

Development of Coaches: IV. Does Gender Make A Difference?

William Bergquist, Ph.D.

This report is the fourth in a series that convey and interpret results from two versions of a questionnaire that was initially prepared by the Development of Coaches Research Collaborative in cooperation with the Collaborative Research Network of the Society for Psychotherapy Research. [Note: for those readers who are familiar with the first three reports, I recommend that you move immediately to the "focus of study" and results sections of this fourth report, given that the initial sections of this report provide background material regarding the two surveys that was already covered in the first three reports.]

Background

Completed in 2009 by 153 coaches from throughout the world, the first survey was followed by a second version that was distributed in 2015 (with only minor editing changes) by the Library of Professional Coaching in cooperation with ITLCInsights. Fifty eight coaches provided responses to the second questionnaire -- yielding a total of 211 responses to the two surveys. The time interval between the two surveys was six years, enabling us to get a preliminary sense of possible changes in coaching attitudes over this period of time, as well as a sense of stability (low levels of difference in mean scores and variance) in the attitudes of professional coaches regarding their own development.

Unlike most coaching surveys, the two surveys conducted in 2009 and 2015 were directed toward those actually doing the coaching, rather than the users of coaching services. These surveys were completed by a widely ranging group of coaches - in terms of geography, schools of coaching, age and years of experience in providing coaching services. These two surveys are also distinctive in that they have been being conducted by organizations (the Library of Professional Coaching and ITLCInsights) that have no specific stake in the

outcomes, and are being distributed to practitioners at many levels of practice and status. These surveys are truly "neutral" and "democratizing."

Methods

Both versions of the Development of Coaches questionnaire are based on one devised by the Collaborative Research Network of the Society for Psychotherapy Research in their international study of development among professional psychotherapists described by Orlinsky and Rønnestad in *How Psychotherapists Develop* (Orlinsky & Rønnestad, 2005). Both of the coaching studies include questions that parallel those used in the Society's Development of Psychotherapists Common Core Questionnaire. This enables us not only to study varied aspects of coaches' development, but also compare responses of coaches to these made by psychotherapists. Many questions have been posed over the past twenty years concerning the similarities and differences between professional coaching and psychotherapy. The data being gathered in these two surveys will provide some of the first answers regarding this comparison.

Modification of Development of Psychotherapists Survey

In adapting the questionnaire, members of the Development of Coaches Research Collaborative drew on their own experiences as coaches to ask questions that they hoped would seem meaningful and relevant to those responding to the questionnaire. The majority of questions could be answered quickly by checking alternatives that most closely reflected the respondent's own experience.

Instructions to the Respondents

In the case of both surveys, respondents were asked to answer all of the questions and were provided with the following framework:

The complete set of responses provides us with a fuller understanding of your own work and the context in which you work. You may find these questions offer a useful opportunity to reflect on your own coaching career. If any seem difficult to answer exactly, give your best estimate and continue. To ensure confidentiality, the

questionnaire is completed anonymously. Information you provide will be used only for research purposes.

Designers of the original survey proposed that the respondents would benefit in two ways. These two benefits made this truly a collaborative effort between those who designed the questionnaire and those who completing it. Following is a statement offered to those considering completion of the second survey:

You can sign up to receive the report findings from this study when they become available. . . These reports will also be made available at no charge to the general coaching public through the Library of Professional Coaching. The reports will identify which modes of development have been found to be the most effective. . . . [Furthermore, results from this survey may] increase the credibility of the coaching profession. As Francine Campone, one of the creators and initiators of the original survey has indicated, a culture of research and evidence needs to be created in the field of professional coaching. The more we learn from one another about professional coaching practices, the more collectively knowledgeable we will become. The more knowledgeable we become, the greater the opportunity for building evidence-based coaching strategies and tools. The better the strategies and tools the more effective we will be as coaching professionals. The more effective we become as a profession, the greater the demand will be for our services.

Focus of this Study

This fourth report is the first in a series regarding potential differences in responses to the Development of Coaches survey based on demographic factors. In this initial study, we focus on a typical distinguishing feature among human beings (and coaches): the gender of respondents. Of those who responded to the first survey, a major (66.2%) were females. Of the 58 respondents to Survey Two, 77.6% were female – a slightly higher percentage than in Survey One.

