran a multiple regression analysis. In this analysis, I examined the impact of the instrumental feedback seeking motive and expressed humility on employee coachability. I ran this analysis for a few reasons. Expressed humility exhibits a strong, positive effect on coachability. In the SEM model, I included expressed humility and the instrumental motive as predictors of employee coachability. Furthermore, assessment of the scale items shows expressed humility may slightly overlap with the instrumental motive. For example, the expressed humility scale asks if “This person actively seeks feedback, even if it’s critical” and “This person is open to the advice of others.” These items tap into feedback seeking with an instrumental motive and feedback receptivity more generally. Thus, I ran a hierarchical multiple regression analysis to determine if expressed humility accounts for the variance the instrumental feedback seeking motive explains in employee coachability. Findings show the instrumental feedback motive positively, significantly relates to employee coachability. However, after I introduced expressed humility, the relationship between the instrumental motive and employee coachability became non-significant. On the other hand, expressed humility does positively, significantly relate to employee coachability, even with the instrumental motive included in the analysis. In summary, this suggests expressed humility may not only drive employee coachability, but also account for the variance explained by the instrumental feedback seeking motive. In other words, individuals expressing humility may not only be coachable as a result of their enacted behaviors but also due to the motive with which they seek and receive feedback. All in all, this explains why the instrumental feedback seeking motive does not positively relate to employee coachability.

**Ego and image defense and enhancement feedback seeking motives.** Hypotheses VII and VIII propose the ego and image defense and enhancement motives negatively relate to an

employee's coachability. The data do not support these hypotheses. However, while non-significant, the data shows a negative trend between the ego and image defense and enhancement motives and employee coachability. Additionally, I examined the bivariate correlations between each coachability component and the ego and image defense and enhancement motives. These show the same pattern of results; non-significance, but negative directionality from the feedback motives to the coachability components. Thus, these non-significant findings may stem more from methodological than theoretical issues (i.e., strong, positive leniency biases and data invariance resulting from careless responding).

These methodological issues and biases may result from the nature of the data collection process. More specifically, the use of self-report measures to capture coachee feedback motives. Coaches rated coachee feedback seeking behaviors. Thus, they rated whether employees sought feedback, based on observation and recall of previous interactions. Similarly, coaches rated their perception of coachee feedback receptivity and transfer of coaching behaviors. Research shows ratings (e.g., on a survey) relate to behavioral memories of instances (e.g., feedback seeking behaviors) when individuals can easily access such memories. However, a delay between the behavior (e.g., feedback seeking) and rating of those behaviors leads to raters relying on global impressions of the individual rather than specific memories of an instance (Feldman, 1981; Sanchez & De La Torre, 1996). In the context of this data collection process, this means coaches (i.e., raters) may rely on global impressions of coachees and/or their behaviors (e.g., feedback seeking, receptivity, and transfer of coaching) to rate the extent to which each coachee engaged in these, while neglecting specific information, such as the motive or purpose driving these behaviors. So, while the feedback seeking and receptivity items utilized in this dissertation tap into whether one seeks and receives feedback with an instrumental motive, it follows that coaches may rely on

global impressions of the behaviors. Thus, any coachee who sought feedback and demonstrated receptivity (per the perception of the coach), regardless of motive, may receive favorable ratings for these behaviors. This may explain why coachees who indicate holding an ego or image defense and enhancement feedback motive received more favorable feedback seeking and receptivity ratings than expected. While the direction of the relationships between the ego and image defense and enhancement motives and employee coachability trend in the expected direction (i.e., negative), these methodological concerns and information processing biases may explain the non-significant findings.

### **Individual Differences and Feedback Motives on Employee Coachability**

This grouping of hypotheses proposes the instrumental feedback seeking motive mediates the relationship between learning goal orientation (Hypothesis IX), feedback orientation (Hypothesis X), proactive personality (Hypothesis XI), expressed humility (Hypothesis XII), achievement striving (Hypothesis XIII), and an employee's coachability. Examination of the path model and regression output demonstrate the instrumental motive does not relate to an employee's coachability. Furthermore, of the traits examined, only expressed humility relates to employee coachability. Thus, the data do not support these hypotheses. Baron and Kenny (1986) established four necessary conditions to proceed with mediated regression analyses. The four assumptions: (1) X significantly relates to Y; (2) X significantly relates to M; (3) M significantly relates to Y; and (4) controlling for M reduces or completely diminishes the previously significant relationship between X and Y. In other words, (1) the predictor (e.g., LGO) must significantly relate to the outcome (e.g., employee coachability); (2) the predictor (e.g., LGO) must significantly relate to the mediator (e.g., instrumental feedback motive); (3) the mediator (e.g., instrumental feedback motive) must significantly relate the outcome (e.g., employee coachability); and (4) controlling

for the mediator (e.g., instrumental feedback motive) reduces or completely diminishes the significant relationship between the predictor (e.g., LGO) and outcome (e.g., employee coachability). All four of these assumptions must be met. However, the data shows only expressed humility (i.e., X) relates to employee coachability (i.e., Y). Thus, in a situation where the instrumental feedback seeking motive did relate to employee coachability, it follows expressed humility is the only trait that may relate to employee coachability through that motive. Nonetheless, the instrumental feedback seeking motive (i.e., M) does not relate to employee coachability (i.e., Y). This eliminates the possibility of any mediating effect. In sum, the data do not meet the assumptions necessary for mediated regression. As a result, the data do not support any of these hypotheses; the instrumental feedback seeking motive does not mediate the relationships between the proposed individual differences and employee coachability. Furthermore, this highlights that expressed humility directly relates to an employee's coachability.

To further explore the relationships between the individual differences and the instrumental motive, I ran a multiple regression analysis. Results from this analysis show FBO and AS positively, significantly relates to the instrumental feedback motive, whereas PPS negatively, significantly relates to the instrumental feedback motive. LGO and expressed humility demonstrate no relationship with the instrumental feedback motive.

As expected, FBO and AS relate to the instrumental feedback motive. Individuals with FBOs inherently seek and demonstrate receptivity to feedback, guided by an instrumental feedback seeking motive. Research indicates individuals holding strong FBOs prove more likely to value, seek, and implement feedback to aid in personal growth and performance improvement (Anseel et al., 2015; Linderbaum & Levy, 2010). Accordingly, it follows an instrumental motive drives these individuals (i.e., Anseel et al., 2015), as they view feedback as a resource necessary for

development and improvement. Similarly, the data shows an achievement orientation (i.e., achievement striving) underscores the instrumental motive such that individuals concerned with achieving and striving toward the attainment of goals view feedback as a means through which to aid personal development, improve performance, and goal attainment (Krasman, 2010). However, whether they seek, internalize, and implement this feedback remains to be seen. In sum, FBO and AS align with expectations and positively relate to the instrumental feedback motive.

