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**ABSTRACT**Combining positive psychology with coaching is a complex matter. While most positive psychology coaching research promotes the use of positive psychology interventions in a coaching practice, the current study attempted to turn it on its head, and use coaching to amplify the effect of positive psychology interventions. In one-week-long randomised controlled trial with 45 participants, 24 (wait/control group) of them completed a gratitude-only intervention, whilst the remaining 21 (experimental group) engaged in a gratitude-and-coaching intervention. Three measures were used to identify the wellbeing differences of wait/control and experimental groups pre-intervention and immediately after the intervention. Paired-sample t-test results showed that participants in the gratitude-only intervention enhanced aspects of their subjective wellbeing, whereas those in the gratitude-and-coaching intervention increased an aspect of their eudaimonic wellbeing and dispositional gratitude. The study provided preliminary evidence that coaching can be used to amplify the effect of positive psychology interventions. The implications of the study are discussed along with the recommendations for future research.Incorporating coaching with PPIs increases the effectiveness of PPIs, using GROW model in combination with gratitude PPIs can increase wellbeingPositive psychology coaching is emerging as the third most frequently used coaching approach worldwide (Palmer & Whybrow, 2017). Despite its growing popularity, the relationship between coaching and positive psychology remains complex and unclear (Lomas et al., 2017). Growing theoretical literature aims to conceptualise it in order to pave the way towards its effective application (e.g., Burke, 2018; Green & Palmer, 2019). Nonetheless, the limited empirical evidence endures. The current study attempts to shed the light on how coaching and positive psychology fields can be used to enrich each other, rather than address their shortcomings.Positive psychology (PP) is a scientific study that aims to examine and promote elements that foster flourishing in both individuals and communities (Sheldon et al., 2000, p. 1). Unlike traditional psychology, which often focuses on addressing deficits, PP aims to enhance individuals’ optimal functioning (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Since its inception, much research has been conducted to identify tools to increase positive outcomes, such as well-being, positive emotions, engagement and others (see Parks & Shueller, 20142014, for a review), resulting in a growing number of evidence-based Positive Psychology interventions (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). The current study offers one such tool, which incorporates coaching.The role of coaching is to facilitate personal growth via a relationship built between a coach and a non-clinical client, the intention of which is to find solutions leading to a goal attainment on a personal, or professional level (Grant, 20032003; Spence & Grant, 2007). The benefits of coaching are vast, and include an improvement in resilience (Smith, 2015; Timson, 2015), decision-making (Lefdahl-Davis et al., 2018), higher likelihood of goal-setting (Müller & Kotte, 2020), a long-lasting increase of hope, which is a crucial component of mental health, and enhancement of psychological and subjective well-being, in both personal and professional contexts (Green et al., 2006; Passmore & Gibbs, 2007). All these topics have also been the foci of positive psychology since its inception (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Thus, despite their differences, there are a number of parallels between coaching and positive psychology in relation to research interests and intervention outcomes. However, to date the evidence for the benefits of coaching is relatively sparse compared to the literature in Positive Psychology.Over the last decade, attempts have been made to combine positive psychology and coaching (e.g., Biswas-Diener, 2020; Burke & Passmore, 2019; Passmore & Oades, 2014; Passmore & Oades, 2016b), however they are often ad hoc and without a systematic approach to integrate both fields. Burke (2018) argued that a systematic implementation of positive psychology coaching practice should be introduced in order to improve coaching clients’ likelihood of experiencing higher levels of functioning, which include practitioners’ knowledge of both PP and coaching, implementation of PPIs, positive diagnosis, positive process, as well as the use of PP measures. This systematic approach of integrating both fields may have a more robust effect in helping clients unlock their potential, build their character strengths, enhance their well-being, and support their sustainable optimal functioning. Recently, Burke’s (2018) framework was applied with a group of novice teachers resulting in deep-level changes in their cognition and enhanced positive affect (Lucey & van Nieuwerburgh, 2020). This systematic approach to a positive psychology coaching practice is just one perspective on the relationship between these two fields.Another view came from Seligman (2007), who argued that coaching requires further delineation of its scope of practice in order to become a profession, and that positive psychology could help coaching achieve it given that it has a well-developed theoretical basis and research to support its effectiveness. His view is also supported by Kaufman (2006), who underlined the challenge of demonstrating the effectiveness of coaching due to lack of ‘theoretical, scientific, or empirical explanations to support their assertions of coaching effectiveness’ (p. 6), thus suggesting a hierarchical relationship between the two fields, whereby one field addresses another field’s shortcomings. In contrast, other researchers claimed that both coaching and positive psychology may have a more reciprocal relationship (Lomas et al., 2017), and suggested that the use of PPIs in coaching may be questionable because coaching may be even considered a positive psychology intervention (Biswas-Diener, 20092009; Biswas-Diener, 2010; Lomas, 2019), thus blurring the