Development of mindfulness in coaching: Perspectives from trainee coaches, experienced coaches and coaching supervisors

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Abstract

The use of mindfulness in the practice of coaching has gained interest over recent years amongst coaching professionals. Whilst there has been research to examine and understand its role and place in coaching practice, much remains yet to be examined with respect to its purpose and how mindfulness may be acquired, used in the practice of coaching and assure the quality thereof. The research presented in this dissertation provides three studies on how mindfulness in coaching is developed and acquired. The focus of the studies is on the experiences and perceptions of trainee-coaches learning mindfulness, experienced coaches using mindfulness and coach supervisors who use mindfulness in their supervision practice. Together, the studies provide a broad scope and an integrated examination of three major phases in the development, practice and improvement of mindfulness in coaching.

The first study considers how mindfulness training impacts on post-graduate trainee-coaches' use of mindfulness. An increase in mindfulness in trainee-coaches was found for the majority (85%) after the training and a large majority (78%) found the training positive and beneficial. The importance of the training is presented in terms of devolvement of insights and mindfulness skills of attention, presence, empathy, self-regulation and non-judgment, the impact of which are fundamental in mindfulness coaching.

The second study explores what mindfulness is from the experienced coach practitioner' perspective and concludes that mindfulness is considered useful or beneficial in their coaching practice. Challenges concerning definitions and practices of mindfulness are noted, as are the coaches' perspectives of what mindfulness is and how they think about and use it in practice. An enhanced operational definition and model are proposed for the development of mindfulness in coaching.

The third study provides an important source to develop the use of mindfulness in coaching practice. Since coaching supervisors are well placed to offer impartial or independent views and help with respect to their supervisees' use of mindfulness, they were included in the research. The challenges and applications for supervisors included mindfulness training to develop effective mindfulness coaching supervision.

A coach supervisor interactive mindfulness framework is proposed to facilitate an understanding of the dynamics and content of the supervisor-supervisee relationship.

Together the three studies provide an integration and discussion of the stages and their contributions to the development of mindfulness in coaching practice. The studies propose a more inclusive and nuanced approach for using mindfulness in coaching. Based on an integration of their Results, an enhanced operational definition and framework for mindfulness in coaching is proposed in Chapter 5. The contribution of the three studies offer a more integrated and realistic basis for the practice of mindfulness in coaching, a better understanding of the challenges for future mindfulness research and the wider implications of these for the coaching profession.

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I also wish to acknowledge the generous support provided by the library and IT staff as well as those from other areas of the Greenlands campus of the Henley Business School. They ensured timely access to various publications and related resources for the research and effective technical support. I also wish to acknowledge the support I received from faculty, staff and student colleagues in my cohort of the PhD program at the Henley Business School.

Declaration of original authorship

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

Barend Van Den Assem

Table of Contents

Tables

Chapter 1

Chapter 2

Chapter 3

Chapter 4

Chapter 5

Figures

Chapter 5

This dissertation is submitted as a collection of three peer reviewed papers on the following research studies. The three papers in the dissertation appear verbatim from their published versions.

I declare I conducted the research for these and was the principal author of each paper. My supervisors who are noted as co-authors on each paper assisted as reviewers and in editing the papers.

Barend Van Den Assem

Paper 1 (Chapter 2)

Van Den Assem, B., Dulewicz, V. and Passmore, J. (2022) 'The impact of mindfulness meditation training and practice on post-graduate coaching students', *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 17(1), pp. 5-20. DOI:org/10.53841/bpsicpr.2022.17.1.5. Published by the British Psychology Society.

Paper 2 (Chapter 3)

Van Den Assem, B. and Passmore, J. (2022) 'How experienced coaches use mindfulness in practice and how they know it is useful or beneficial', *Consulting Psychology Journal,* 74(4), pp.116-141. DOI:org/10.1037/cpb0000219. Published by the American Psychological Association.

Paper 3 (Chapter 4)

Van Den Assem, B., Passmore, J. and Dulewicz, V. (2022) 'How coaching supervisors experience and use mindfulness within their practice: An IPA study', *Organisationsberating, Supervision, Coaching*, 29(4), pp. 523-541. DOI: 10.1007/s11613-022-00782-3. Published by Springer Germany.

Chapter 1

Introduction and Literature Review

1. Background to the research

The major aim of the research for this dissertation was to provide a better understanding of development of mindfulness in coaching. This included an acknowledgement of both the benefits and critique of mindfulness, which in turn helped to define the scope and provide the major underpinnings of the research which guided the various stages of it from inception to completion.

In their recent integrative overview of mindfulness in organizations, Choi et al. (2022) noted that mindfulness has been 'associated' with many positive motivational and behavioural outcomes, such as

- reduced "impulsivity" (Lu & Huffman, 2017);
- "greater behavioural regulation" (Brown et al., 2007);
- increased "persistence and performance" (Imtiaz et al., 2018, pp.109-110);
- "less defensive responding" (Niemiec et al., 2010);
- "goal progress" and "goal setting" (Smyth et al., 2020);
- "prosocial behaviour" (Hafenbrack et al., 2020);
- reduced "turnover" (Reb et al., 2017);
- "work engagement" (Leroy et al., 2013);
- "job performance" (Lomas et al., 2017);
- improved memory, less distracting thoughts (Mrazek et al., 2013);
- reduced rumination (Tomlinson et al., 2018);
- improved performance on cognitive tasks (Zeidan et al., 2010);
- reduced biased decision-making (Hafenbrack et al., 2014);

- improved cognition and attention (Eberth & Sedlmeier, 2012);
- executive functioning (Cásedas et al., 2020; Chiesa et al., 2011).

Furthermore, the positive results of mindfulness in coaching are reported in terms of its usefulness and benefit for the coach, client and the coaching relationship. González et al. (2018, pp. 87-88) and Kemp (2017, pp. 386-387) note that the practice of mindfulness has been argued to increase self-awareness, presence, creativity, stress management, "a systemic outlook", "open to possibilities", being "in tune with clients", "more compassionate" and less judgmental. Evidence also suggests mindfulness supports autonomy in that individuals found greater interest or value in aspects of their daily activities by supporting "autonomous engagement" in these and being less susceptible to "controlled motivations" (Donald et al., 2020, pp.1121, 1133; Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Mindfulness may benefit various stages of the coaching process, "help the coachee to recognize what he/she truly needs and desires", "set goals" and "sustain learning from previous experiences" (Kemp (2017, pp. 386-387). This is also clearly reflected in Epstein's (2003) position on mindfulness practice. It begins and ends with the coach exercising "attentive observation of oneself, [the coachee] and the [issues]", being "aware of one's own filtering of perceptions", "critical curiosity", a "beginners mind, an ability to see a situation freshly" and "presence, [which] implies a connection between the knower and the known, undistracted attention on the task and the person, and compassion based on insight rather than sympathy" (Epstein, 2003, p. 7).

The most important ingredients for positive outcomes are the coach's personal qualities, including "communication and interpersonal skills", ability "to listen to a coachee's concerns, process that information, display empathy, build trust, provide

feedback to them, notice patterns of thought and action, manage transference and counter transference, etc." (Spence, 2019, p.199). Of these "arguably its most important contributions come via the stabilization of attention (which enhances the ability to listen for long periods of time) and the noticing of patterns of thought and action (which can generate insight and assist future planning and action)" (Spence, 2019, p.199). Relevant and additional supporting contributions from the literature are presented or revisited in the following chapters.

In addition to these important positive observations and insights of mindfulness in the literature, coaches using mindfulness in their coaching practice continue to experience a number of practical and theoretical issues, which impact or potentially affect the quality of their practice. Good et al's. (2016) integrative review of mindfulness and Choi et al's. (2022) more recent review of mindfulness in the context of organizations highlight a broad range of these, some of which have not received much prominence in the literature to date. Several of Choi et al's. (2022) issues provided a purposeful perspective for framing the aim and scope of the research for this dissertation. These were as follows:

- "[D]efinitions of mindfulness demonstrate significant variation" and "there is no gold standard for defining and measuring mindfulness" (Choi et al., 2022 pp. 49-50).

- "[R]esearch and practice on mindfulness may be enhanced to the extent that factors complementary to current definitions of mindfulness are considered more fully" (Choi et al., 2022, p. 50).

- “[A] more systematic, integrated way of conceptualizing mindfulness may be advantageous. A balanced understanding of mindfulness at work encourages more sophisticated research and more effective practice that may better support employees and organizations” (Choi et al., 2022 p.62).

- “[Mindfulness may interact with other variables and … different facets of mindfulness may interact among themselves” (Choi et al., 2022, p.47).

- “[C]ontextual sensitivity concerns the fact that the degree to which mindfulness is valuable, appropriate, and hence desirable, may be influenced by the context in which it occurs” (Choi et al., 2022, p. 50).

- “[A] more balanced perspective may provide practitioners with a more effective way to think about mindfulness and apply it” (Choi et al., 2022, p38).

- “A balanced approach could therefore complement mindfulness with goals, motivations, values and/or ethical frameworks that serve an orienting function that promotes larger life and work objectives” (Choi et al., 2022, p 49).

- “Mindfulness [is] part of a system of engagement. Research on mindfulness might also be enhanced by considering a broader set of processes and outcomes than those conventionally studied” (Choi et al., 2020, 48-49).

- “[T]he absence of a proper framework for understanding mindfulness is an equally pernicious impediment to research and practice. In the same way that a theory serves to guide hypothesis development, a framework serves to orient researchers and practitioners to important considerations that might otherwise be overlooked” (Choi et al., 2022, p.60).

Choi et al's. (2022) issues helped to identify a number of areas for this research with respect to the use and implications of mindfulness in practice. These were helpful in guiding the analysis of data for this research related to the participants own experience and challenges they faced in their practice of mindfulness. Furthermore, Choi et al's. (2022) issues provided a broad grounding for the research and a helpful guide in the analysis of the results and examining the implications of these, as well offering feasible proposals for enhancing the use of mindfulness in coaching going forward.

2. Rationale for the research design

The literature review above was important in formulating the rationale and design of the research. Contributions specifically related to the benefits of mindfulness to coaching (Gonzalez et al., 2018; Kemp, 2017; Epstein, 2003; Spence, 2019) confirmed the importance of the use of mindfulness in coaching. Secondly, the issues presented by Choi et al. (2022) above and the proposals by Good et al. (2016, pp. 132-135) for advancing the research and practice for the integration of "mindfulness research from other disciplines" presented areas where potential improvements in the use of mindfulness could be made. Together, Choi et al's. (2022) and Good et al's. (2016) positions provided the context for the research and offered the means to further the development of mindfulness in coaching practice.

The aim of the dissertation is to set out and explore three important stages in the development of mindfulness in coaching practice. The most direct and comprehensive approach to consider how mindfulness is used in practice was to engage trainee-coaches undergoing training in mindfulness, experienced coach practitioners and supervising coaches, who practiced mindfulness in their supervision

of practicing coaches, in the research. These sources, which represented three different levels of coaching experience, were considered to be suitably placed and informed to comment on the use of mindfulness in practice.