Interestingly, the multiple regression analysis shows PPS negatively, significantly relates to the instrumental feedback motive. This seems contrary to expectations. Thus, I examined the bivariate correlation between PPS and the instrumental motive. Results show a positive, significant relationship. Next, I conducted a hierarchical multiple regression analysis to further understand the unexpected findings from the initial multiple regression analysis. I included FBO in the regression first, as it exhibited the strongest relationship with the instrumental motive. The output from this analysis shows FBO positively, significantly relates to the instrumental motive, but PPS negatively relates. Thus, this suggests a negative suppression effect (i.e., addition of a predictor changes the sign of the standardized regression coefficient) (Paulhus et al., 2004). Overall, the data shows, when examined independently, PPS positively, significantly impacts the instrumental feedback motive. Based on this finding, the theoretical reasoning I proposed remains sound. To explicate this, proactive individuals focus available resources on achieving the high goals they set (Crant, 1996). Accordingly, they perceive feedback from coaches as an informational resource which can provide direction toward achieving behavioral change and goal attainment.

A potential reason for the unexpected findings between LGO and the instrumental feedback motive stems from the scales and items utilized. Evaluation of the items used to capture



LGO tap into an individual's trait level learning goal orientation. However, researchers find state (vs. trait) goal orientations exert stronger relationships with distal outcomes, such as learning and performance (Payne et al., 2007). For example, a state goal orientation measure may provide a stronger link to an individual's learning and development. Furthermore, seeking feedback with an instrumental motive at work may facilitate this learning and development. However, based on the items collected in this study, the data only speaks to one's trait learning goal orientation.

Additionally, including a mediating variable from the individual differences underlying coachability, specifically LGO in this case, to the feedback motives and coachability behaviors may provide findings that align with expectations. For example, researchers demonstrate that motivation to learn, which indicates an individual's desire and willingness to exert effort toward development, mediates the relationship between individual differences (e.g., achievement striving, proactive personality) and engagement in developmental activities (e.g., feedback seeking) (Major, Turner, & Fletcher, 2006). Inclusion of an additional path in the coachability model makes theoretical sense, as unmotivated individuals, regardless of their standing on specific traits, will not direct their effort toward development and performance improvement (Major et al., 2006). As such, this may explain why the individual differences (e.g., LGO) did not positively, significantly relate to the instrumental feedback motive or employee coachability.

### **Coaching Behaviors and Themes**

The next category of hypotheses focuses on the managerial coaching behaviors/themes related to an employee's coachability. These hypotheses posit the following: perceived managerial support (i.e., psychologically safe environment [Hypothesis XIV] and feedback seeking supportive environment [Hypothesis XV]), coach-coachee relationship (Hypothesis XVI), and feedback (i.e., feedback quality and delivery [Hypothesis XVII]) positively relate to an employee's coachability.

The data do not support these hypotheses. These findings suggest employee coachability operates independently of coaching behaviors/themes. To dive deeper into this, I ran a series of moderated regression analyses. In one set of analyses, I examined the interaction between employee coachability and each of the five managerial coaching behaviors/themes and its impact on each coachability behavior (i.e., feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and transfer of coaching). Findings from these analyses demonstrate no positive, significant interaction effects of managerial coaching behaviors and employee coachability on the coachability behaviors. However, employee coachability positively, significantly relates to each coachability behavior. This supports the assertion that employee coachability operates independently of coaching, such that employee coachability drives an individuals' feedback seeking, receptivity, and implementation of coaching; coaching behaviors do not. These findings suggest that regardless of one's direct manager/coach, the nature of feedback provided, and environment created, coachable employees still seek, receive, and implement feedback. This aligns with the conceptualization of employee coachability as an individual difference; coachable individuals seek more, receive and internalize, and implement feedback based on their inherent nature. Specifically, coachable individuals exhibit coachability regardless of the circumstances around them. For example, a coachable employee seeks feedback from his or her direct manager regarding a sales presentation he or she conducted. This manager uses a harsh tone (i.e., poor feedback delivery) and provides feedback lacking informational value (i.e., low quality feedback). However, because of the high coachability of this employee, he or she listens and demonstrates receptivity to this feedback. Understanding the poor quality of this feedback, the coachee then seeks feedback from a different manager or peer who observed their performance during the same presentation. As a result, the coachee receives actionable feedback and subsequently implements it to improve his or her performance. In this situation, the coachee

did not receive feedback in a proper manner (i.e., poor delivery by the manager) or of high quality (i.e., lacking informational value). Regardless, this coachee sought more information, internalized it, and implemented it in order to improve. Thus, despite the poor manager, this employee still exhibited coachability. As such, the employee's coachability operated independently of the managerial coaching behaviors. This highlights the absence of relationships found between the managerial coaching behaviors/themes and employee coachability.

### **Coachability Outcomes**

The last set of hypotheses propose the outcomes driven by an employee's coachability. These hypotheses suggest a positive relationship exists between an employee's coachability and job performance (Hypothesis XVIII) and adaptability (Hypothesis XIX). The data strongly supports both of these hypotheses. In summary, employee coachability drives employee job performance and adaptability.

To explain the emergence of these findings, coachable employees exhibit increased feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, and transfer of coaching feedback. Thus, the feedback coachees receive helps them gain greater clarity about what others expect of them and how to effectively perform their tasks in the organization (Whitaker et al., 2007). This greater understanding increases individuals' ability to meet and exceed expectations regarding their performance (Anseel et al., 2015). Furthermore, implementation of the received feedback elevates current KSAs, which enable greater effectiveness and higher performance. As such, coachable employees achieve elevated levels of job performance.

The adaptability findings emerged for a similar reason. In the face of uncertain or unfamiliar situations, coachable employees seek feedback, internalize it, and implement it. This feedback provides increased role, process, and goal clarity (Sawyer, 1992; Whitaker et al., 2007),

which facilitates employees' ability to adjust quickly, thereby being more agile and adaptable. Consequently, evidenced by the findings of this dissertation, employee coachability drives adaptability.