In analyzing the data for this fourth report, we combined the responses to both surveys – having found them to be closely aligned in our previous studies (using the same data that are

being analyzed in this report). Furthermore, we went beyond the calculation of means and variances for the female and male populations. We conducted simple T-Tests to determine if the differences between the responses of men and women were significantly different regarding any of the questions we presented in our three previous reports.

While we present the mean, variance and T-Test Scores in the next section of this report for each of the seven questions on which we focused in the previous three studies, the reader should be informed that no significant differences were found for the responses to any of the items contained in these seven questions. In fact, none of the T-Tests produced scores greater than 1.00. The degree of congruence between women and men in their responses to these two survey is truly remarkable. Apparently, gender doesn't make much of a difference when it comes to the perspectives held by professional coaches and responses to challenges faced by coaches (or at least those responding to these two surveys).

Results

As we did in the first three report we will offer basic descriptive statistics (mean and variance) for all of the statements associated with each of these questions. The mean scores will give us an initial impression regarding the extent to which respondents rated themselves low or high on each item, while the variance scores will give us an initial impression of the extent to which respondents tend to agree with one another in their rating of each item. In addition, we provide T-Test scores for each item to determine the extent to which gender differences are significant. In each table, we also indicate whether the magnitude of T-Test scores reach at least a .05 level of probable significance. As we have already noted, there are no T-Test scores that reach this level of significance.

Question: Since you began formally working as a coach . . .

	Male	Female	T-Test	P Level
<i>How much have you changed overall as a coach?</i>	Mean=4.02 Variance=1.20	Mean=4.01 Variance =0.80	0.47	>.05

<i>How much do you regard this as progress or improvement?</i>	Mean=4.40 Variance=0.77	Mean=4.35 Variance =0.87	0.35	>.05
<i>How much do you regard this as a decline or impairment?</i>	Mean=0.32 Variance=0.48	Mean=0.19 Variance =0.34	0.13	>.05
<i>How much have you succeeded in overcoming any past limitations in your coaching skills and knowledge?</i>	Mean=3.81 Variance=0.64	Mean=3.92 Variance =0.87	0.23	>.05
<i>How much have you realized your potential as a coach?</i>	Mean=3.60 Variance=1.33	Mean=3.93 Variance =0.96	0.05	>.05

Question: Overall at the PRESENT time . . .

	Male	Female	T-Test	P Level
<i>How effective are you at co-creating the working partnership with clients?</i>	Mean=4.40 Variance=0.42	Mean=4.34 Variance=0.56	0.60	>.05
<i>How authentically personal do you feel while working with clients?</i>	Mean=4.51 Variance=0.47	Mean=4.56 Variance=0.36	0.59	>.05

<i>How good is your general theoretical understanding of coaching?</i>	Mean=4.32 Variance=0.61	Mean=4.24 Variance=0.62	0.60	>.05
<i>How empathetic are you in relating to clients with whom you have relatively little in common?</i>	Mean=4.26 Variance=0.77	Mean=4.39 Variance=0.52	0.29	>.05
<i>How effective are you in communicating your understanding and concern to your clients?</i>	Mean=4.32 Variance=0.65	Mean=4.48 Variance=0.38	0.15	>.05
<i>How much mastery do you feel you have of the techniques and strategies involved in practicing coaching?</i>	Mean=3.90 Variance=0.81	Mean=4.00 Variance=0.61	0.36	>.05
<i>How well do you understand what happens moment by moment during coaching sessions?</i>	Mean=4.09 Variance=0.69	Mean=4.10 Variance=0.75	0.79	>.05
<i>How effective are you at stimulating client insight?</i>	Mean=4.37 Variance=0.56	Mean=4.28 Variance=0.53	0.44	>.05
<i>How much precision, subtlety and finesse have you attained in your coaching work?</i>	Mean=3.86 Variance=0.91	Mean=4.01 Variance=0.77	0.31	>.05

<i>How confident do you feel in your role as a coach?</i>	Mean=4.21 Variance=0.67	Mean=4.27 Variance=0.63	0.86	>.05
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Question: Currently, how often do you feel . . .