The rationale for choosing their perspectives for this research was to provide greater insight of how coaching practitioners understand and use mindfulness practice, both at the level of each group as well as a comprehensive view of it based on the three groups. Secondly, the rationale of the research was to understand what they considered were the challenges in the development of mindfulness in their coaching practice.

There are many definitions of coaching explored by the literature from a number of perspectives (Bachkirova et al., 2017, 2018; Passmore et al., 2013). Since coaching has an extensive breadth, as does mindfulness, and the area of this research is in terms of the development of mindfulness in coaching, a broad view and definition of coaching is required. Although Silbee's (2010) broad definition of coaching was relied upon for the coaching supervisors' study (see section 2.2 of Van Den Assem, Passmore and Dulewicz, 2022), the definitions offered by Lai (2014) and Passmore and Lai (2019) more specifically and appropriately reflect the purpose of integrating and focusing the results of the three studies on which this dissertation is based.

Lai (2014, p. 14) considered "the defining elements of coaching appear to have evolved from a direct and coach-centred approach to a facilitative/helping and learner-centred process. Basically, the coaching process is a helping relationship that relies on a person's effective interactions to develop solutions for another's learning and change. These definitions reveal 'adult learning' and relationships are essential elements in coaching study and practice". Passmore and Lai (2019, p. 71) noted that

"positive behavioural changes are … the main purpose of coaching, with a recognition that a structured process is involved".

3. Nature of the research

The research is presented as three separate peer-reviewed published research studies employing mixed research methods. The first study, on trainee coaches, uses a relativistic internal realism ontology and engages a quantitative approach 'with qualitative research in a subordinate role' (Rose et al., 2015:16-17; Easterby-Smith et al., 2015:49-50). The other two studies use interpretivism and social constructionism and an inductive, qualitative approach and method to examine and analyse mindfulness. The results are analysed in the context of experiential learning theory proposed by Kolb (1984) and Schön's (1983, pp. viii, 49-69) model of knowing, i.e., reflection in and on action.

Participants

The experience in coaching and mindfulness of the 112 participants who took part in the research varied substantially, ranging from coach trainees to experienced coaches and coach supervisors. Sixty-seven were post-graduate trainee coaches, 30 were experienced coaches, and 15 were coaching supervisors. Their demographic profiles appear in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Participants' professional and personal profile

Participants No. 112	Mean Coaching experience in years	Mean age in years	Age range	Gender ratio Female/Male
Trainee coaches 67	4	49	34-64	61/39
Experienced coaches 30	14	54	39-70	60/40
Coaching supervisors 15	18	59	45-77	80/20

Research instruments and questions

The contributions of the participants with respect to mindfulness was expected to vary with two of the three groups offering a more in-depth and nuanced understanding of mindful coaching practice. In view of this anticipated difference, the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), a closed ended well-established psychometric questionnaire specifically designed to measure mindfulness, was chosen to collect data from the trainee coaches group (Baer et al., 2008). The experienced coaches and coaching supervisors completed a semi-structured questionnaire, which provided them with greater latitude to describe and comment on their experience, and allowed for a richer source of qualitative data to emerge. Both qualitative and statistical data were collected and analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith et al., 2009) and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Field, 2018).

The research questions that guided the research for the three studies were as follows:

- The questions for the study on the impact of mindfulness mediation training and practice on post-graduate trainee coaches were (i) *What is the impact of mindfulness meditation training on postgraduate trainee-coaches in terms of practising mindfulness meditation?* (ii) *How does the training effect their opinions of the practice of mindfulness meditation?* and (iii) *How does their training impact on the academic marks they received for the training module?*
- The questions for the experienced coaches' study were (i) *How does mindfulness inform your coaching practice?* and (ii) *How do they know it is useful or beneficial?*
- The question for the coaching supervisors' study was *How do coaching supervisors experience and use mindfulness within their practice?*

4. Structure and outline of the dissertation

Chapter 1:

The Introduction discusses the aims of the research, the key research questions and how these are addressed in the three research studies, which are included as chapters of the dissertation. Since a significant amount of literature is also reviewed in these papers, the Introduction and Literature Review are merged into a single chapter. Further contributions from the literature of specific relevance to the following chapters is presented or discussed therein.

This Chapter also contains the structure of the dissertation and the findings of three research studies, the focus of which is the development of mindfulness in coaching practice.

Chapters 2, 3, 4:

Three peer reviewed papers on the research studies appear in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

Each of these was reviewed, accepted and published in different peer review journals over the past two years. The three studies in this dissertation appear verbatim from their published versions. Each study addresses a specific area or level of the development of mindfulness in coaching practice:

i. The training of trainee coaches in mindfulness and its application in coaching.

Van Den Assem, B., Dulewicz, V. and Passmore, J. (2022) 'The impact of mindfulness meditation training and practice on post-graduate coaching students', *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 17(1), pp. 5-20. DOI.org/10.53841/bpsicpr.2022.17.1.5 Published by the British Psychology Society.

ii. The practice of mindfulness by experienced coaches and how they know it is useful or beneficial.

Van Den Assem, B. and Passmore, J. (2022) 'How experienced coaches use mindfulness in practice and how they know it is useful or beneficial', *Consulting Psychology Journal,* 74(4), pp.116-141. DOI:org/10.1037/cpb0000219. Published by the American Psychological Association.

iii. The supervision of practising coaches by supervisors who use mindfulness in their supervision practice.

Van Den Assem, B., Passmore, J. and Dulewicz, V. (2022) 'How coaching supervisors experience and use mindfulness within their practice: An IPA study', *Organisationsberating, Supervision, Coaching*, 29(4), pp. 523-541. DOI: 10.1007/s11613-022-00782-3. Published by Springer Germany.

Chapter 5 and 6:

These Chapters provides an overview and integration of the major findings of the three papers noted above and how these advance the development and the use of mindfulness in coaching practice. They summarise and critically discuss the findings and their contributions to knowledge and practice, propose an enhanced operational definition and framework for mindfulness in coaching and provide a concluding overview for the research.

5. Overview of the three research studies

The three studies complemented each other in their contribution to the development of mindfulness in coaching. The first study provides the perspective of the novice, the post-graduate trainee coach. It found that training and practice of mindfulness by trainee coaches was successful in developing their insights and skills in mindfulness, and was also supported by the literature. A large majority of trainees were positive about the training and practice on mindfulness and found it beneficial. Those who had a more favourable opinion of the practice of mindfulness scored higher on the test (FFMQ) which measured their development of mindfulness. Those who practiced regularly were more likely to be committed or motivated, which would appear to positively reflect on their opinion of practice. Finally, those trainees with higher levels of mindfulness and whose mindfulness had improved had more favourable opinions with respect to their training and practice, showing more positive effects in contrast to those trainees with lower levels of mindfulness. The conditions for this was regular and frequent practice as opposed to irregular and infrequent practice. Trainee coaches did exhibit less developed views and interpretations of mindfulness compared to the experienced coaches and coach supervisors as they reached out to explore what and how the boundaries of mindfulness could be used or useful in their

mindfulness practice. An important contribution of this study to the research for the dissertation is that mindfulness in coaching may be acquired and developed through training and practice.

The focus of the second study on the use of mindfulness by experienced coaches offers an in-depth and nuanced analysis of what actually occurs in mindfulness coaching. The purpose of this study was to obtain a clearer understanding of what mindfulness is from the experienced practitioners' perspective in terms of its available definitions and how it is used, and is useful or beneficial, in practice. Experienced coaches using mindfulness were more grounded or assured in their use of mindfulness than coach trainees. Although this group ranged from generally having a clear and in-depth conceptual understanding and intuitiveness of what mindfulness meant for them in their coaching practice and how to use it effectively, they were not always clear how they knew if mindfulness was useful or beneficial in their practice. A few of these used mindfulness selectively, sparingly or only aspects of it and were more likely to be less sure about how they knew mindfulness was effective or beneficial.

Although the numerous definitions in the literature presented in the second study offered various useful conceptual interpretations of mindfulness, they did not always capture the importance of the actual practice of mindfulness coaching. The experienced coaches' own lived experience in the acquisition and development of mindfulness identified and described the major features and constituents of mindfulness they used in practice. These features and constituents in turn provided the impetus and basis for the development of an enhanced operational definition of mindfulness and an enhanced operational model of the practice of mindfulness in coaching.

The focus of the third study was coaching supervisors, who were both experienced in the practice of mindfulness and supervision of coaches, and offered experienced coaches support in their coaching practice. The purpose of supervision is to enhance and enable coaches to continue to develop their coaching skills. The study considered the importance of providing an enabling context, support and encouragement for supervisees to deal with their coaching challenges and development of their coaching practice, including recognition of their personal and professional strengths, competencies and limitations. Although there were a few exceptions, coaching supervisors who used mindfulness in their supervision practice were found to have a well thought out or conceptual understanding of the place, purpose and effect of mindfulness in practice.

6. Contributions to Knowledge and Practice

The focus of the contributions is on three important phases represented by trainee coaches, experienced coaches and coaching supervisors in the development of mindfulness in coaching and the inter-relationships between them.

Clearer definition of mindfulness in coaching

The research identified a common set of concepts across a number of definitions of mindfulness, which offers a clearer understanding of what is the basis for mindfulness in coaching and a more manageable scope for considering its use in coaching practice. These conceptual commonalities were also recognized, identified or used by coach trainees, experienced coaches and coaching supervisors in their practice of mindful coaching and training.

Enhanced operational definition and framework for mindfulness in coaching

The above noted contribution was instrumental in formulating an enhanced operational definition and operational framework for the practice on mindfulness. The contributions of the three groups, particularly the experienced coaches about how they used mindfulness in practice, were instrumental in formulating an enhanced operational definition and framework for development of effective practice of mindfulness in coaching in Chapter 5.

Challenges for the development and practice of mindfulness in coaching

The overall contributions of the research for this dissertation supports the literature showing that mindfulness works and that mindfulness in coaching is considered useful and beneficial. Aided by the issues identified by Choi et al. (2022) above, the contributions of the three research studies also recognised a number of the important challenges including an “absence of a proper framework for understanding mindfulness” and “definitions of mindfulness [demonstrating] significant variation” (Choi et al., 2022 pp.49-50, 60).

A major contribution which emerged from this research was a number of challenges to the development and practice of mindfulness in coaching. These challenges provided an additional focus for both practice and research in enhancing the quality of mindfulness in coaching practice. These were as follows:

- Knowing how mindfulness is useful or beneficial in practice,
- Knowing how and when to use mindfulness in practice,
- Knowing what is going on for the client,
- Knowing what the client wants and needs,
- Recognizing change in the client,

- Being able to create space and an enabling context for clients,
- Being clear in the use of mindfulness concepts in practice,
- Understanding the connection of concept and context in practice,
- Improving the definitional framework for practice.