### **Research Questions**

RQ1 poses the question: Which managerial coaching factor exhibits the strongest relationship with employee coachability? To assess this research question, I ran a multiple regression analysis. After this, I conducted a relative weights analysis to determine which managerial coaching factor (i.e., coach-coachee relationship, nature of feedback [feedback delivery and feedback quality], perceived managerial support [psychological safety, feedback seeking supportive environment]) displays the strongest relationship with employee coachability. Results from the multiple regression analysis show the coach-coachee relationship as the only managerial coaching factor exhibiting a positive, significant relationship with employee coachability. Thus, when I examine the coaching behaviors and employee coachability in isolation (i.e., without any other factors, unlike in the SEM analysis), the coach-coachee relationship reaches significance. Correspondingly, the relative weights analysis demonstrates the coach-coachee relationship exhibits the strongest relationship with employee coachability. This means, of all managerial coaching behaviors/themes examined, the quality of the coach-coachee relationship impacts employee coachability most. More specifically, high-quality coach-coachee relationships foster employee coachability. These findings mirror those from the leader-member exchange (LMX) literature, such that high-quality relationships lead to managers providing additional time and resources to those with whom they possess high-quality relationships (Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012). In the context of coach-coachee relationships and coachability, these findings may indicate coaches provide additional and more effective feedback to those with

whom they hold high-quality relationships. In turn, this prompts coachees with high-quality relationships to reciprocate (i.e., mutual obligation) by seeking more feedback, being receptive, and implementing this feedback. In other words, high-quality coach-coachee relationships impact the coachability of employees, evidenced by their enacted behaviors.

RQ2 poses: Does a high-quality coach-coachee relationship positively relate to the adoption of an instrumental feedback motive? While the leader-member exchange (LMX) literature provides evidence to support the relationship between a high-quality coach-coachee relationship and adoption of an instrumental feedback motive, the data says otherwise. Research suggests as the quality of the coach-coachee relationship improves, coaches and coachees feel a sense of mutual obligation (i.e., engaging in behaviors to help one another). For example, coaches may provide additional feedback, resources, or developmental opportunities to coachees with whom they hold high-quality relationships. In turn, coachees reciprocate by maximizing these opportunities, developing KSAs, and improving their performance (Chen et al., 2007). So, a coach may provide more feedback to a coachee whom he or she likes or respects. In turn, this coachee may then implement this feedback to improve his or her performance. However, the data do not support these suggestions. To further understand this, I explored the LMX literature in more depth. While managers may provide additional feedback or resources to those with whom they hold high-quality relationships, researchers suggest the mere presence of a high-quality coach-coachee (or LMX) relationship does not mean managers possess the willingness or ability to provide the constructive, informational feedback necessary for employee (e.g., coachee) development (Lonsdale, 2016). As such, coachees may not adopt an instrumental feedback motive if they know, through previous interactions, the manager does not provide constructive feedback, or do it well.

This may explain why the data shows a high-quality coach-coachee relationship does not relate to the adoption of an instrumental feedback motive.

RQ3 poses the question: Is employee coachability a stronger predictor of job performance than the quality of the coach-coachee relationship? Similar to RQ1, I ran a multiple regression followed by a relative weights analysis to evaluate this question. Findings from the multiple regression analysis demonstrate a positive, significant relationship between employee coachability and job performance. However, the coach-coachee relationship does not significantly relate to job performance. In line with these results, the relative weights analysis shows employee coachability as a much stronger contributor of job performance than the coach-coachee relationship. This mirrors the findings from Hypotheses XIV-XVII; employee coachability operates independently of managerial coaching behaviors. As such, employee coachability proves more important to an employee's job performance than the quality of the relationship with their coach. While a high-quality coach-coachee relationship may lead to managers providing additional resources (e.g., feedback) to coachees (Dulebohn et al., 2012), the onus rests on the coachee to internalize and implement this information. Thus, employee coachability forms a much more proximal link to performance as it influences whether individuals seek, demonstrate receptivity to, and subsequently implement feedback to drive development and achieve performance improvement. Taken together, employee coachability impacts job performance to a greater extent than the coach-coachee relationship.

RQ4 poses: Does employee coachability predict manager perceptions of employee promotability? The data shows employee coachability does predict manager perceptions of employee coachability. This finding may emerge for a few reasons. First, researchers suggest promotability ratings center not only on the ability but willingness of employees to perform at

higher job levels (De Pater, Van Vianen, Bechtoldt, & Klehe, 2009). So, while promotability decisions typically include assessments of job performance (Jawahar & Ferris, 2011), this speaks to employee coachability predicting promotability regardless of job performance, as promotability ratings stem from more than just an individual's performance (i.e., a willingness to improve and perform at higher levels). In line with this, seeking feedback and demonstrating receptivity signal a desire to develop and improve. These behaviors also prove crucial for achieving development and performance improvement (Anseel et al., 2015; Ashford et al., 2003). However, without implementing the received feedback, individuals cannot attain these desired outcomes. Thus, coachable employees better position themselves to develop current knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) and achieve higher performance, as they take action and implement the feedback. Furthermore, research shows the acquisition and improvement of a wide range of KSAs increases individuals' capacities for effective managerial action (London, 2002; De Pater et al., 2009). Thus, it follows that employees demonstrating coachability not only signal their willingness to develop and learn while in their current role (and future roles), but actually improve KSAs viewed as necessary for success in higher roles. As such, managers see coachable employees as more promotable.

To further explore this finding and provide support for my rationale, I ran a multiple regression analysis regressing promotability on job performance and employee coachability. I ran this multiple regression to determine whether job performance accounts for the impact of employee coachability when evaluating promotability. In other words, when considering both an employee's coachability and job performance, does employee coachability still predict promotability? The results indicate employee coachability and job performance both predict promotability. However, the R-squared value increased by over 30% when I introduced coachability into the regression

equation (vs. promotability regressed only on performance). Diving deeper into these findings, I ran a relative weights analysis to determine which factor contributes most strongly to promotability. Findings from this analysis show employee coachability demonstrates the strongest relationship (i.e., highest importance) with promotability relative to job performance. In sum, these results suggest employee coachability predicts manager perceptions of promotability. The data also shows employee coachability incrementally predicts promotability above and beyond job performance.

RQ5 poses: Which goal orientation (i.e., LGO, PPGO, PAGO) exhibits the strongest relationship with employee coachability? I ran a multiple regression and relative weights analysis to examine this question. Findings from these analyses show PAGO demonstrates a positive, significant relationship with employee coachability and acts as the most important indicator of coachability relative to the other goal orientations (i.e., LGO, PPGO). Examination of the construct, measure, and items used to assess PAGO may provide insight into this finding.