	Male	Female	T-Test	P Level
<i>Lacking confidence that you can provide a beneficial effect for a client.</i>	Mean=1.45 Variance=0.40	Mean=1.46 Variance =0.51	0.95	>.05
<i>Unsure how best to deal effectively with a client.</i>	Mean=1.45 Variance=0.40	Mean=1.49 Variance =0.44	0.75	>.05
<i>In danger of losing control of a coaching conversation to a client.</i>	Mean=1.02 Variance=0.50	Mean=0.88 Variance =0.61	0.24	>.05
<i>Unable to have much real empathy for a client's experiences.</i>	Mean=0.84 Variance=0.29	Mean=0.60 Variance =0.36	0.01	>.05
<i>Uneasy that your personal values make it difficult to maintain an appropriate attitude toward a client.</i>	Mean=0.87 Variance=0.34	Mean=0.64 Variance =0.35	0.01	>.05
<i>Distressed by your inability to impact a client's life or work situation.</i>	Mean=1.07 Variance=0.51	Mean=1.02 Variance =0.66	0.65	>.05
<i>Troubled by ethical issues that have arisen in your work with a client.</i>	Mean=0.73 Variance=0.50	Mean=0.60 Variance =0.39	0.24	>.05
<i>Irritated by a client who seems to be</i>	Mean=1.00	Mean=0.97	0.79	>.05

<i>actively blocking your efforts.</i>	Variance=0.59	Variance =0.58		
<i>Unable to comprehend the essence of a client's problem.</i>	Mean=0.96 Variance=0.48	Mean=0.82 Variance =0.44	0.19	>.05
<i>Unable to find something to like or respect in a client.</i>	Mean=0.58 Variance=0.47	Mean=0.32 Variance =0.22	0.01	>.05
<i>Conflicted about how to reconcile obligations to a client and equivalent obligation to others.</i>	Mean=0.93 Variance=0.70	Mean=0.78 Variance =0.58	0.26	>.05
<i>Bogged down with a client in a relationship that seems to be going nowhere.</i>	Mean=1.04 Variance=0.52	Mean=0.97 Variance =0.56	0.55	>.05
<i>Frustrated with a client for wasting your time</i>	Mean=0.85 Variance=0.46	Mean=0.68 Variance =0.54	0.12	>.05

Question: When in difficulty, how often do you . . .

	Male	Female	T-Test	P Level
<i>a. Try to see the problem from a different perspective</i>	Mean=3.98 Variance=0.74	Mean=3.97 Variance =0.78	0.32	>.05
<i>b. Share your experience of the difficulty with a client</i>	Mean=3.07 Variance=1.54	Mean=2.77 Variance =1.68	0.27	>.05
<i>c. Discuss the problem with a more experienced colleague</i>	Mean=3.28 Variance=1.30	Mean=3.13 Variance =1.69	0.30	>.05

<i>d. Consult relevant articles or books</i>	Mean=2.78 Variance=1.65	Mean=2.72 Variance =1.84	0.31	>.05
<i>e. Involve another professional or organization in the case</i>	Mean=2.02 Variance=1.60	Mean=1.61 Variance =1.89	0.23	>.05
<i>f. Make changes in your coaching contract with a client</i>	Mean=1.67 Variance=1.55	Mean=1.60 Variance =1.61	0.31	>.05
<i>g. Simply hope that things will improve eventually</i>	Mean=0.96 Variance=0.98	Mean=0.74 Variance =0.68	0.23	>.05
<i>h. Seriously consider terminating coaching</i>	Mean=1.15 Variance=0.58	Mean=1.23 Variance =0.83	0.36	>.05
<i>i. Review privately with yourself how the problem has arisen</i>	Mean=3.70 Variance=1.23	Mean=3.66 Variance =1.47	0.32	>.05
<i>j. Just give yourself permission to experience difficult or disturbing feelings</i>	Mean=3.31 Variance=1.35	Mean=3.26 Variance =1.40	0.31	>.05
<i>k. See whether you and your client can deal together with the difficulty</i>	Mean=3.38 Variance=1.29	Mean=3.39 Variance =1.51	0.33	>.05
<i>l. Sign up for a conference or workshop that might bear on the problem</i>	Mean=1.39 Variance=1.37	Mean=1.46 Variance =1.64	0.35	>.05
<i>m. Modify your stance or approach with a client</i>	Mean=3.17 Variance=1.12	Mean=3.29 Variance =1.27	0.34	>.05
<i>n. Avoid dealing with the problem for the present</i>	Mean=0.89 Variance=0.55	Mean=0.95 Variance =0.76	0.36	>.05