boundaries of the fields. This is a rapidly growing trend in the latest literature heralding a more integrative approach to a positive psychology coaching practice (Van Nieuwerburgh et al., 2018). However, to date only limited empirical data is available to confirm any such presuppositions.Recently, Lomas (2020) attempted to combine the existing views of the relationship between positive psychology and coaching by creating four perspective on their intersections: (1) coterminous, (2) positive psychology encompassing coaching, (3) coaching encompassing positive psychology, and (4) positive psychology and coaching partially overlapping each other. The current study considers coaching and positive psychology relationship as overlapping. This approach assumes that some coaching activities affect wellbeing, positively or negatively, and both fields share overlapping objectives in facilitating participants’ realisation of potential. Pieced together, they have a reciprocal relationship that allows for an amplification of positive outcomes. Thus, the same way as applying positive psychology in a coaching practice may help participants enhance their wellbeing, applying coaching as part of positive psychology intervention practice has a potential to do the same. We argue that instead of using positive psychology research in coaching practice, coaching may also be used to enhance the effect of positive psychology interventions on individuals’ wellbeing.Positive Psychology interventions (PPIs) are intentional activities that aim to boost wellbeing, enhance positive feelings, behaviours, or cognitions Sin and Lyubomirsky (2009). Parks and Biswas-Diener (2013) provide a stricter criteria arguing that a PPI needs to (1) focus on positive themes, (2) result in a positive outcome, and (3) aim to improve wellness instead of treating illness. Only when all three elements are present, an intervention may be considered a PPI. The current study incorporates all three elements of PPIs in terms of the interventions used.Hundreds of studies explored the impact of PPIs on various aspects of well-being, such as positive emotions, engagement, happiness and others (e.g., Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Seligman et al., 2005; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). Two meta-analyses about the effect of PPIs on wellbeing concluded that indeed, PPIs are associated with enhancement of both hedonic and eudaimonic well-being (Bolier et al., 2013; Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). However, a recent meta-analysis showed that the effect size of the PPIs impact on wellbeing is overestimated (White et al., 2019). Notwithstanding, across all three meta-analytical studies, expressing gratitude is perceived as one of the most effective PPIs, which is why the current research applied this intervention.Gratitude is a disposition, or a conscious life-orientation towards appreciating selected, or all aspects of life (Burke, 2020). Gratitude interventions come in various forms, which range from counting one’s blessings, through to writing and delivering a letter of gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Froh et al., 2009; Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Watkins et al., 2003). Gratitude is recommended for coaches to use as a tool during their coaching sessions (Passmore & Oades, 2016a; Passmore & Oades, 2016b). For the purpose of this research, the ‘three good things’ gratitude intervention (TGT) was employed, as per Seligman et al. (2005), according to which participants were asked to write every day for one week three things that went well for them during the day and the reason why this happened. The purpose of the causal explanation of the PPI was to direct their focus not only on replaying the event but also on highlighting occurring thoughts, emotions, and feelings during the event (Burton & King, 2004), which is more effective than a simple TGT activity (Seligman et al., 2005).There are several benefits of practicing a TGT. Emmons and Shelton (2002) showed that individuals who practised gratitude noticed an increase in multiple components of subjective or hedonic well-being such as positive affect and life satisfaction. Additionally, gratitude reduced hedonic adaptation, which is a tendency to adapt to a stable level of happiness (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). The conscious act of feeling grateful, when compared with complaining, results in greater life satisfaction, optimism, and connectedness with others that are significant elements of subjective well-being (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). Therefore, there is strong evidence to suggest that a gratitude activity results in improvements in hedonic well-being.At the same time, there is less research supporting a relationship between gratitude and eudaimonic well-being (Kashdan et al., 2006; Wood et al., 2009). Wood et al. (2009) suggest that gratitude can have a positive impact on Psychological Wellbeing (PWB) as it is positively correlated with variables such as self-acceptance, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and positive relationships, all of which are components of PWB (Keyes et al., 2002). This correlation is also supported by Kashdan et al. (2006) who identified gratitude as having a positive impact on daily self-esteem and on participation in rewarding social and motivational activities, which are also related to PWB (Ryff & Singer, 1998). Thus, gratitude seems to contribute in not only experiencing an emotionally pleasant life but also living a life full of meaning and personal growth (Wood et al., 2009). The current study examined the effect of gratitude intervention on both subjective and psychological wellbeing, as measured by the PERMA model (Seligman, 2011).In addition to the gratitude-only intervention, the current study explored the impact of the gratitude intervention combined with a coaching practice on clients’ wellbeing. It applied an amalgamation of the GROW model (Whitmore, 2009) and a solution-focused framework, which is complementary to the strength-based approach, as it maintains a focus on setting and achieving goals (Grant, 2019). The GROW model was