First, research suggests these goal orientations function independently of each other. This means individuals may hold all of these goal orientations. Correspondingly, research views goal orientations as a trait and a state (Cellar et al., 2011; Payne et al., 2007; Silver, Dwyer, & Alford, 2006). For example, an individual may inherently be learning goal oriented. However, in the face of work tasks, this same individual may adopt a performance orientation, such that demonstrating competence to others acts as a stronger motivator than the desire to learn for the sake of learning. Therefore, the possibility exists individuals inherently hold PAGOs but adopt a more favorable goal orientation (e.g., LGO) at work. The organization from which I collected data boasts a strong coaching culture. As such, employees understand the importance of continuous individual development and performance improvement. This strong coaching and learning culture may



influence employees to suppress their PAGO or behave in ways that align more closely with the organizational culture and values (e.g., demonstrate receptivity and subsequently implement coaching/feedback). Taken together, the data seem to exclusively reflect employee trait goal orientations while failing to capture employee orientations (i.e., state GO) during work situations within this organization. This may explain the counter-intuitive findings between PAGO and employee coachability.

An additional reason for these findings stems from the relationship between the goal orientation predictors. Specifically, the data and analyses indicate the presence of a classical suppression effect. Classical suppression effects refer to instances where the addition of a predictor in the multiple regression analysis increases the bivariate correlation (Paulhus, Robins, Trzesniewski, & Tracy, 2004). For instance, the relationship between PAGO and employee coachability does not reach significance. However, the addition of PPGO and LGO to the regression analysis increases the observed relationship between PAGO and employee coachability. This increased effect between PAGO and employee coachability reaches statistical significance. Thus, these predictors (i.e., PPGO, LGO) act as suppressors, which explains the relationship between PAGO and employee coachability.

RQ6 poses: What are the implications for coachability outcomes with different combinations of managerial coaching effectiveness and coachability (e.g., impact of high-quality coaching relationship and low coachability on performance)? To assess this question, I ran a series of moderated regression analyses to examine the interaction between employee coachability and the various managerial coaching behaviors/themes. Results from these analyses show employee coachability as the only significant predictor of performance. Interestingly, employee coachability

interacts with the coach-coachee relationship and feedback seeking supportive environments to decrease performance. These findings are counterintuitive.

Perhaps, highly coachable employees situated in high-quality coaching relationships achieve lower levels of performance for a few reasons. Researchers find managers hesitate to and avoid providing critical or constructive feedback to employees due to [perceived] interpersonal consequences (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). Thus, managers may refrain from providing critical feedback to employees with whom they hold high-quality relationships, even when the employee signals he or she genuinely wants the feedback through their enacted behaviors (e.g., feedback seeking). This happens because managers fear harming the relationship, the coachee, and/or their own image (Steelman & Rutkowski, 2004). As a result, the feedback provided by managers does not contain the informational value (i.e., constructive feedback) critical for achieving development and improved performance. This subsequently hinders employees' ability to achieve high levels of performance.

The finding regarding feedback seeking environment, employee coachability, and performance also differs from expectations. The possibility exists that as managers create feedback seeking environments, all employees for whom they assume responsibility seek more feedback (i.e., not just highly coachable employees who continuously and actively seek feedback). Thus, managers dedicate additional time to each direct report on his or her "team." For example, some managers from whom I collected data oversee up to 12 employees. If these managers support and promote feedback seeking, all of their coachees may seek additional feedback more often. As a result, managers lack adequate time to provide high-quality (i.e., specific, informational) feedback to each coachee. This impedes the ability of each coachee to achieve high levels of

performance, as they do not receive the quality of feedback necessary for improving requisite KSAs.

### **Additional Analyses**

To further examine the importance of predictors in relation to the endogenous (i.e., outcomes) variables in the path model, I conducted a series of relative weights analyses. Prior to running the relative weights analyses, I employed multiple regression to determine which variables significantly related to the endogenous variables. I offer explanations for these findings in the following sections.

First, I ran a multiple regression analysis examining the relationship between the proposed individual differences underlying coachability and the instrumental feedback seeking motive. These findings show feedback orientation, and achievement striving positively, significantly relate to the instrumental motive, whereas proactive personality negatively, significantly relates to the instrumental motive. Learning goal orientation and expressed humility do not relate to the instrumental motive. Correspondingly, the relative weights analysis indicates feedback orientation exhibits the strongest relationship with the instrumental motive, followed by achievement striving. Theory supports these findings. FBO refers to an individual's orientation or disposition around seeking, demonstrating receptivity to, and appreciating the value of feedback (London & Smither, 2002). As such, it follows an instrumental feedback motive drives these individuals, as they view feedback as a resource necessary for development and improvement (Anseel et al., 2015). Thus, relative to more distal, less contextualized individual differences (e.g., LGO, PPS), FBO provides a more direct link to an individual's intent or motive when faced with feedback. In sum, the finding suggesting FBO acts as the most important predictor of the instrumental feedback motive makes theoretical sense.

**Employee coachability and relative weights analysis.** Next, I ran a multiple regression and relative weights analysis to examine the relative contribution or importance of predictors of employee coachability. In this analysis, I included coachability traits, feedback motives, and the managerial coaching behaviors/themes. Results from the regression analysis demonstrate expressed humility as the only positive, significant predictor of employee coachability. This finding mirrors those from the SEM analysis. Correspondingly, results from the relative weights analysis show expressed humility as the strongest driver of employee coachability. Employee coachability centers on behaviors that facilitate individual development and performance improvement. Similarly, expressed humility connotes an individual's willingness to view themselves accurately, teachability (i.e., openness to learning, feedback, and new ideas from others), and an appreciation of others' strengths and contributions. Furthermore, expressed humility manifests in learning from others and, subsequently, the seeking of critical feedback (Owens et al., 2013). Relative to the other predictors, expressed humility more directly relates to an individual's coachability. For example, because expressed humility emerges in social contexts (e.g., at work), it seems a more proximal indicator of one's coachability than their standing on certain traits (e.g., trait LGO) or general motives/perceptions regarding feedback (e.g., instrumental feedback motive). Essentially, expressed humility captures an individual's state, or contextual, level of humility. As such, it makes sense expressed humility emerged as the most important predictor of employee coachability.

**Job performance and relative weights analysis.** Following this analysis, I examined the strongest predictors of job performance. After running multiple regressions, I ran two separate relative weights analyses. In the first, I included the coachability behaviors (i.e., feedback seeking, feedback receptivity, transfer of coaching) separately and evaluated their

impact on job performance. This analysis shows transfer of coaching and feedback seeking behaviors as the most important drivers of performance. Overall, these findings align with expectations. Research shows feedback seeking behaviors lead to higher levels of performance (Anseel et al., 2015), as it allows individuals to obtain the necessary information required for effective behavioral change and individual development. Correspondingly, without implementing the received feedback, individuals cannot possibly utilize the coaching to develop their KSAs and improve performance. Thus, transfer of coaching serves as the most direct link to performance.