The contribution to this research provides a clear indication of the status of the use of mindfulness in coaching, its current challenges and its way forward in terms of practice and research. The aim of these contributions is to offer options and assurances for the ongoing development of mindfulness in coaching, and in particular, the engagement and commitment of mindful coaches to their own development and competence.

Since both mindfulness and coaching require a high level of competence, there is a need for coaches practising mindfulness to be highly skilled in both. The identification and description of the challenges within the development of mindfulness in coaching is a major contribution of this research.

7. Future direction of the practice of mindfulness coaching

The future direction of the practice of mindfulness coaching lies within the two major contributions of the research studies. These are the proposed enhanced operational definition and framework for mindfulness practice in coaching and the challenges in the development of mindfulness in coaching noted above. The two major contributions and other findings of the three studies offer opportunities to explore and develop an expanded and deeper understanding of the practice of mindfulness in coaching. In turn, this would provide a means to test the utility and robustness of the enhanced definition and framework for mindfulness practice and for developing the effective practice of mindfulness in coaching in terms of their application and relevance across

various practice contexts and the above noted challenges. Furthermore, it would also serve to further test the findings of this research and encourage an evidence-based approach in the pursuit of the efficacy of mindfulness in coaching**.**

8. Conclusion

The focus of the three research studies is on the development of mindfulness in coaching practice based on the understanding of three groups involved in the training, practice and supervision of coaching and their distinct inter-connected views of the development of mindfulness coaching. The practice of mindfulness in coaching acknowledges and relies more on the coaches' personal definitions and professional perspectives and understanding of mindfulness than on the definitions of mindfulness in the literature. Their contribution to the research for this dissertation provide a clear indication of the status of the use of mindfulness in coaching, its current challenges and its way forward in terms of practice and research. The aim of these contributions offers options and assurances for the ongoing development of mindfulness in coaching, and in particular, the engagement and commitment of mindful coaches to their own development and competence.

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Chapter 2

The impact of mindfulness meditation training and practice on post-graduate coaching students

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the insights and development of post-graduate trainee-coaches engaged in mindfulness meditation training and how mindfulness meditation contributed to their development and performance.

***Methods*:** Data were gathered from 67 trainee-coaches who undertook a 10-week program. The Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) measured pre- and post-training results. Opinions of the training and a daily diary log system to track the time each spent in mindfulness meditation practice were used to capture the impact of the training and each trainee's contribution to the development of their own mindfulness. Ten hypotheses were proposed.

***Results*:** An increase in mindfulness in trainee-coaches was found for the majority (85 per cent) after the practice sessions. A large majority (78 per cent) were positive about the training and practice and had found it beneficial. Those with higher levels of mindfulness, and those whose mindfulness had improved, tended to have more favourable opinions of mindfulness, showing positive effects of practice in contrast to those with lower mindfulness. These and a positive relationship between increases in

mindfulness during training and the days available spent practising mindfulness are the important findings. Three hypotheses were supported. These indicated higher FFMQ scores in the students' mindfulness meditation after the training; relationships between trainees' FFMQ pre- and post-test scores and available days spent practicing; and opinion of their mindfulness meditation practice and the days available spent practicing. Two other hypotheses were partially supported: Relationships between FFMQ pre- and post-scores and trainees' opinions about their mindfulness meditation practice; and between FFMQ post- and pre-scores and trainee academic achievement on the academic module in which mindfulness meditation was taught and practised. Academic performance was less directly related to mindfulness meditation training and practice and there were no significant differences between males and females on measures relating to the training and practice.

***Discussion*:** Findings on increases in mindfulness, opinions of mindfulness practice and academic performance are explained or generally supported by the literature. Practical applications, limitations and further research are also covered. The importance of training is presented in terms of the development of insights and the mindfulness skills of attention, presence, empathy, self-regulation and non-judgement, the impact of which are fundamental in mindfulness coaching.

***Conclusion*:** Mindfulness meditation training of trainee-coaches complements and aids the development of professional and personal skills. The training offers opportunities for greater interpersonal insights, and the use of mindfulness meditation in coaching practice.

***Keywords*:** Mindfulness meditation training, Practice, Coaching, Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire, Diary logs, Academic performance.

The literature covers studies concerning university training programs based on mindfulness practice in coaching (Cavanagh & Spence, 2013; Collard & Walsh, 2008; Deiorio et al., 2016; Kemp, 2016; Lech et al., 2018; Passmore & Marianetti, 2007; Virgili, 2013). However, Good et al. (2016, p. 135) report there has been little attempt to consider 'the active ingredients' of mindfulness training programs and, according to de Bruin et al. (2015), few studies have been conducted on mindfulness in higher education.

Why is mindfulness training relevant to coaches

This study aims to examine the insights and development of post-graduate trainee-coaches engaged in mindfulness meditation training and how it contributed to their development and performance in practice. Mindfulness training is regarded to be helpful and relevant for coaches in preparing them for coaching sessions, maintaining focus and staying emotionally detached therein, and in teaching mindfulness to their clients (Passmore & Marianetti, 2007). These authors considered the teaching of it would include areas such as concentration, awareness and acceptance, which are also supported by various definitions of mindfulness (Van Den Assem & Passmore, 2022). Furthermore, suggestions to integrate mindfulness and coaching for practising coaches has also been proposed (Virgili, 2013; Kemp, 2016) as has the integration of mindfulness training and health coaching (Spence et al., 2008). These integrations are considered achievable through the use of interpretive qualities such as presence, attentiveness and openness, and training, to develop other skills such as attention, empathy, self regulation and non-judgement, which are relevant to the quality of coaching relationship (Virgili 2013).

The Five Facets Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), which is used in this study to measure the impact of the mindfulness training and practice, is based on these concepts as well, e.g., awareness, noticing, non-judging, non reactivity (Baer et al., 2008), as is the International Coaching Federation (ICF) core competence Maintaining Presence. Specifically, the emphasis of this ICF competency is on coaches being focused, regulating their emotions, creating space for clients and the ability to cultivate learning and growth, in terms of awareness, insight or learning with respect to their worldview and behaviours. (International Coaching Federation (ICF), 2019). In addition, Cox's (2013) conceptualization of the coaching process which includes an emphasis on the present and presence provides additional support to this ICF competency, as does the authors preliminary findings with respect to presence as the enabler of the present in a mindfulness and coaching supervision context (Van Den Assem, Passmore & Dulewicz, 2022).

The present study follows through on Virgili's (2013) work noted above and describes what the active ingredients of mindfulness training and practice are for coach trainees and to demonstrate a case for the integration of these for mindfulness coaching practice (Kemp, 2016).

Definitions of mindfulness and mindfulness meditation

The definitions described below are supportive of, and compatible with the facets of the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), which is the main instrument used to gather data for this study. Baer et al. (2004, p.9) note that mindfulness 'is generally defined to include focusing one's attention in a nonjudgmental or accepting way on the experience occurring in the present moment'. Brown et al. (2003, pp. 822-848) defined mindfulness as 'an enhanced attention to an awareness of current experience or present reality'. These definitions support Hölzel et al's. (2011, p.538) position on

mindfulness meditation, which ‘encompasses focusing attention on the experience of thoughts, emotions, and body sensations, simply observing them as they arise and pass away’, which also describe aspects of the facets of the FFMQ.

Mindfulness meditation training has been shown to enhance present moment awareness by teaching participants to notice distractions and repeatedly bring attention back to the object of meditation. This may increase awareness of ongoing cognitive states, which improve attention, reduce mindwandering and improve cognitive tasks and mindfulness (Zeidan et al., 2010). Although various exercises are prescribed during this mindfulness meditation training, no specific goals are set. Participants only observe whatever is happening in the moment without judgement (Baer, 2003). Those who have completed mindfulness training indicated improvements in mindfulness, depressive symptoms, rumination, memory and sustained attention (Chambers et al., 2008).

Impact of mindfulness meditation training and practice

Good et al. (2016), Tang et al. (2015) and Zeidan et al. (2010) report that the effectiveness of minimum mindfulness training may occur after only a matter of minutes, brain changes in three hours and structural brain changes in 11 hours of training. Brief mindfulness meditation and training has been reported to significantly effect cognitive tasks that require sustained attention and executive processing efficiency, reduce fatigue, anxiety and improved mindfulness, higher-order executive processes, visuo-spatial processing and verbal fluency (Zeidan et al., 2010), and students’ retention of information from lectures (Ramsburg & Youmans, 2014). It has been reported that a 10-minute-per-day fully automated mindful awareness training program improved grades in reading and science (Bakosh et al., 2016). However, an important qualifier to these effects would appear to be with respect to when the

meditation practice occurs. According to Chan & Woollacott (2007) and Soler et al. (2014), these effects appear related to frequent or regular rather than irregular or infrequent mediation.

Finally, both Manuel et al. (2017) and Soler et al. (2014) suggest that objective indices such as frequency and duration of meditation practice may be useful in assessing practice and that further research consider these in terms of practice outcomes.

Academic performance and mindfulness meditation training and practice

Although some studies revealed a significant direct relationship between mindfulness and academic performance, others did not (Caballero et al., 2019; Chiang & Sumell, 2019; Miralles-Armenteros et al., 2019; Lin & Mai, 2018; Teodorczuk, 2013). As a result, the relationship between academic performance and mindfulness does not appear to be a direct one.

Bennett et al. (2018, p.76) suggest that mindfulness improves academic performance because it 'is purely a product of (i) cognitive enhancement (i.e., working memory, information recall and attention) and (ii) personality and individual differences (such as resiliency and mindfulness)'. Lin & Mai (2018, p. 373) report 'mindfulness meditation intervention can help in-class learning' and 'significantly improves short-term academic performance but does not significantly improve long-term academic performance'.

However, Zeidan et al's. (2010), McConville, et al's. (2017) and Boo et al's. (2019) studies have noted that various processes underpin the effect of mindfulness on academic performance. These include coping with stress, enhancing self-awareness, attention, thinking, feelings and behaviours and reducing distressing thoughts and

rumination. Miralles-Armenteros et al. (2019) note that these relationships are not direct but with mindfulness may facilitate students' compassion, which may in turn improve feelings of closeness, connectedness, trust and support, which consequently can lead to increased levels of engagement and academic performance.

Objectives of the study

The purpose is to examine the insights and development of trainee-coaches engaged in a post graduate mindfulness meditation training program. The literature, in particular Good et al. (2016) and de Bruin (2015), helped to focus the need for this study and shape its three research questions: (i) What is the impact of mindfulness meditation training on post graduate trainee-coaches in terms of practising mindfulness meditation; (ii) How does the training effect their opinions of the practice of mindfulness meditation; and (iii) How does their training impact on the academic marks they received for the module. These questions in turn served to frame four areas of focus to guide our research and develop ten related hypotheses: (i) the impact of a mindfulness meditation training program on trainee-coaches (Hypothesis 1), (ii) their opinion of the training (H 2, 3, 4), (iii) the time they spent practising mindfulness meditation during their training (H 5, 6), and (iv) their academic performance (Marks achieved) related to their training (H 7, 8, 9, 10).