<i>o. Show your frustration to the client</i>	Mean=0.76 Variance=0.75	Mean=0.83 Variance =0.90	0.38	>.05
<i>p. Explore the possibility of referring the client to another coach</i>	Mean=1.50 Variance=0.82	Mean=1.66 Variance =1.24	0.38	>.05
<i>q. Refer the client to some other non-coaching professional</i>	Mean=1.48 Variance=1.01	Mean=1.74 Variance =1.42	0.34	>.05

Question: In your RECENT coaching how often ...

	Male	Female	T-Test	P Level
<i>Do you feel you are changing as a coach?</i>	Mean=3.68 Variance=1.20	Mean=3.62 Variance =1.25	0.93	>.05
<i>Does this change feel like progress or improvement?</i>	Mean=4.19 Variance=0.90	Mean=4.04 Variance =1.25	0.30	>.05
<i>Does this change feel like decline or impairment?</i>	Mean=0.10 Variance=0.12	Mean=0.19 Variance =0.32	0.12	>.05
<i>Do you feel you are overcoming past limitations as a coach?</i>	Mean=3.57 Variance=1.41	Mean=3.48 Variance =1.70	0.61	>.05
<i>Do you feel you are becoming more skillful in practicing coaching?</i>	Mean=4.16 Variance=0.78	Mean=4.02 Variance =1.11	0.31	>.05
<i>Do you feel you are deepening your understanding of coaching?</i>	Mean=4.16 Variance=1.14	Mean=4.11 Variance =1.02	0.76	>.05

<i>Do you feel a growing sense of enthusiasm about doing coaching?</i>	Mean=4.00 Variance=1.32	Mean=3.92 Variance =1.54	0.64	>.05
<i>Do you feel you are becoming disillusioned about coaching?</i>	Mean=0.44 Variance=0.73	Mean=0.45 Variance =0.86	0.98	>.05
<i>Do you feel you are losing your capacity to respond empathetically?</i>	Mean=0.10 Variance=0.22	Mean=0.17 Variance =0.44	0.36	>.05
<i>Do you feel your performance is becoming mainly routine?</i>	Mean=0.46 Variance=0.90	Mean=0.44 Variance =0.57	0.89	>.05
<i>How capable do you feel to guide the development of other coaches?</i>	Mean=3.89 Variance=1.20	Mean=3.65 Variance =1.91	0.17	>.05
<i>How important to you is your further development as a coach?</i>	Mean=4.54 Variance=0.87	Mean=4.55 Variance =0.84	0.89	>.05

Question: How much influence has each of the following had on your OVERALL development as a coach?

	Male	Female	T-Test	P Level
<i>Experiences in coaching clients</i>	Mean=2.65 Variance=0.50	Mean=2.77 Variance =0.25	0.26	>.05
<i>Taking coaching specific courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses)</i>	Mean=1.94 Variance=1.11	Mean=2.39 Variance =0.75	0.31	>.05
<i>Collaborating with other coaches</i>	Mean=1.83	Mean=2.13	0.05	>.05