Similar to these findings, the relative weights analysis which included employee coachability as a second order factor indicates employee coachability as the strongest contributor to job performance. Employee coachability refers to an individual difference influencing the degree to which employees are open to seeking, receiving, and using coaching feedback to drive individual development and improve performance. Thus, as an individual's level of coachability drives their feedback seeking, receptivity, and implementation behaviors. As such, it follows exhibition of these behaviors (i.e., coachability) drives performance.

**Adaptability and relative weights analysis.** I ran these same two analyses with adaptability and promotability as the outcome variables. Findings from the adaptability analyses mirror expectations. Feedback receptivity, feedback seeking, and transfer of coaching exert the strongest impact on adaptability. As a result of the feedback seeking and subsequent receptivity, employees experience increased role, process, and goal clarity (Sawyer, 1992; Whitaker et al., 2007). This positions them to effectively adjust their behaviors, especially in the face of unexpected circumstances and situations. Accordingly, if coachable individuals face uncertain or unfamiliar situations, a great likelihood exists they will seek feedback, internalize it, and

subsequently implement it. This facilitates quicker adjustments, agility, and adaptability (Anseel et al., 2015; Ashford, 1986). As such, the finding that the three coachability behaviors drive adaptability aligns with expectations. The relative weights analysis which included employee coachability as a second-order factor indicated by the coachability behaviors shows the same findings; employee coachability emerges as the most important predictor of adaptability.

**Promotability and relative weights analysis.** The analyses examining promotability as an outcome provide interesting findings. Results show expressed humility as the strongest driver of promotability, followed by feedback seeking and feedback receptivity. However, when I introduced coachability as a second-order factor in the relative weights analysis, results indicate employee coachability exerts the greatest impact on promotability. These results seem to stem from manager perceptions of coachees' desire to develop and improve. Additionally, promotability may result from managers perceptions of coachee readiness for higher level positions. Feedback seeking and demonstrating receptivity signal one's willingness and intent to develop and achieve high performance. These behaviors also prove crucial for achieving development and performance improvement (Anseel et al., 2015; Ashford et al., 2003). However, without implementing the received feedback, individuals cannot attain these desired outcomes. Thus, coachable employees better position themselves to develop current knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs). Furthermore, research shows the acquisition and improvement of a wide range of KSAs increases individuals' capacities for effective managerial action (London, 2002; De Pater et al., 2009). It follows that employees demonstrating coachability not only signal their willingness to develop and learn in their current role (and future roles), but actually improve KSAs viewed as necessary for success in higher roles. As such, this desire to develop and improve driven by one's coachability carries over to the new role. Correspondingly,

managers believe coachable employees possess the skills and motivation necessary for effectiveness in these higher-level roles. In summary, managers view coachable employees as more promotable.

### **Limitations/Future Directions**

The limitations of this dissertation center around the cross-sectional, survey-based design employed. Although I established temporal precedence in the measurement process by collecting data in two waves (i.e., predictors in the first wave and outcomes in the second), the cross-sectional nature of the study limits the ability to draw strong, causal inferences (Bowen & Wiersema, 1999; Kozlowski, 2015). Furthermore, survey-based methods constitute obtrusive measurement techniques as they require the cooperation of respondents. While this does not intrinsically qualify as a limitation, survey-based studies and the resulting findings rest on the assumption respondents do not contaminate the data (Hill, White, & Wallace, 2014). However, due to the self-report and perceptual nature of the ratings (i.e., subjectivity) inherent in survey-based studies, researchers suggest these methods prove susceptible to a multitude of response biases (e.g., social desirability, consistency, carelessness). These biases negatively impact the integrity of the data and subsequent findings (Schmitt, 1994; Spector, 1994; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee & Podsakoff, 2003; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Podsakoff, 2012).

In this dissertation, I utilized both self-report (i.e., individual differences, feedback motives) and perception-based (i.e., coaching behaviors/themes, coachability behaviors, coachability outcomes) measures to test the proposed model of employee coachability. The data collected indicates respondents contaminated the data, evidenced by the strong, positive leniency biases in both coach and coachee responses (see Figures 3a-5b). Additionally, the long-string, or invariant responding, analyses I ran suggest respondents engaged in careless responding. These

biases lead to a lack of variance across responses, which limits confidence in the observed relationships between variables. As such, the survey-based method utilized to collect data and test the model of employee coachability serves as a limitation of this study.

Due to the widespread limitations associated with cross-sectional and survey-based methods in general, I suggest alternative measurement approaches that may produce more reliable data and findings. The use of sociometric badges forms a technologically advanced and unobtrusive measurement technique researchers may consider utilizing to improve the measurement of psychological phenomena (e.g., employee coachability). Sociometric badges, which come in the form of employee ID badges, continuously and automatically collect data on individuals' behavior. For example, sociometric badges capture tone of voice, body language, how often and with whom individuals interact, non-linguistic social signals (e.g., excitement, interest), and physiological indicators (e.g., energy levels, individual flow states) (Olguín, Waber, Kim, Mohan, Ara, & Pentland, 2008; Pentland, 2015). This method allows for the measurement of the same phenomena as survey-based methods. Yet, advanced methods such as sociometric badges provide more accurate measurements because of the continuous, dynamic nature of the data collection. More specifically, survey-based measures capture a snapshot of an individual's characteristics (e.g., personality, individual differences). In contrast, as sociometric badges continuously and automatically collect data on individuals across time and contexts, a more realistic picture of their nature emerges (Olguín et al., 2008). Additionally, these advanced methods remove self-report ratings and perception from measurement, eliminating the existence of human biases (e.g., leniency, social desirability) that distort the integrity of data and subsequent findings.



In the context of this dissertation, I posit these advanced methods provide avenues through which researchers may better understand employee coachability. For example, the data I collected does not support the individual differences I proposed underlie an employee's coachability. However, I believe these findings stem more from methodological than theoretical reasons. The use of sociometric badges alleviates these issues. Researchers demonstrate individual differences manifest in behavior, such as the way individuals speak, move, interact, and emote. As sociometric badges capture these behaviors, research indicates sociometric badges as an effective method through which to capture individual differences (Olguín et al., 2008).

Regarding employee coachability, these badges may provide more accurate and realistic assessments of individuals' characteristics and motives (e.g., LGO, PPS, instrumental motive) than self-report measures. For example, based on the tone an individual uses when asking for feedback, or the duration of the feedback discussion, we may infer an employee's feedback motive (e.g., longer feedback discussions indicate an employee asked for constructive feedback, aligned with the instrumental motive). Similarly, the metrics (e.g., movement, tone of voice, body language) captured by sociometric badges may offer more reliable estimates of individuals' coachability behaviors. For example, researchers may infer an individual's receptivity to feedback based on the tone of voice with which they respond to the feedback provided or their body language when faced with constructive feedback (e.g., defensive posture). Likewise, feedback seeking behaviors may be assessed through the frequency with which an employee travels to his or her manager's office after a performance episode (e.g., sales call, presentation). Additionally, to capture coaching behaviors, such as the coach-coachee relationship, examination of the frequency and duration of interactions between the coach and coachee may indicate the

quality of the relationship. In sum, I suggest utilization of sociometric badges provides a more effective method through which to capture individual differences underlying coachability, coachability behaviors, coaching behaviors, and, as a whole, employee coachability.