Hypotheses

'… if there was a strong theoretical basis for the research, then the researcher may derive hypotheses and empirical generalizations and begin to collect evidence in a structured way for the purposes of formal testing' (Remenyi et al., 1998, p.142).

The rational for the development of the hypothesis was based on major areas of interest and connections between these as identified in the literature above with respect to the training and practice of mindfulness. One of these areas selected for this research was to identify and understand the *active ingredients of the mindfulness training and practice program*. It included concepts such as the awareness, the present, attention, non-judgement, which were reflected in published work and definitions of mindfulness (Baer, 2003; Baer et al., 2004; Brown et al., 2003; Hölzel et al., 2011; Zeidan et al., 2010). Contributions with respect to the *impact of the training and its effectiveness*, the second area of focus of the hypotheses was provided by several additional sources (Good et al., 2016; Tang et al., 2015; Zeidan et al., 2010; Ramsburg & Youmans, 2014; Bakosh et al., 2016; Chan & Woollacott, 2007; Soler et al., 2014; Manuel et al., 2017). Finally, contributions with respect to the *impact of mindfulness on academic performance* were offered by a number of sources (Caballero et al., 2019; Chiang & Sumell, 2019; Miralles-Armenteros et al., 2019; Lin & Mai, 2018; Teodorczuk, 2013; Bennett et al., 2018; Lin & Mai, 2018; Zeidan et al., 2010; McConville, et al., 2017; Boo et al., 2019). Based on these contributions from the literature, the hypotheses were formulated and expanded to reflect additional related interests and themes from the literature above, and are presented with the related cited literature against each one below.

H1. The majority of the students will have a higher post-module than pre-module FFMQ score. (Baer et al., 2006, p. 36, 2008, p. 329; Zeidan et al., 2010, p. 603; Chambers et al., 2008, p. 303).

H2. There is a significant positive relationship between FFMQ scores and opinion of practice (Baer et al., 2006, p. 36, 2008, p. 329; Good et al., 2016; Tang et al., 2010; Zeidan et al., 2010, p.597)

H3. There is a significant positive relationship between time (minutes per day) spent practicing mindfulness and opinion of practice. (Manuel et al., 2017, pp. 1, 5; Soler et al., 2014, p. 5; Chan & Woollacott, 2007, p. 656).

H4. There is a significant positive relationship between days (per cent of total available) spent practicing mindfulness and opinion of practice. (Manuel et al., 2017, pp. 1, 5; Soler et al., 2014, p. 5; Chan & Woollacott, 2007, p. 656).

H5. There is a significant positive relationship between FFMQ scores and time (minutes per day) spent practising mindfulness. (Manuel et al., 2017, pp. 1, 5; Soler et al., 2014, p. 5; Chan & Woollacott, 2007, p. 656).

H6. There is a significant positive relationship between FFMQ scores and the days (per cent of total available) spent practising mindfulness. (Manuel et al., 2017, pp. 1, 5; Soler et al., 2014, p. 5; Chan & Woollacott, 2007, p. 656).

H7. There is a significant positive relationship between FFMQ scores and academic achievement. (Zeiden et al., 2010, pp. 597, 602, 603; Miralles-Armenteros et al., 2019, pp. 7,8; Lin & Mai, 2018, p. 373 ; Chiang & Sumell, 2019; Boo et al., 2019, p. 288; Teodorczuk, 2013, p. ii).

H8. There is a significant positive relationship between time (minutes per day) spent practising mindfulness and academic achievement. (Manuel et al., 2017, pp. 1, 5; Soler et al., 2014, p. 5; Chan & Woollacott, 2007, p. 656).

H9. There is a significant positive relationship between days (per cent of total available) spent practising mindfulness and academic achievement. (Manuel et al., 2017, pp. 1, 5; Soler et al., 2014, p. 5; Chan & Woollacott, 2007, p. 656).

H10. There is a significant positive relationship between opinion of mindfulness meditation practice and academic achievement. (Miralles-Armenteros et al., 2019, pp. 7, 8; Lin & Mai, 2018, p. 373; Chiang & Sumell, 2019; Boo et al., 2019, p. 288).

Method

Participants

The research was conducted with post graduate trainee-coaches who attended a module on neuroscience and psychology within a post-graduate coaching programme in a UK business school, in which they engaged in the training and practice of mindfulness meditation. The total number of these trainee coaches who commenced training was 107, 67 of whom completed all the requisite forms; 35 in 2019, 10 in 2020 and 22 in 2021. The disruption caused by Covid19 had reduced the number available in 2020 and 2021. The average age of the sample was 48.5 years with a standard deviation of 6.6. The gender ratio was 61per cent female and 39 per cent male.

Procedure

Three cohorts participated, spread over three years (2019, 2020 and 2021, each over a ten-week period). They took part in a four-hour class session on the first day of the training on the theory and practice of mindfulness. This was conducted by two senior trainers skilled in the practice and theory of mindfulness coaching from the academic and practitioner communities. This class session was followed by a 15-minute guided practice during the second and third days of that week. During the second week of class the following month, each of the first three days were devoted to 15 minutes of

guided practice, totalling 45 minutes. In the last month of class, the first four days were each given to 15 minutes of guided practice, for a total of one hour.

In addition to the class sessions, trainee-coaches continued to practice mindfulness meditation at home and maintained their personal daily diary logs recording the time in minutes practised on a daily basis for the duration of the training. During this time they were also contacted individually by the researchers and program staff to remind them of the benefit of recording their mindfulness exercises in their logs soon after they completed these. At the final workshop of each cohort the second FFMQ form was administered and later collected along with the daily diary logs.

Measures and data collection

The data sources used included pre- and post-training scores from the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ), trainee-coaches' opinions about their training and practice of mindfulness meditation, daily diary logs of their personal mindfulness meditation practice at home, as well as the students' age, gender and academic achievement, i.e., Marks obtained on the neuroscience and psychology module in which the mindfulness meditation training occurred.

Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire

Since the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) provides a comprehensive source to measure mindfulness (Bergomi et al., 2013; de Bruin et al., 2012; Gherardi-Donato et al., 2020; Sauer et al., 2013) and examines 'a greater range of the facets of mindfulness than others' (Baer et al., 2006, p. 36), it was specifically selected to measure the impact of mindfulness meditation training. 'Meditation is significantly and positively correlated with four of the FFMQ mindfulness facets (all but acting with awareness)' ….. and "most mindfulness facets were significantly related to meditation experience and to psychological symptoms and well-being' (Baer et al., 2008, pp. 329,

336). Participants completed the long version (39 questions) of FFMQ before (pre) their mindfulness training and practice commenced and as well as a second FFMQ long version after (post) upon its completion (see Appendices B).

In an attempt to operationalize mindfulness FFMQ integrates a number of different instruments and produces a five-factor (facet) solution:

- '*Observing* includes noticing or attending to internal and external experiences, such as sensations, cognitions, emotions, sights, sounds, and smells.
- *Describing* refers to labeling internal experiences with words.
- *Acting with awareness* includes attending to one's activities of the moment and can be contrasted with behaving mechanically while attention is focused elsewhere (often called automatic pilot).
- *Nonjudging* of inner experience refers to taking a nonevaluative stance toward thoughts and feelings.
- *Nonreactivity* to inner experience is the tendency to allow thoughts and feelings to come and go, without getting caught up in or carried away by them' (Baer et al., 2008, p. 330).

FFMQ pre- and post-meditation training measures provide the data to test Hypothesis 1 in terms of the impact of the mindfulness training conducted during this study; H 2 regarding the trainee-coaches' opinions of the mindfulness meditation practice; H 5 and 6 on frequency and time spent practicing; and H7 academic marks.

Students' opinions of the benefit of mindfulness meditation training

All trainee-coaches who participated were asked at the end of their training once they had completed the second FFMQ to comment in writing on how beneficial the mindfulness meditation training was in terms of their practice of mindfulness

meditation. All provided written comments. Their qualitative responses were rated on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 being not helpful / beneficial through to 5 being very helpful/beneficial. Two experienced researchers rated the trainee-coaches' responses independently and, where differences or disagreements occurred, these were discussed and a final rating agreed.

Daily diary logs of home mindfulness meditation practice

Each trainee-coach used a well-known research device, a daily dairy/log, to record the time in minutes each day they spent practising mindfulness meditation at home over the three-month period of the mindfulness meditation training (Carmody & Baer, 2008; Lloyd et al., 2018). The logs provided the data to test H 5 and 6 in terms of the time spend practising mindfulness meditation, H 3 and 4 with respect to the students' opinions on their training and H8 and 9 on academic performance.

Academic performance

Academic performance (i.e., assignment Mark obtained) on the neuroscience and psychology module was a variable which was related to trainee-coaches' performance with respect to training and practice of mindfulness meditation. The focus of the assignment for the module was to choose and critically review a cognitive behavioural model approach, which included mindfulness coaching.

Demographic variables

Gender and age data were collected and related to all other measures noted above. In the relevant studies in the literature, gender was more frequently used than age, and gender differences with respect to mindfulness–based interventions were found in one study (Rojiani et al., 2017).

Data Analysis

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) (Field, 2018) was used to analyse the data and to test the hypotheses, specifically Pearson product-moment correlation and Mann-Whitney t-test.

Results

Three tables are presented and explained, with key results relating to the hypotheses emphasised. Table 1 shows the percentage changes between post and pre-FFMQ total and facet scores. Percentage change figures are normally used in such cases and enable direct comparisons between scale scores to be made, not possible when using raw scores. Positive means an increase and Negative a decrease in score. On Total Score, 85 per cent showed an increase and 15 per cent a decrease in score. On the facets, between 61 per cent and 85 per cent recorded an increase and between 6 per cent and 30 per cent a decrease, with Observe showing the largest increase.

In order to determine if these results are significantly different, a one-sample t-test was conducted to compare Pre- and Post-FFMQ total and facet scores. Table 2.1 shows that all differences were highly significant. In addition, all Post-FFMQ mean scores were higher than Pre mean scores. Overall, these findings reveal clear support for H1.

Table 2.1 Post minus Pre FFMQ score Percentage Changes and FFMQ 1 vs 2 t-test Results

Total & Subscales:	**Negative %**	**Equal %**	**Positive %**	**t-test:**	**t**	**Sig.**
Total Score	15	0	85		69.87	0.01
Observe	6	9	85		48.54	0.01
Describe*	28	10	61		46.75	0.01
Awareness*	30	5	66		49.88	0.01
Nonjudging	27	10	63		39.16	0.01
Nonreacting*	16	10	73		44.56	0.01
n = 67					df = 66	

*These three rows do not equal 100% because figures were rounded.