	Variance=1.01	Variance =0.82		
<i>Getting formal supervision, mentoring or consultation</i>	Mean=1.59 Variance=1.27	Mean=2.11 Variance =1.04	0.00	>.05
<i>Having informal case discussion with colleagues</i>	Mean=1.54 Variance=1.01	Mean=1.87 Variance =1.08	0.04	>.05
<i>Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice</i>	Mean=1.87 Variance=0.76	Mean=2.04 Variance =0.65	0.23	>.05
<i>Observing coaches in workshops, films or on tapes</i>	Mean=1.17 Variance=1.05	Mean=1.55 Variance =1.22	0.03	>.05
<i>Getting personal coaching</i>	Mean=1.70 Variance=1.12	Mean=2.24 Variance =0.95	0.00	>.05
<i>Giving formal supervision, mentor coaching, or consultation to other coaches</i>	Mean=1.61 Variance=1.37	Mean=1.86 Variance =1.41	0.21	>.05
<i>Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online)</i>	Mean=1.13 Variance=1.66	Mean=1.83 Variance =1.70	0.00	>.05
<i>Doing coaching related research</i>	Mean=0.93 Variance=1.43	Mean=1.25 Variance =1.53	0.08	>.05
<i>The institutional conditions in which you practice</i>	Mean=0.93 Variance=1.28	Mean=1.15 Variance =1.28	0.40	>.05
<i>Experiences in your personal life</i>	Mean=2.11 Variance=0.89	Mean=2.16 Variance =0.80	0.62	>.05

Question: How much influence does each of the following have on your CURRENT development as a coach?

	Male	Female	T-Test	P Level
<i>Experiences in coaching with clients</i>	Mean=2.53 Variance=0.67	Mean=2.57 Variance =0.58	0.79	>.05
<i>Taking courses, seminars or workshops (including online courses)</i>	Mean=1.87 Variance=0.92	Mean=1.94 Variance =0.98	0.69	>.05
<i>Getting formal supervision or consultation</i>	Mean=1.67 Variance=1.56	Mean=1.75 Variance =1.54	0.70	>.05
<i>Having informal case discussion with colleagues</i>	Mean=1.36 Variance=1.22	Mean=1.92 Variance =0.80	0.00	>.05
<i>Reading books or journals relevant to your coaching practice</i>	Mean=1.84 Variance=0.78	Mean=1.87 Variance =0.85	0.84	>.05
<i>Getting life coaching for yourself</i>	Mean=1.43 Variance=1.51	Mean=1.62 Variance =1.46	0.31	>.05
<i>Getting coaching on your coaching work</i>	Mean=1.50 Variance=1.48	Mean=1.62 Variance =1.57	0.52	>.05
<i>Coaching other coaches on professional or life issues</i>	Mean=1.43 Variance=1.83	Mean=1.74 Variance =1.31	0.13	>.05
<i>Giving supervision or consultation to other coaches</i>	Mean=1.24 Variance=2.01	Mean=1.65 Variance =1.56	0.06	>.05

<i>Teaching coaching courses or seminars (face to face or online)</i>	Mean=1.41 Variance=1.97	Mean=1.63 Variance =1.92	0.32	>.05
<i>The workplace conditions in which you practice</i>	Mean=0.97 Variance=1.89	Mean=0.83 Variance =2.42	0.54	>.05
<i>Experiences in your personal life outside coaching</i>	Mean=1.74 Variance=1.60	Mean=1.81 Variance =1.41	0.73	>.05

Discussion

Results regarding gender differences from the two Development of Coaches surveys seem to be compatible with a growing body of literature in many fields that suggest gender-based differences are becoming less important in modern Western societies. Sometime the lack of differences is ascribed to reduction in gender discrimination and at other times to the effects of “women’s liberation” and the emergence of “feminist theory” during the second half of the 20th Century in most Western countries. At the very least, a distinction has been made with increasing frequency between biological sex and gender as a role. In recent years, terms such as the “social construction of gender” and “gender fluidity” have moved us even further into the realm of blended gender-based identities.

At the very least, the results generated from our two coaching surveys indicate that gender is not a major factor with regard to professional coaching practices. Do these results (or non-results) suggest that men and women are likely to be influenced by factors other than gender when choosing to become a professional coach or when engaging in coaching with a client? Does the gender of the client make any difference or is everyone “treated equally”?

Unfortunately, we don’t have any data regarding the potential variations in coaching practices based on the gender of the client. Hopefully, future studies about coaching strategies and practices will provide some data regarding potential gender differences in coach/client interactions.

We will have to turn to other demographic factors to see if there are significant differences in responses to our two coaching surveys. It seems that the variance in survey responses is not attributed to gender. So, we can cross one suspect off our list.

Reference

Orlinsky, D.E. and Rønnestad, M. H. (2005), *How Psychotherapists Develop; A study of therapeutic Work and professional growth*. Washington, D. C.: American Psychological Association.