Additional methods researchers may use to further understand employee coachability are natural language processing (NLP) and, more specifically, topic modeling. Current traditional methods, such as survey-based approaches, require respondents to translate their mental state into a response format (Kjell, Kjell, Garcia, & Sikström, 2019). For example, I asked employees to assess the quality of the relationship they hold with their coach. An example item reads: “My manager and I have mutual respect for one another.” In this instance, an employee rates the extent to which they agree with that statement on a scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). An employee who selects a “5” indicates a high-quality coach-coachee relationship founded on genuineness and authenticity. However, the response does not provide any insight into how the employee interpreted the question nor why they answered the way they did. The use of open-ended items that allow respondents to expand on their responses and explain why they answered in a certain manner allows for a deeper understanding of the constructs of interest. Furthermore, utilizing advanced methods such as NLP and topic modeling provides an automated method for content analyzing the data and deriving meaningful themes (Schmiedel, Müller, & vom Brocke, 2019). In the context of coach-coachee relationships, for instance, the use of these methods allows for the derivation of themes that truly reflect how respondents interpret and perceive high-quality coaching relationships. Similarly, if organizations allow access to employee e-mail exchanges, researchers can use NLP and related methods (e.g., topic modeling) to content analyze the dyadic written conversations and derive themes that may further highlight the features that truly define high-quality coaching

relationships. This not only allows for a better understanding of the construct itself (i.e., coach-coachee relationship), but more importantly how it relates to and influences other constructs, such as employee coachability. These methods also remove many of the perceptual biases that plague widely utilized data collection techniques (Kjell et al., 2019). In sum, the use of advanced practices such as NLP provide methods through which researchers can obtain a more nuanced understanding of psychological constructs and phenomena.

All in all, this dissertation suffers from limitations resulting from cross-sectional and survey-based methods. These limitations constrain the current understanding of employee coachability and its relationships with antecedents (e.g., individual differences, feedback motives), contextual factors (e.g., coach-coachee relationship, feedback seeking environment), and outcomes. However, employing technologically advanced methods that continuously capture behavioral data and remove perception from measurement promise a more nuanced understanding of psychological phenomena. In this case, employee coachability.

### **Practical Implications**

Volatility, complexity, ambiguity, and unpredictability characterize the landscape of today's work environment (Ozkan, 2008). To effectively adapt to the constantly changing dynamics of work in today's performance-driven environment, researchers and practitioners recognize the critical importance of employee adaptability, continuous development, and performance improvement across all organizational levels (Huang et al., 2014; Joo et al., 2012; Ozkan, 2008; Pulakos et al., 2015). One method increasingly utilized to achieve these goals is organizational (i.e., managerial) coaching (Joo et al., 2012; Ladyshevsky, 2010). Findings from this dissertation suggest employee coachability as an additional method for achieving said goals.

The data indicates that employee coachability promises important organizational benefits irrespective of whether organizations employ coaching practices. Specifically, I find employee coachability drives individual job performance, adaptability, and promotability. While the importance of high job performance for organizational success does not require further explanation, researchers suggest employees' ability to adapt to novel situations in the workplace and perform at an elevated level may be more crucial now than ever (Huang et al., 2014). Moreover, research indicates employee adaptability as a vital driver of organizational effectiveness to generate competitive advantages (Cullen et al., 2014; Huang et al., 2014). This further emphasizes the importance of employee coachability and suggests it may be a source of competitive advantage through employee adaptability.

I initially examined employee coachability as a method through which organizations can maximize coaching interactions. However, the data indicates employee coachability operates independently of coaching behaviors. In other words, regardless of the quality of the coaching relationship, nature of feedback provided (i.e., quality and properly delivered), and environment (i.e., psychologically safe, feedback seeking supportive), coachable employees still seek, demonstrate receptivity to, and implement feedback to drive individual development and performance improvement. While these behaviors surely remain important for optimizing coaching interactions (i.e., coaching cannot be effective without the coachee's willingness to receive and implement coaching), the findings suggest the importance and impact of employee coachability spans these interactions. As such, organizations may consider employee coachability a competency to which they hire or train employees.

In this study, expressed humility emerged as an individual difference underlying coachable employees. Thus, to hire coachable employees, organizations should identify

individuals who exhibit this characteristic during the selection process. Effective methods for identifying these individuals may include behavioral interviewing, situational judgment tests (SJTs), and examining past behavior (e.g., biodata) (Ryan & Ployhart, 2014).

Furthermore, as coachability manifests in feedback seeking, receptivity, and implementation of feedback behaviors, it follows organizations can train employees to exhibit these desirable behaviors. These trainings may focus on the importance of being coachable (i.e., increased job performance, adaptability, promotability) and provide best practices regarding how to seek feedback in a way that elicits the provision of useful, instrumental information. Additionally, training geared toward reducing the emotional charge of constructive feedback may prove beneficial for increasing employees' ability to effectively receive and subsequently implement constructive feedback.

### **Conclusion**

In sum, the results of this dissertation demonstrate coachable employees achieve greater individual performance, are more adaptable, and are perceived as more promotable. As such, organizations should consider identifying coachable individuals during the hiring process and elevating the skills of existing employees to become more coachable. This provides an avenue through which organizations can achieve greater effectiveness and potentially create competitive advantages. These findings and implications suggest I accomplished the overarching goals of this dissertation. More specifically, I (1) highlighted the importance of coachability for both research and practice, (2) pinpointed the personality traits underlying coachable employees, (3) determined the behaviors and motives of coachable individuals, (4) evaluated the impact of managerial coaching behaviors on employee coachability, and (5) examined individual outcomes driven by employee coachability.