Table 2.2 presents the Pearson correlations with significance levels between the variables: Time Spent (Average minutes per day, Min/Day) and percentage of days available (% Days) spent practising; ratings of Opinions on the practice; academic performance (Ac Marks); and FFMQ total and facet scores Pre (1), Post (2) and Post minus Pre (PP); and age of participants.

All correlations between FFMQ and Time Spent on practice were not statistically significant. These findings reject H 5. Regarding Days spent practising, all correlations with Pre FFMQ were not significant. However, correlations with Post FFMQ total score and all facets except Describe were significant. Furthermore, Post minus Pre FFMQ total score and two facets, Observe and Nonjudging, were significant. Therefore, these findings provide some support for H6. Those who spent more days practicing were more mindful (i.e. attained higher scores) after practice.

The correlation between opinion of practice and time spent practising was not significant and so H3 is rejected. However, the correlation between opinion of practice

and days spent practising was significant and so H4 is supported. Those who spend more days on practice appear to have a higher opinion of that practice.

Ratings on participants' opinions of their practice show a similar pattern. While only two facets showed significant correlations between opinions and Pre FFMQ, Post FFMQ total score and four facets (all except Describe) showed significant relationships. Furthermore, Post minus Pre FFMQ total score and two facets, Observe and Nonjudging, were significantly related. Therefore, these findings provide some support for H2. Those with more favourable opinions tended to be more mindful (i.e., attained higher scores) after practice.

Turning to the correlations with academic performance (Ac Marks), Pre FFMQ total score and three facets, Observe, Describe and Nonjudging, were all significantly correlated with Ac Marks, as was Post FFMQ total score. However, not one of the Post minus Pre scores was significant. Therefore, these findings provide partial support for H7. Those who achieved higher Marks tended to be more mindful (i.e., attained higher scores).

Correlations between Academic Marks and both Time and Days spent practicing were not significant and so H8 and H9 were rejected. Furthermore, opinion of the practice was not significantly correlated with Academic Marks and so H10 is also rejected. Therefore, amount of, and opinion about, practice do not appear to influence academic performance.

Finally, Age was only significantly correlated with one variable, Time Spent practising. Correlations with Frequency and Opinions of Practice, and Academic Marks were not significant. Therefore, Age does not appear to influence the key variables.

Table 2.2 Correlations between Diary Log, Opinions, Academic Mark, Age, Experience, FFMQ

	Mins/Day	**% Days**	**Opinions**	**Ac Marks**	**Age**
Total FFMQ1	0.060	-0.024	0.172	0.256**	0.025
Observe1	0.134	0.070	0.212*	0.182*	-0.020
Describe1	0.010	-0.080	-0.046	0.230*	0.012
Aware1	-0.051	-0.099	0.175	0.122	0.003
Nonjudging1	0.088	-0.015	0.059	0.190*	0.097
Nonreacting1	0.024	0.072	0.236*	0.138	-0.043
Total FFMQ2	0.112	0.393**	0.401**	0.231*	-0.074
Observe2	0.045	0.218*	0.370**	0.134	-0.157
Describe2	-0.023	0.004	-0.005	0.182	-0.076
Aware2	0.015	0.258*	0.395**	0.133	-0.088
Nonjudging2	0.167	0.486**	0.316**	0.162	0.077
Nonreacting2	0.149	0.259*	0.248*	0.150	-0.023
Total Post - Pre	0.041	0.416**	0.212*	-0.017	-0.113
ObservePP	-0.131	0.210	0.232*	-0.066	-0.118
DescribePP	-0.047	0.134	0.066	-0.112	-0.094
AwarePP	0.070	0.348**	0.179	0.074	-0.142
NonjudgingPP	0.067	0.462**	0.244*	-0.031	-0.038
NonreactingPP	0.154	0.229*	-0.003	0.063	-0.045
Mins Per Day	1	0.403**	0.155	0.071	0.220*
% Days	0.403**	1	0.469**	-0.051	0.092
Opinions	0.155	0.469**	1	0.124	0.073
Academic Marks	0.071	-0.051	0.124	1	0.060
Age	.220*	0.092	0.073	0.060	1
N	59	59	67	65	67

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

In order to explore the coach trainees' opinions more deeply, they were rated independently by the first two authors on a 5-point Likert scale from *very useful* to being of *no benefit*. The trainees' ratings were then split into two similar sized groups. Those with high, favourable opinions of their practice with ratings of 4 and 5, 46 per cent of the sample; and those with lower, less favourable opinions with ratings of 1, 2 & 3, 54 per cent. t-tests, which compared mean scores of the two groups on all the other variables, were conducted. Results are presented in Table 2.3.

There were no significant differences on Pre FFMQ mean scores between the two groups whereas Post FFMQ total score and four facet scores (all except Describe) showed significant differences, four of which were highly significant. On Post minus Pre FFMQ there were significant differences between mean group scores on Total Score and the facet Nonjudging. These findings are broadly in line with the relevant correlation results and provide further support for H2.

There was not a significant difference between groups on Time Spent practicing, thus providing more evidence for the rejection of H3. However, there was a highly significant difference between groups on Days Spent practising. These findings are in line with the relevant correlation results and provide further support for H4.

There was a significant difference between groups on Marks attained. Those with more favourable opinions of their practice achieved significantly higher Marks than those with less favourable opinions. This finding contrasts with the correlation found between rating of opinion and marks, which was not significant, but do provide partial support for H10.

Table 2.3 t-test: Opinion Rating Groups 1/2/3 vs 4/5 on all other variables

	Opinion	*N*	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig.
Total FFMQ1	Low	36	120.8	14.50	-1.55	65	0.13
	High	31	127.6	21.09			
Observe1	Low	36	24.3	4.75	-1.82	65	0.07
	High	31	26.5	5.07			
Describe1	Low	36	28.3	5.51	-0.32	65	0.75
	High	31	28.7	6.38			
Aware1	Low	36	23.6	4.69	-1.31	65	0.19
	High	31	25.3	5.61			
Nonjudging1	Low	36	25.4	6.50	-0.89	65	0.38
	High	31	26.9	6.53			
Nonreacting1	Low	36	19.2	4.00	-0.99	65	0.33
	High	31	20.2	4.74			
Total FFMQ2	Low	37	131.2	13.47	-4.36	66	0.00
	High	31	146.6	15.61			
Observe2	Low	37	27.7	4.85	-2.87	66	0.01
	High	31	31.0	4.54			
Describe2	Low	37	29.9	5.38	-1.17	66	0.25
	High	31	31.4	5.38			
Aware2	Low	37	25.3	4.21	-3.50	66	0.00
	High	31	28.8	3.98			
Nonjudging2	Low	37	27.0	6.34	-3.70	66	0.00
	High	31	32.1	4.72			
Nonreacting2	Low	37	21.4	3.69	-1.98	66	0.05
	High	31	23.3	4.40			
Total Post - Pre	Low	36	10.5	15.30	-2.18	65	0.03
	High	31	18.9	16.46			
ObservePP	Low	36	3.5	3.32	-1.20	65	0.23
	High	31	4.5	3.37			
DescribePP	Low	36	1.4	4.04	-1.32	65	0.19
	High	31	2.68	3.70			
AwarePP	Low	36	1.72	4.57	-1.52	65	0.13
	High	31	3.48	4.91			
NonjudgingPP	Low	36	1.53	6.12	-2.41	65	0.02
	High	31	5.23	6.41			
NonreactingPP	Low	36	2.31	3.75	-0.86	65	0.39
	High	31	3.06	3.44			
Mins Per Day	Low	31	11.05	4.06	-1.86	57	0.07
	High	28	13.64	6.47			
% Days	Low	31	43.09	25.72	-4.41	57	0.00
	High	28	71.97	24.46			
Academic Marks	Low	34	64.82	8.02	-1.97	63	0.05
	High	31	68.45	7.01			

Note on Opinion Rating: Low Group 1,2,3, 54.4%; High Group 4 & 5, 45.6%.

In summary, the findings confirm the importance of training in the development of insights and skills with respect to attention, presence, empathy, self-regulation and non-judgement, the impact of which are also considered by the literature to be fundamental in mindfulness coaching. An increase in mindfulness in trainee-coaches was found for the majority of the trainee coaches after the practice sessions. A large majority of trainee-coaches (52; 78 per cent) were positive about the training and practice and had found it beneficial. Those with higher levels of mindfulness, and those whose mindfulness had improved, tended to have more favourable opinions of mindfulness, showing positive effects of practice in contrast to those with lower mindfulness. A positive relationship between increases in mindfulness during training and the days available spent practising mindfulness are important findings.

Discussion

Why the training and regular practice of mindfulness is useful for coaches

Increases in Mindfulness

The unifying theme of this study is the place of mindfulness meditation in the development of trainee-coaches. Improvements in mindfulness were found after the practice sessions. The results showing an increase in mindfulness for post- minus pre-FFMQ scores for the majority of the students, a finding supported by de Bruin et al. (2015).

Frequency of, commitment to and favourable opinion of practice

The importance of regular mindfulness meditation practice resonates with the trainee-coaches' opinion about mindfulness practice. Although no significant relationship was found for them between minutes of practice per day and their opinion about the practice, there was a significant positive relationship between the number of days

spent practicing, indicative of frequent practice, and their opinion. Therefore, it is not the amount of time spent meditating but rather the frequency of the meditation as a percentage of the number of days available for practice which is significant. This relationship suggests that those who practise regularly are also more likely to be more committed or motivated to the practice of mindfulness meditation than those who do not practise regularly and that this commitment would appear to be reflected in their opinion also about their practice.

Those trainee-coaches with higher post FFMQ2 scores tended to have more favourable opinions of practice, as did those with higher change scores (FFMQPP). The implication of these findings is that those with higher levels of mindfulness, and those whose mindfulness had improved, tended to have more favourable opinions, showing positive effects of practice in contrast to those with lower mindfulness. Numerous positive personal written comments from trainee-coaches offered clear affirmations of how mindfulness meditation training had helped them in their practice of mindfulness meditation. Although a large majority of trainee-coaches (52; 78 per cent) were positive about the mindfulness meditation training and practice and had found it beneficial, a few (15; 22 per cent) offered less positive comments.

The results on improvements of mindfulness and on trainee-coaches opinions relate well with the findings indicating a positive relationship between post (but not pre) FFMQ, and significant increases in scores and the days available spent practising mindfulness. These are important findings. Regular mindfulness meditation practice for shorter periods of time is more effective than intermittent or infrequent practice for longer periods of time, findings supported by Soler et al. (2014), cited above. These results suggest that trainee-coaches who choose to practice more frequently may already be committed to developing or maintaining their mindfulness skills than those

who do not. As such, those who may be more committed are also likely to be more motivated to use mindfulness meditation skills in their practice and can see that they have a place in their present or future coaching practice. Some may already have had an appreciation of mindfulness meditation prior to the training, which they felt may have suited their temperament and personality or to be a preferred approach to coaching.