modified by adding a positive, strengths-based focus that included reflection on the procedure, attainment of goals, specific actions, and self-ratings (MacKie, 2014), in order to provide a standard structure during a coaching conversation and encourage goal-setting.In conclusion, most of the literature about the link between positive psychology and coaching is theoretical and more empirical studies are required to test its presuppositions and identify the actual role both fields play in enhancing individuals’ wellbeing. Furthermore, whilst most literature focuses on how positive psychology can supplement coaching practice, thus suggesting a hierarchical relationship between the fields, the current research attempted to recognise the potential effectiveness of coaching in amplifying the results of a gratitude intervention. Therefore, the research question aimed to identify which intervention (gratitude-only or gratitude-and-coaching) was more effective in enhancing participants’ wellbeing. We hypothesised that the gratitude-and-coaching intervention would yield higher levels of wellbeing, including its components, gratitude and positive emotions, than a gratitude-only intervention.A randomised controlled trial applying a mixed-method design aimed to identify differences in participants’ scores pre-and post-intervention. For a control group the intervention was to carry out gratitude-only activity for a week; for an experimental group the intervention was to carry out a gratitude-and-coaching practice. Participants completed a survey pre and post an intervention, which consisted of a series of psychological measures and open-ended questions about their experiences of an intervention. The study received ethical approval from the University of East London.A total of 45 individuals participated in the study, 21 of whom were in the experimental and 24 in the control groups. Most participants were female (73%) and white (91%). The majority of them were aged 35–44 years (55%), followed by 45–54 (33%). Most participants were single (44%), followed by married (27%). In relation to education, 43 participants (95.5%) had at least an undergraduate degree, and 14 of them (31%) a doctoral degree. Finally, the majority of participants were in full-time employment (64%).The participants were randomly assigned to two conditions: (1) the gratitude-only group (wait/control group) and (2) the gratitude-and-coaching group, who were asked to complete three good things gratitude intervention accompanied by a 30-minute coaching session (experimental group). Both groups were asked to complete a series of online measures pre- and immediately post-intervention.In order to ensure that all participants received a similar coaching session, the same questions were asked in all coaching engagements and one coach carried out all coaching sessions. There were four groups of questions that the coach asked, one for each stage of the GROW model, the details of which can be found in . Download CSVDisplay TableThree measures were completed by both groups pre- and post-intervention: the Gratitude Questionnaire-Six Item Form (GQ-6;McCullough et al., 2002), the PANAS Scale (Watson et al., 1988) and the PERMA-Profiler (Butler & Kern, 2016). In addition to the scales, participants were asked to complete a series of demographic questions, establishing their age, gender, marital status, employment, ethnicity and education. Qualitative data about participants’ overall experience was gathered post- intervention.The GQ-6 aims to measure gratitude in terms of the intensity and frequency of an individual’s experiences of gratitude. It is a six-item measure on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). An example of the statement includes: I am grateful to a wide variety of people. The reliability of the scale in the current study was high ranging from =73 to =76.The PANAS is a measure of the experiences of Positive Affect (PA) and Negative Affect (NA) over the past week. It is a 20-item measure on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from (1 = very slightly or not at all, 5 = extremely). Of the 20 types of emotions used in the scale, 10 reflect PA (e.g., interested, excited, strong) and 10 NA (e.g., distressed, nervous, afraid). Composite scores for PA and NA were calculated by averaging the scores for adjectives indicating PA on the one hand and NA on the other. In the current study, reliability ranged from =83 to =89.The PERMA-Profiler provides a 23-item multidimensional measure of well-being on an 11-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 10. The range indicates the frequency or the extent to which participants experienced well-being thoughts, emotions and behaviours and it differs for each question, e.g., 0 = not at all, never, or terrible, whereas 10 = completely, always or excellent. A sample question includes: How often do you become absorbed in what you are doing? Scores are calculated by summing up the results for each one of the five dimensions (positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, achievement) and an additional happiness question. The current study showed moderate to high reliability ranging from =58 to =91 for each dimension and the overall scale reliability from =.87 for T1 to =90 for T2.After completing an intervention, participants were also asked a number of open-ended questions about their engagement with the intervention, such as what time of day they completed the task, and how for how many days they practiced gratitude. Content analysis was carried out on questions in relation to (1) the frequency of engagement with an intervention, and (2) the time of day when they carried out an intervention. Only participants who have engaged with the intervention for five or more days were included in the analysis.A paired-samples t-test was conducted to evaluate the impact of the interventions on participants’ scores in wellbeing (PERMA), gratitude (GQ-6) and affect (PANAS). In the experimental group, statistically significant differences were found in their wellbeing scores between time 1 (M = 7.56, SD = 1.01) and time 2 (M = 8.03, SD = 1.01), t(20) = −3.41, p





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