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## **Appendices**

**Appendix A****Table Depicting Constructs, Scales, and Respondent-Type**

<b>Construct</b>	<b>Scale(s)</b>	<b>Citation/Source</b>	<b>Respondent</b>
Learning Goal Orientation		VandeWalle (1997)	Coachee
Feedback Orientation		Linderbaum & Levy (2010)	Coachee
Proactive Personality		Seibert et al. (1999)	Coachee
Expressed Humility		Owens et al. (2013)	Coach
Achievement Striving		Goldberg (1999)	Coachee
Feedback Seeking Motives	Instrumental Motive	Dahling et al. (2015)	Coachee
	Image Defense and Enhancement Motive	Dahling et al. (2015)	
	Ego Defense and Enhancement Motive	Tuckey et al. (2002)	
Coach-Coachee Relationship		Gregory & Levy (2010)	Coachee
Nature of Feedback	Feedback Quality	Steelman et al. (2004)	Coachee
	Feedback Delivery	Steelman et al. (2004)	
Perceived Managerial Support	Feedback Seeking Environment	Steelman et al. (2004)	Coachee
	Psychological Safety	Edmondson (1999)	
Coachability	Feedback Seeking Behaviors Feedback Receptivity Transfer of Coaching	Dahling et al. (2012) Ryan et al. (2000) Facteau et al. (1995)	Coach
Job Performance	*Objective – Performance Review*		Coach
Adaptability		Alavi et al. (2014)	Coach
Promotability		Thacker & Wayne (1995)	Coach



## Appendix B

### Detailed List of Measures and Items Included in this Study

Instructions for the **Goal Orientation and Proactive Personality** scales read:

“The following items contain phrases describing people’s behaviors and perceptions regarding their general approach to work tasks. Please use the rating scale to indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Your responses will be anonymous and be kept confidential, so please answer truthfully and to the best of your ability.”

- **Learning Goal Orientation (VandeWalle, 1997):**

1. I am willing to select a challenging work assignment that I can learn a lot from
2. I often look for opportunities to develop new skills and knowledge
3. I enjoy challenging and difficult tasks at work where I’ll learn new skills
4. For me, development of my work ability is important enough to take risks
5. I prefer to work in situations that require a high level of ability and talent

- **Performance Prove Goal Orientation (VandeWalle, 1997):**

1. I’m concerned with showing that I can perform better than my coworkers
2. I try to figure out what it takes to prove my ability to others at work
3. I enjoy it when others at work are aware of how well I am doing
4. I prefer to work on projects where I can prove my ability to others

- **Performance Avoid Goal Orientation (VandeWalle, 1997):**

1. I would avoid taking on a new task if there was a chance that I would appear rather incompetent to others
2. Avoiding a show of my low ability is more important to me than learning a new skill
3. I’m concerned about taking on task at work if my performance would reveal that I had low ability
4. I prefer to avoid situations at work where I might perform poorly

- **Proactive Personality (Seibert et al., 1999):**

1. I am constantly on the lookout for new ways to improve my life
2. Wherever I have been, I have been a powerful force for constructive change
3. Nothing is more exciting than seeing my ideas turn into reality
4. If I see something I don’t like, I fix it
5. No matter what the odds, if I believe in something, I will make it happen
6. I love being a champion for my ideas, even against others’ opposition
7. I excel at identifying opportunities
8. I am always looking for better ways to do things
9. If I believe in an idea, no obstacle will prevent me from making it happen
10. I can spot a good opportunity before others can

Instructions for the **Feedback Orientation** scale reads:

“The following items contain phrases describing people’s perceptions regarding feedback. Please use the rating scale to indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Your responses will be anonymous and be kept confidential, so please answer truthfully and to the best of your ability.”

- **Feedback Orientation (Linderbaum & Levy, 2010):**

**Utility:**

1. Feedback contributes to my success at work
2. To develop my skills at work, I rely on feedback
3. Feedback is critical for improving performance
4. Feedback from coaches can help me advance in my company
5. I find that feedback is critical for reaching my goals

**Accountability:**

1. It is my responsibility to apply feedback to improve my performance
2. I hold myself accountable to respond to feedback appropriately
3. I don’t feel a sense of closure until I respond to feedback
4. If my coach gives me feedback, it is my responsibility to respond to it
5. I feel obligated to make changes based on feedback

**Feedback Self-Efficacy:**

1. I feel self-assured when dealing with feedback
2. Compared to others, I am more competent at handling feedback
3. I believe that I have the ability to deal with feedback effectively
4. I feel confident when responding to both positive and negative feedback
5. I know that I can handle the feedback that I receive

Instructions for the **Expressed Humility** scale reads:

“The following items contain phrases describing people’s perceptions and behaviors. Please use the rating scale to indicate how accurately each statement describes this employee. Your responses will be anonymous and be kept confidential, so please answer truthfully and to the best of your ability.”

- **Expressed Humility Scale (Owens et al., 2013):**

**Willingness to View Oneself Accurately:**

1. This person actively seeks feedback, even if it is critical
2. This person admits when they don’t know how to do something
3. This person acknowledges when others have more knowledge and skills than him or herself

**Teachability:**

1. This person is willing to learn from others
2. This person is open to the ideas of others
3. This person is open to the advice of others

**Appreciation of Others’ Strengths:**

1. This person takes notice of others' strengths
2. This person often compliments others on their strengths
3. This person shows appreciation for the unique contribution of others

Instructions for the **Achievement Striving** scale read:

"The following items contain phrases describing people's behaviors. Please use the rating scale to indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Your responses will be anonymous and be kept confidential, so please answer truthfully and to the best of your ability."

- **Achievement Striving (Goldberg, 1999):**

1. Go straight for the goal
2. Work hard
3. Turn plans into actions
4. Plunge into tasks with all my heart
5. Do more than what's expected of me
6. Set high standards for myself and others
7. Demand quality
8. Am not highly motivated to succeed (RV)
9. Do just enough work to get by (RV)
10. Put little time and effort into my work (RV)

Instructions for the **Feedback Motives** scale reads:

"The following items contain phrases describing people's perceptions and behaviors. Please use the rating scale to indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statements. Your responses will be anonymous and be kept confidential, so please answer truthfully and to the best of your ability."