Other areas related to training and practice

Academic performance and mindfulness meditation practice

No significant positive relationships were found between marks achieved on the neuroscience and psychology module and the amount of time spent on mindfulness meditation practice; the number of days spent practising; or ratings of the students' opinion of their mindfulness meditation training. A possible explanation of these findings is that the assignment marks measure knowledge and understanding of the general subject area, and not the skills developed in the practice – the focus of this study. Therefore, Marks are based on work on a number of topics, only one of which is mindfulness.

Notwithstanding, literature cited above shows a relationship between academic performance (Marks achieved) and mindfulness meditation practice, in that practice provides the conditions which can enhance academic learning and performance in terms of increasing awareness, improving mood, attention, processing information, as indicated by improvements on cognitive tasks and mindfulness scores (Zeidan et al., 2010). This contrasts with our findings and merits further investigation.

Those with higher Mindfulness scores at the start of the module (FFMQ 1) and at the end (FFMQ 2) were likely to achieve higher Marks but those with higher FFMQ

Post minus Pre scores were not. A possible explanation may be that many of these students already had high levels of mindfulness and so the scope for further development was limited. Thus, the improvements in mindfulness (from FFMQ PP scores) were not related to Marks achieved.

Demographic variables

There were *no* significant correlations between Age and any of the FFMQ scores. Furthermore, t-tests comparing gender differences on *all* variables produced *no* significant differences between males and females. The literature is sparse on this subject and what does appear relates only to facets of mindfulness. Soler et al. (2014) found differences between the effect of both gender and age on FFMQ mindfulness facets and Baer et al. (2008) found that age by itself is modestly correlated with the FFMQ facet Acting with Awareness. Further research on demographic differences in mindfulness appears to be required.

Practical applications of the findings

The major findings of this study have implications for practice of mindfulness meditation. There was an increase of mindfulness in trainee-coaches between the start and end of practice sessions. The implication of this finding is that the practice of mindfulness meditation appears to have had a beneficial effect on mindfulness of the trainee-coaches and that practice seems to be effective and should continue. Further, given the linkage between coach competencies (ICF, 2019) encouraging coach presence and client engagement, it may be concluded these aspects of coach practice will also be enhanced.

Whereas the time spent practicing does not improve mindfulness as measured by FFMQ, the frequency of practice sessions and opinions of the practice do.

Furthermore, all FFMQ facets except Describe indicated improvements. The clear implication here is that trainee-coaches should be encouraged to have frequent and regular practice sessions, rather than a few lengthy sessions.

Although opinions of practice were not significantly correlated with marks, the group with high/favourable opinions (4 and 5) achieved significantly higher Marks than those with less favourable opinions (1, 2 and 3). The practical implication of this finding is that lessons might be learned by those administering this training program from the opinions of both these trainee-coaches groups in terms of the impact these could have on their development.

Students with higher mindfulness scores at the start of their mindfulness meditation module (FFMQ test 1) were likely to achieve higher Marks. This also extended to three facets (Observe, Describe and Non- judging) and to the total score on the post test (FFMQ2). Furthermore, significant t-test results between favourable and less favourable opinion groups found significantly higher marks for the favourable group. These findings suggest that at the outset those trainee-coaches with higher levels of mindfulness overall and on the three facets were likely to achieve higher marks. This provides a case for the use of FFMQ as an instrument to select trainee-coaches (students) for courses.

Limitations of the research

This was a single study on a specific coaching programme in one business school. It raises questions about how far the results can be generalised. However, because of the limited literature on mindfulness training on coaching programmes, this study does provide some rare and useful findings. The comparison of these results with those of other programs is difficult because “there is no standardization between programs”

(McConville, 2017, p. 42). Notwithstanding, some of the outcomes of this study are supported in the literature above by other mindfulness meditation training results.

The study did not probe the student participants' future considerations with respect to their personal practice and professional use of mindfulness meditation. This would have offered useful insights to gauge the students' intentions to use or continue to use mindfulness meditation, in different ways and contexts.

Addendum post publication

The study did not use a control group, which is acknowledged as a limitation of this study. The authors considered setting up and including a control group of mature post-graduate students at the outset of the research. In view of the time and commitment required of such a group over the period of the study, they were unable to find a group willing and able to contribute to the study.

Consequences of no control group

Since the study did not have the benefit of a control group, as well as it being based on self-report data from the trainee coaches, it is difficult to confirm the results, which may have been attributable to the variables tested or to external factors.

Benefit of control group and caveats

The use of a control group could potentially have helped to ensure greater internal validity of the study, by offering a means to compare the responses offered by the 67 trainee coaches. It would have allowed the researchers to offer additional confirmation or explanation for the study results, which may have influenced the outcomes.

For example, a control group would have offered additional data and analysis, which may have helped to explain why there were increases and decreases in the level of mindfulness amongst the coach trainees, and or to what extent there may have

been no change in mindfulness. Furthermore, a control group may have potentially identified or explained if or why the importance some student trainees attributed to the importance to mindfulness at the pre-test was a factor in rating themselves higher on the post-test, i.e., the Hawthorne Effect.

In view of the above comments in this Addendum, additional research would benefit from the inclusion of a robust control group to match the coach trainees, such as one comprised of post-graduate students in similar or related subject areas. It would offer additional assurance and potentially enhance the internal validity of the findings of the research.

Further research

Students with more coaching experience might logically be expected to score higher on mindfulness meditation since they would be considered to have a broader or more in-depth appreciation of coaching and how and where mindfulness meditation could most appropriately be used in coaching. This premise needs to be considered in future research on other programmes.

Since this study did not find a significant difference between males and females or provide a compelling explanation for this, it is suggested that future research into mindfulness meditation further examines the impact of gender in mindfulness meditation training.

Given that practice frequency has a relationship to the opinion students had about mindfulness meditation practice, it is suggested further research be conducted on this relationship on other programmes, in terms of the development of trainee-coaches, and also perhaps of practising coaches, who are seeking to develop their mindfulness meditation skills. Such research could also examine the short- and long-

term impact of the mindfulness training and practice and the trainee coaches' continued commitment to these in their day-to-day coaching practice.

Finally, additional related work by the authors which further explores the development of mindfulness in coaching, the focus of which is the use of mindfulness by experienced coach practitioners (Van Den Assem & Passmore, 2022) and coach supervisors (Van Den Assem, Passmore & Dulewicz, 2022) is already underway. Based on the results of that research and of this study, the authors' aim is to present an integrated understanding and position for the training and development of mindfulness for coach practitioners.

Conclusion

Three hypotheses were supported: The majority will have higher FFMQ scores on mindfulness meditation after the training than before (H1). There is a positive relationship between trainees' FFMQ test scores and available days spent practicing (H6). There is also a positive relationship between opinion of their mindfulness meditation practice and the days available spent practicing (H4). Two other hypotheses were partially supported: There is a positive relationship between FFMQ scores and opinions about mindfulness meditation practice (H2); and there is a positive relationship between FFMQ scores and academic achievement (H7). Hypotheses 3, 5, 8, 9 and 10 were rejected.

Mindfulness meditation training of trainee-coaches complements and aids the development of professional and personal skills, and the use of mindfulness in coaching. The training offers opportunities for greater interpersonal insights, and the use of mindfulness meditation in coaching practice. The contribution of this research has broad implications for the training and use of mindfulness meditation in academic

settings. In particular, the use of the FFMQ in the selection of students, and possibly extended to teaching staff, in mindfulness meditation training and practice could promote a positive mindfulness environment in support of both students and faculty.

In addition, the implications of the applicability of mindfulness training for coaches would be that it is also useful in the development of mindfulness for coaching practice generally. Since the use of mindfulness in coaching has become more prominent in the coaching literature, a broader application and interest in it is likely to continue to evolve. Not only in the practice of coaching and evidence of its impact, but also in terms of continuing professional development, coaching supervision, academic research and for professional coaching organizations.

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Chapter 3

How experienced coaches use mindfulness in practice and how they know it is useful or beneficial

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Abstract

The research sought to explore the meaning of mindfulness for experienced coaching practitioners in a practice context. There are many formal definitions but it is difficult to know how and which ones are used in practice and to what degree or effect. The purpose of the research was to obtain a clearer understanding of what mindfulness is from the practitioners' perspective in terms of its available definitions and how it is used and is useful or beneficial in practice. The research used qualitative methodology, an interpretivist and constructivist approach, the in-depth interview method and interpretative phenomenological analysis to analyse the data. Using purposive sampling, 30 experienced coach practitioners were interviewed with respect to their position on mindfulness. The coaches' perspectives are reflected in two meta-themes: how coaches used mindfulness, and how coaches know mindfulness is useful or beneficial (i.e., the impact of mindfulness). The first is comprised of five sub-themes: practicing with greater awareness in the here and now, being present or having presence and focus, being non-judgmental and practicing with curiosity and kindness, creating space for clients, and practicing in a more effective and respectful way. The second is expressed in 10 subthemes related to how the coaches know

mindfulness was useful or beneficial for themselves, the client, and the coach-client relationship. Further research and specific implications are proposed for the practice of mindfulness in coaching, including an enhanced operational definition and model for mindfulness in coaching.

What's It Mean? Implications for Consulting Psychology?

The research reported on here helps align the challenges and limitations presented by the literature in terms of definitions and the practice of mindfulness by coach practitioners. The overall purpose is to offer greater clarity and connection between these definitions and the practice of mindfulness, with the end goal being to provide an enhanced definition and model of mindfulness and ultimately greater effectiveness in practice.

Keywords: mindfulness, coaching, coaches, practice, coachees

Most investigations into mindfulness has not been based on standardized or validated empirical research or outcome studies with respect to its use in a coaching context (Grant, 2013; Virgili, 2013). There are concerns about its lack of content validity or external supports for construct validity and the means for measuring mindful communication (Park et al., 2013; Prince-Paul & Kelley, 2017). Furthermore, it is difficult to define partly because it overlaps with other constructs, the aims of which do not appear to differ from those of mindfulness (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000; Passmore, 2009). An example is Johns' (2013) consideration that both reflection and mindfulness are typologies on a scale of reflective practices.

The major concern with the concept of mindfulness is the definitional challenges it poses for qualitative research, let alone quantitative research (Grant, 2013). One source considers it to be “a confused construct” that lacked “definitional clarity and consistency across research studies” (Cavanagh & Spence, 2013, pp. 113-114). Others continue to consider that a clear and agreed upon coach practitioner definition of mindfulness has not been reached (Nilsson & Kazemi, 2016; Spence, 2019; Trowbridge & Mische Lawson, 2016; Virgili, 2013). Few papers explored the benefits of mindfulness or the development of it in practice by coaches for themselves or their clients (Passmore, 2017). In view of this, it was difficult to know which definitions of mindfulness coaches have used and to what degree or effect they used these in practice or if they independently developed their own understanding of mindfulness through the practice of it.

The Issues and Direction of the Research

The literature identified that there is a need for further research on the issues and conditions related to definitions and the measurement of mindfulness (Spence, 2019). Various issues and gaps in the theory and conceptualization of mindfulness in coaching as related to definitions, constructs, measurement, and content validity clearly illustrate a need for research to be undertaken in these areas. The lack of precision in defining as well as the use of mindfulness calls for an agreement on what constitutes mindfulness (Nilsson & Kazemi, 2016; Virgili, 2013). In addition, it is reported that the increased use of mindfulness in practice has meant it is becoming more difficult to define its “scope and content” (Trowbridge & Mische Lawson, 2016, p.103). Furthermore, it is claimed the literature did not provide a consensus about clarity and consistency with respect to the definition or nature of mindfulness (Cavanagh & Spence, 2013). The literature did not provide agreement in defining

mindfulness in terms of how specific coach practitioners have used mindfulness in practice and its impact or, more specifically, how they know it is useful or beneficial for the coach or client. In addition, it did not give adequate attention to the uniqueness of the voice of the coach practitioner using mindfulness even though it offered many definitions of it. In view of this, it is the coaches' use of mindfulness in practice and its usefulness or benefit which was chosen as the focus of this research. The research questions which guided this research were: How do coaches use mindfulness? And how do they know it is useful or beneficial?

An important consideration and issue identified in the literature relates to mindfulness and reflection. Various authors have stated or implied that mindfulness "overlaps with many other constructs" such as reflectiveness (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000, p.1) or that the aims of reflectiveness do not appear to differ from those of mindfulness (Passmore, 2009). Since mindfulness and reflection at times use similar terminology, which tends to conflate them, reflectiveness is often noted as being supportive of or working in tandem with mindfulness.

Johns (2013) has gone so far as to propose that both reflection and mindfulness are typologies on a scale of reflective practices, with the clear implication that reflection leads to mindfulness. Hewson and Carroll (2016, pp. 44-45, 57) saw reflection to be a "mindful consideration" and reflective practice as ''a recurrent process that moves through three stances of mindfulness, consideration and consolidation", the "starting point" for which is mindfulness. At the higher levels, reflection appears to have characteristics which may be ascribed to mindfulness. "Transcendent reflection" that "sees beyond to what makes meaning and what gives meaning to life … transcends any particular relationship, person or situation" (Carroll, 2010, p. 24) and places a greater emphasis on the "existential", "spiritual" engagement" and "sense-making" (de

Haan, 2012, p. 54). This would suggest that mindfulness can guide and enhance reflection. Finally, Passmore & Amit's (2017, p. 5) concept of "mindful awareness" helps to connect mindfulness through attention to reflection as follows: "Mindful awareness is a way of being, as much as mindfulness is a chosen way of life".

The various definitions of mindfulness in the literature note that the focus of mindfulness is not on outcomes but more on being, awareness, attention, the present, and a state of mind, which as a consequence may enable reflection to occur (Table 3.A). Succinctly put, to distinguish it from reflection at this particular point, Evans, et al. (2009, p. 379) saw mindfulness as "a form of present-centered, non-judgmental, and non-reactive awareness".

In contrast, reflection relies more on experience, logic and cognitive skills or doing, as opposed to being, which perhaps helps to explain the major difference between reflection and mindfulness. "Reflection is generally viewed as a thinking activity," "a mental process with a purpose or an outcome," and "a skill for improving learning outcomes" that "[bring] about deeper understanding of self-concept, enrichment of learning outcomes, and enhancement of critical thinking skills", and as such, reflection is "an important strategy for learning and change". (Hullinger et al., 2019, pp. 7-8).

The literature considered and reviewed for the research was based on the quality of their relevance to the research questions. First, the mindfulness and coaching literature was of particular importance. Second, related sources which provided broader contexts with respect to the interconnectivity of the practice and theory of mindfulness were considered. Third, both quantitative and qualitative sources were reviewed and included (Trowbridge & Mische Lawson, 2016; Wamsler et al., 2018). However, very few quantitative sources were found that met the inclusion

criteria (Theeboom et al., 2013), and only two made a useful contribution to the literature review. Fourth, the grey literature was considered, but only peer-reviewed journals, academic books and a published doctoral dissertation were included in this review. Finally, the literature reviewed was in English.

Purpose of the Research

The research seeks to address the issues identified in the literature, namely those related to definitions and the use of mindfulness in practice. Its overall purpose was to offer greater clarity and connection between these, the end goal of which was to consider an enhanced definition and model of mindfulness and ultimately greater effectiveness in practice. The “Results” and “Discussion” sections provide an in-depth account of the coaches’ meanings of mindfulness in terms of themes and interrelationships. A number of salient or tangible constructs or features of mindfulness were identified that provided a basis for developing an enhanced practice definition and model for mindfulness in coaching.

Second, the purpose of this research was to provide a clearer understanding of what the implications are for the use of mindfulness by coach practitioners and how these can help shape future practice and research. The practitioners’ perspective on mindfulness was instrumental in this purpose. Coach practitioners were selected and interviewed for their experience and understanding of mindfulness in practice. The research used a qualitative methodology and an interpretivist and constructivist approach, the in-depth interview method, and interpretive phenomenological analysis to analyse the data. Finally, coaches were invited to reflect on both these descriptive and prescriptive contributions and elements of the research and embrace these in terms of applying or integrating them into their own practice.

Challenges in Defining and Using Mindfulness in Coaching

In spite of claims by Cavanagh & Spence (2013) and others reported above that mindfulness lacked definitional clarity and there being a lack of agreement on a coach practitioner definition of mindfulness, Nilsson & Kazemi (2016, pp. 183, 186-187) and the researchers discovered a somewhat less supportive view of this discordance. Thirty-eight of the 42 definitions of mindfulness identified by them reflected a substantial consistency and conceptual compatibility (Table 3.1, 3.2, 3.A). The 38 definitions included specific references with respect to awareness, attention, and the present and supportive concepts such as fully awake, consciousness, attending, being in the present, present moment, the here and now (Table 3.1). However, what these concepts meant for the practicing coach was not represented in the definitions, nor was the meaning or implication of these in each definition.

Table 3.1

Most Frequently Identified Conceptual Similarities Across 38 of the 42 Definitions of Mindfulness

Mindfulness concepts	*N* of definitions in which these concepts appeared
Awareness, fully awake, consciousness	28 (66.7%)
Attention, attending	17 (40.5%)
Here and now, present moment, being in the moment	26 (61.9%)

The fact that four definitions neither explicitly include reference to the concepts that appeared in the 38, nor illustrate much conceptual comparability across the four, supports the definitional discordance referred to by Cavanagh & Spence (2013) and others above. Each of the four definitions had a different emphasis or slant with respect to mindfulness (Table 3.2). One definition considered it to be a “preferred way of thinking” (Sternberg, 2000, pp. 11, 24); another, “a psychological state” of “information processing” (Krieger, 2005, p.137); the third “an orientation to everyday experiences” (Hick, 2009 p.1); and finally, a “combination of ongoing scrutiny of existing expectations, continuous refinement and differentiation of expectations, based on newer experiences, willingness and capability to invent new expectations” (Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001, p.42).

Table 3.2

Conceptual Differences Identified Between Four of the 42 Definitions of Mindfulness

Conceptual differences	Authors
"Preferred way of thinking'. It has characteristics of a 'cognitive ability', a 'personality trait', a 'cognitive style'. It is 'at the interface of between cognition and personality' "	Sternberg (2000, pp. 11, 24)
"A psychological state in which individuals engage in active information processing while performing their current tasks such that they are actively analyzing, categorizing, and making distinctions in data'"	Krieger (2005, p.137)
"Mindfulness is an orientation to our everyday experiences that can be cultivated by means of various exercises and practices"	Hick (2009, p. 1)
"The combination of ongoing scrutiny of existing expectations, continuous refinement and differentiation of expectations based on newer experiences, willingness and capability to invent new expectations that make sense of unprecedented events, a more nuanced appreciation of context and ways to deal with it, and identification of new dimensions of context that improve foresight and current functioning"	Weick and Sutcliffe (2001, p. 42)

The Voice of the Coach Practitioner

The research questions were designed to identify mindfulness within a practice context of coaching. They allowed coach practitioners' voices to emerge and express how they used mindfulness and know it is useful or beneficial. The various themes which emerged identified the major features and constituents of mindfulness they used in practice which are also reflected in the definitions of mindfulness in the literature.

Method

Research Design

Although the various definitions of mindfulness noted in the literature review were useful in conceptualizing the front-end requirements of the research, the researchers felt that the definitions were at times overly complex or limited in their application or purpose in explaining practice. In view of this, the research took on an experiential purpose and focus in terms of how practitioners see and use mindfulness in practice. Their experiences were sought to clarify the use and benefit of mindfulness in practice, which in turn could contribute to the existing conceptual understanding of it in the literature. The interview schedule was designed to capture this through two specific questions and prompts with respect to mindfulness.

- How does mindfulness inform your coaching practice?
- How do you know when mindfulness is useful or beneficial for you and your coaches, i.e. its impact?

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis and Traditional Qualitative Research

IPA and the more traditional qualitative approach to research appear to have a number of things in common. According to Mack et al. (2005, p. 3) the general framework for qualitative research and IPA seeks "to explore phenomena", using "instruments which are more flexible, an iterative style of eliciting and categorizing responses to questions",

and “semistructured methods such as in-depth interview”. Their analytical objectives are to describe and explain “variation, relationships, individual experiences and group norms”. The format of questions is “open-ended” and data format is “textural based on audiotapes, videotapes and filed notes”. In terms of study design, “some aspects … are flexible, participant responses affect how and which questions researchers ask next”, and the “study design is iterative, that is, data collection and research questions are adjusted according to what is learned” (Mack et al., 2005, p. 3).

IPA differs from the traditional qualitative approach methodologically in its focus and commitment to the examination of “how people make sense of their major life experiences” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 1). “The researcher is trying to make sense of the participant trying to make sense of what is happening to them” Furthermore, “the researcher … only has access to the participant’s experience through the participant’s own account of it”, which the researcher interprets “in order to understand their experience” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 3) In view of this, IPA studies usually use “relatively” small sample sizes and “reasonably” homogeneous samples “so that, within the sample … convergence and divergence [can be examined] in some detail” (Smith et al., 2009, p.3).

IPA was found to be highly suitable for the research. The authors took the explicit stand on IPA as providing an “intensive qualitative analysis of detailed personal accounts” from the coaches interviewed (Smith, 2011, p. 10; Denicolo et al., 2016). This analysis “helped to explore, describe and interpret the means by which … participants [made] sense of their experiences” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 40). In so doing IPA provided an “understanding [of] lived experience and shared culture” of coaches who used mindfulness, which was consistent with the purpose of this qualitative

research that sought to understand how practitioners see themselves as using mindfulness in practice (Spinks, 2018, p. 8).