- **Feedback Seeking Motives**

**Instrumental Motive (Dahling et al., 2015):**

1. I can learn more about the performance expectations that others set for me by asking for feedback
2. My job-related skills can be improved if I ask for feedback
3. I ask for feedback to help me "learn the ropes" when new performance goals and expectations are set for me
4. I seek feedback when I am uncertain about my role in the organization
5. When I ask for feedback, I do so because I want information related to my duties in the organization

**Image Enhancement/Defense Motive (Dahling et al., 2015):**

1. I like to ask for feedback because it gives me a good opportunity to remind others of my accomplishments
2. Asking for feedback is a good way to emphasize my good qualities to others
3. I ask for feedback at work because I know it will enhance the way others see me
4. Requesting feedback can communicate to others that I am a good, responsible worker

5. I can make a good impression on others by asking for feedback on tasks that I know I have performed well
6. I can appear very competent if I ask for feedback from the right people

**Ego Enhancement/Defense Motive (Tuckey et al., 2002):**

1. If I received negative feedback, I would have a negative attitude towards myself, so I try to avoid criticism
2. Negative feedback doesn't really lower my self-worth, so I don't go out of my way to avoid it
3. Receiving negative feedback wouldn't really change the way I feel about myself
4. It's hard to feel good about myself when I receive negative feedback
5. I try to avoid negative feedback because it makes me feel bad about myself
6. I worry about receiving feedback that is likely to be negative because it hurts to be criticized
7. Negative feedback doesn't really worry me because I still have a positive attitude towards myself

Instructions for the **Coach-Coachee Relationship** scale read:

"Please use the rating scale to indicate how accurately each statement describes the relationship that you have with your supervisor. So that you can describe this relationship in an honest manner, your responses will be anonymous and be kept in absolute confidence."

- **Coach-Coachee Relationship (Gregory & Levy, 2010):**

**Genuineness of the Relationship:**

1. My manager and I have mutual respect for one another
2. I believe that my manager truly cares about me
3. I believe my manager feels a sense of commitment to me

**Effective Communication:**

1. My manager is a good listener
2. My manager is easy to talk to
3. My manager is effective at communicating with me

**Comfort with the Relationship:**

1. I feel at ease talking with my manager about my job performance
2. I am content to discuss my concerns or troubles with my manager
3. I feel safe being open and honest with my manager

**Facilitating Development:**

1. My manager helps me to identify and build upon my strengths
2. My manager enables me to develop as an employee of our organization
3. My manager engages in activities that help me to unlock my potential

Instructions for the **Nature of Feedback** scale read:

"Please use the rating scale to indicate how accurately each statement describes your manager. So that you can describe this relationship in an honest manner, your responses will be anonymous and be kept in absolute confidence."

- **Nature of Feedback (Steelman et al., 2004 - FES):**

**Feedback Quality:**

1. My manager gives me useful feedback about my job performance
2. The performance feedback I receive from my manager is helpful
3. I value the feedback I receive from my manager
4. The feedback I receive from my manager helps me do my job
5. The performance information I receive from my manager is generally not very meaningful (RV)

**Feedback Delivery:**

1. My manager is supportive when giving me feedback about my job performance
2. When my manager gives me performance feedback, he or she is considerate of my feelings
3. My manager generally provides feedback in a thoughtless manner (RV)
4. My manager does not treat people very well when providing performance feedback (RV)
5. My manager is tactful when giving me performance feedback

- **Perceived Managerial Support**

Instructions for the **Psychological Safety** scale read:

“Please use the rating scale to indicate how accurately each statement describes the environment your manager has created within your team. So that you can describe this relationship in an honest manner, your responses will be anonymous and be kept in absolute confidence.”

**Psychological Safety (Edmondson, 1999):**

1. If you make a mistake on this work team, it is often held against you
2. Members of this work team are able to bring up problems and tough issues
3. People on this work team sometimes reject others for being different
4. It is safe to take a risk on this work team
5. It is difficult to ask other members of this work team for help
6. Working with members of this work team, my unique skills and talents are valued and utilized

Instructions for the **Promotes Feedback Seeking** scale read:

“Please use the rating scale to indicate how accurately each statement describes your manager. So that you can describe this relationship in an honest manner, your responses will be anonymous and be kept in absolute confidence.”

**Promotes Feedback Seeking (Steelman et al., 2004 – FES):**

1. My manager is often annoyed when I directly ask for performance feedback (RV)
2. When I ask for performance feedback, my manager generally does not give the information right away (RV)
3. I feel comfortable asking my manager for feedback about my work performance

4. My manager encourages me to ask for feedback whenever I am uncertain about my job performance

- **Coachability**

Instructions for the **Feedback Seeking and Transfer of Coaching** scales read:

“The following items contain phrases describing people’s behaviors. Your responses will be anonymous and be kept confidential, so please answer truthfully and to the best of your ability. Please use the rating scale to indicate how frequently this employee engages in the following behaviors.”

Instructions for the **Feedback Receptivity** scale read:

“The following items contain phrases describing people’s behaviors when provided with feedback. Your responses will be anonymous and be kept confidential, so please answer truthfully and to the best of your ability. Please use the rating scale to indicate how accurately each statement describes this employee when you provide him or her with feedback.”

- **Feedback Seeking Behaviors (Dahling et al., 2012):**

1. Seeks feedback on their performance after assignments
2. Solicits critiques from you
3. Seeks out feedback on their performance during assignments
4. Asks for your opinion of their work
5. Asks for information about what is required for them to function successfully on the job
6. Asks how well they are performing on the job

- **Feedback Receptivity (Ryan et al., 2000):**

1. This employee tends to deny the existence of concerns (RV)
2. This employee recognizes potential negative consequences of his/her behavior
3. This employee expresses great concern about the feedback (RV)
4. This employee is receptive to the feedback
5. This employee accepts the feedback presented
6. This employee makes a lot of excuses during the feedback interview (RV)

- **Transfer of Coaching (Facteau et al., 1995):**

1. This employee’s behavior has improved following our coaching interactions
2. This employee applies the skills/learning principles discussed during coaching interactions in a way that improves his or her productivity
3. This employee transfers the skills/principles learned during coaching interactions back to their job
4. This employee has changed his or her job behavior in order to be consistent with the content discussed during coaching interactions

5. This employee applies the skills and principles learning during coaching interactions in a way that improves his or her overall job performance

Instructions for the **Job Performance** scale read:

“Please use the rating scale to indicate this employee’s performance.”

- **Job Performance**

1. This employee’s performance falls in which of the following tiers...
  - a. Bottom third of the company
  - b. Middle third of the company
  - c. Top third of the company

Instructions for the **Adaptability** scale read:

“The following items contain phrases describing people’s behaviors. Please use the rating scale to indicate how accurately each statement describes your employee. Your responses will be anonymous and be kept confidential, so please answer truthfully and to the best of your ability.”

- **Employee Adaptability/Agility (Alavi et al., 2014):**

1. At work, this employee can adjust to new work procedures
2. At work, this employee can quickly learn to use new resources
3. At work, this employee can learn to keep up-to-date
4. At work, this employee can quickly switch from one task to another

Instructions for the **Promotability** scale read:

“Please use the rating scale to indicate the extent to which you agree with each statement. Your responses will be anonymous and be kept confidential, so please answer truthfully and to the best of your ability.”

- **Promotability (Thacker & Wayne, 1995):**

1. I believe this employee will have a successful career
2. If I had to select a successor for my position, it would be this subordinate
3. I believe that this employee has high potential