Since the purpose of the research was to obtain insights from the coaches interviewed about what they thought about mindfulness in their coaching practice, it did not use a particular definition of mindfulness to guide the research design or the interviews. Rather, it looked to the coaches interviewed to provide their own descriptions of mindfulness. However, Langer's (1997) and Langer and Moldoveanu's (2000) socio-cognitive perspective on mindfulness were helpful in conceptualizing the research framework.

Sample and Recruitment

All 30 coach practitioners were identified and recruited through purposive sampling. IPA calls for "a reasonable homogenous sample" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 3), and the sample was homogenous on a number of dimensions. These included experience in mindfulness as part of their practice, qualifications, language, age, and gender as representative of practitioners in the coaching profession.

- Coaches were all experienced in using mindfulness in their coaching practice, with an average of 14.1 years of coaching experience. In addition some also had experience in other coaching modalities inclined to use mindfulness, for example, Gestalt, (Gillie, 2011), cognitive behavioural, personal centred, psychodynamic and family systems.
- Seventy-seven percent (23) had post graduate qualifications in coaching or were in the process of acquiring these.
- The average age was upper middle age, that is, 54, with a range of 39 to 70.
- The gender ratio was skewed positively towards female, 60% female and 40% male, which reflects the gender difference in the coaching profession.

- Ninety-three percent (28) were from English speaking countries and 70% (21) were from the United Kingdom. The two coaches who were not from English speaking countries were fluently bilingual, from countries where English is widely used and that have strong cultural connections with the United Kingdom. Their profiles are provided in Table 3.B.

Selection Criteria

The coaches' experiences in mindfulness were used to frame the selection criteria. In the context of Langer & Moldoveanu (2000), these criteria were based on the coaches' practice of mindfulness and in particular their recognition of the importance of alternative interpretations for themselves, their clients and the issues brought to coaching. The criteria were based on the process of "drawing novel distinctions" to provide insight into the coaches' "sensitivity" to their environment, "openness to new information", "the creation of new categories for structuring perception", and "awareness of multiple perspectives in problem solving" (Langer & Moldoveanu, 2000, p. 2).

The coaches were recruited through referrals from practicing coaches, university coaching facilities, their staff and researchers, and professional coaching organizations, - for example, the International Coaching Federation and the Association for Coaching**.** Their self-reported level of coaching competence with the exception of one was at the senior or master coach level based on the International Coaching Federation's (2017) Core Competencies and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council's (2015, 2018) Competence Framework V2 and Glossary.

The sample size of 30, which may be larger than necessary (Smith et al., 2009:51,106), provided rich personal accounts to allow for key themes to emerge for

the group. This may have not have been possible with a smaller sample or more quantitative methodologies (Smith et al., 2009; Grant et al., 2010).

Data Collection Strategies

Coaches were interviewed in person and via Skype and Zoom, using a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix C), voice recorded, and subsequently professionally transcribed by a court reporter. The questions posed of the coaches were designed to encourage latitude, openness and a deeper and richer sense of meaning to emerge (Oppenheim, 1992; Smith & Osborn, 2003). The alignment of a qualitative approach with the two research questions, that is, how do coaches use mindfulness and how they know it is useful or beneficial, ensured the data and themes which emerged were strongly linked and focused on the purpose of the research**.**

Analysis of data

IPA was used to analyse the interview data and explore and interpret how the coaches interviewed regarded and understood their experiences (Denicolo et al., 2016; Smith, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). It was chosen since it promoted depth and understanding in examining "how people make sense of their major life experiences" and was "concerned with exploring experience in its own terms" (Smith et al., 2009, p 1). Furthermore, from a research perspective, IPA was aligned with what the researchers of this article were aiming to achieve, which is "trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of what is happening to them" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 3). The coding of the data initially provided first cycle codes which over time led to deeper or richer levels of interpretation, culminating with the emergence of meta-themes which addressed and answered the research questions.

Preliminary coding was completed using a priori coding which reflected the structure of the interview schedule questions, which in turn were based on the

research questions, using “soft” a priori themes “representing potential aspects of [interest in] the data” (King and Brooks, 2017, p. 29). First-cycle codes which were subsequently either relabelled or became other codes, new categories and finally major themes or assertions (Saldana, 2016). The content of the themes was analysed for its relationship within each and across other themes for relevance and explanatory value. Throughout the coding process emergent thoughts were considered and used in identifying and developing the themes. Initially only the most salient information in the 30 transcripts related to the research questions were identified. Mega patterns (Saldana, 2016, pp. 5-6) emerged from the data as the interview transcripts were prepared, read and re-read by the researchers and two academic colleagues experienced in coding and analysis. This inter-rater reliability served to control potential bias and resolve any questions or conflicts in terms of coding differences.

The analysis of the data provided various themes related to mindfulness in practice. Two meta-themes emerged. One was with respect to how coaches used mindfulness, which included five sub-themes. The other was how they know mindfulness is useful or beneficial, that is, its impact, which was comprised of ten sub-themes (Table 3.3). The material used to describe any one sub-theme also served to inform others, which essentially represents the character and fluidity of mindfulness itself and the contexts in which it is used.

Table 3.3

How Mindfulness is used in Practice and How to Know If It Is Useful or Beneficial

Sub themes	Metatheme 1: How mindfulness is used in practice	Metatheme 2: How to know mindfulness is useful or beneficial
1	Practicing with greater awareness in the here and now	Coach-focused cluster: 1 to 6 Giving meaning to clients' lives and experience
2	Being present or having presence and focus	Being present and having presence
3	Being nonjudgmental, practicing with curiosity and kindness	Understanding what is going on for the client
4	Creating space for clients	Being able to clear /quieten the mind and create space for clients
5	Practicing in a more effective and respectful way	Acknowledging and supporting clients' choices
6		Being able to recognize changes in the client
7		Client-focused cluster: 7 and 8 Knowing what the coach and client want
8		Being in touch with the mind and physical body
9		Coach-client relationship focused cluster: 9 and 10 Having effective communications
10		Being able to work together

Thirty-eight of the 42 definitions of mindfulness resonated with or explicitly reflected and supported the views on mindfulness of the 30 coaches interviewed. The themes that emerged related to how coaches use mindfulness and know it was useful or beneficial. Many of the themes are broad, not mutually exclusive and often include more than one concept related to mindfulness. As such, any one definition may apply to more than one theme which emerged during this research.

The concepts of awareness, attention, being in the present, in the moment, the here and now, fully awake, consciousness, and presence of mind are supported and reflected in 38 definitions. Although these definitions are clear about which concepts define mindfulness, paradoxically it does challenge the above critique that there is no precision or consensus regarding clarity, consistency with respect to the definition or nature of mindfulness (Cavanagh & Spence, 2013). Finally, since the concepts considered by four definitions noted in Table 3.2 did not contribute to the formulation of any of the themes, they were not used in the analysis of the findings.

Results

The coaches' perspectives on their practice clearly resonate throughout the findings. These perspectives largely describe coaches' perceptions of different behaviors that reflect mindfulness based upon what they think and do. Because of a lack of a common definition of mindfulness explained above it is important to note for the reader that these definitions are behavioral indicators of high order coaching competencies. In presenting and integrating the results as sub-themes, their individual voices and meanings are preserved as closely as possible to the context in which these appeared in the interviews. The contributions made by the coaches interviewed are presented as summaries and quotes of material attributed to specific coaches. The summaries which appear in various paragraphs present or highlight the insights of a number of

specific coaches on the particular area or topic. The purpose of the contributions in quotation marks, which usually appear at the end of the paragraphs, often capture the gist or more nuanced meaning of these summaries presented earlier in the same paragraph.

The results are presented in light of two specific questions: How does mindfulness inform coaching practice? And how do coaches know when mindfulness is useful or beneficial for them and their coaches, that is, its impact.

Meta-theme 1: How Coaches Use Mindfulness in Practice

Coaches described how they used mindfulness as a metatheme and five supportive subthemes. These five subthemes presented below are highly interrelated and reported in a descending order of importance in terms of the attention coaches gave these in their use of mindfulness in practice. Presented as descriptive statements and direct quotes, they are preserved in the context to which they apply and closely to the meaning that they have for the coaches who provided them. As such, these statements and quotes are the most direct and meaningful connection between the coaches' use of mindfulness and their personal understanding of it.

Practicing With Greater Awareness in the Here and Now.

Many of the 30 practicing coaches interviewed considered mindfulness useful as a reflective practice, being in the here and now, letting go, listening, removing distraction, creating a stillness for clients to hear themselves, being intentional, having intentional attention and managing difficult situations and emotions (Coaches 6, 24, 30). "Mindfulness informs everything, not just my coaching practise" (Coach 30).

Mindfulness for them was often equated with or considered first to be self-awareness, then an awareness of others and what is occurring at the moment (Coach 19). Self-awareness it should be noted is also an important leadership competency

practice by leaders who may not be coaches. This included awareness of body and mind and the space clients take, being conscious of who they as coaches are, and how they physically feel and are perceived by others and themselves. Using mindfulness to connect the practicing coach to the moment helped to improve thinking and being mindful of heart, gut, head, limbs and attention to be able to pull things together in the body (Coach 26). **"**The human body is actually the archive of their life" (Coach 13).

Being Present, Having Presence and Focus.

The most important level of mindfulness and attentional strategy within coaching was what it does to help stay in the moment with the client, which is a type of self-reflection expressed as a decentred point of attention. This is a place where practicing coaches notice what is occurring inside themselves and their own reactions and feelings as detached observers with a critical attentional stance. Coaches are noticing their clients' and their own reactions and thoughts but not being captured by them. It is a particular use of attention focused on noticing what is unfolding in the present moment. This condition is different from self-reflection which is a type of remembrance and making meaning of what is unfolding or has unfolded across whatever set of moments being reflected upon. It is the self-reflective that follows on from mindfulness. However, when self-reflection is not associated with mindfulness, it provides the coach with the wrong data, such as "having an emotion and being had by the emotion" (Coach 22).

Mindfulness informs coaching practice by providing coaches with an opportunity to fully focus on their work with clients. This includes preparing mentally for the session by checking and being aware of their level of mindfulness, what may be distracting them, or placing them within the coaching environment. If coaches

wander off or are distracted during a coaching session, they very quickly come back to being fully mindful and aware of what is occurring (Coach 5). For clients, the focus is on being aware and curious about what is happening inside and outside of the session. Structures in coaching which enable clients to do this may include having self-reflective time to think through issues and to notice and create moments of mindfulness outside as well as during the coaching sessions (Coach 22). “When I start a coaching session, right at the start, I will check my level of mindfulness and I will stop anything that is distracting me” (Coach 5).

”Mindfulness is useful to get into the state of presence faster, to be connected and in the right space with the client, in managing emotions, listening to one’s intuition and being present, leaving all other problems aside” (Coach 27). When the coach is in the moment, mindfulness and presence helps the client think or feel clearer. “Showing up mindful impacts in a big way in terms of coaching presence” (Coach 16).

Thirty-eight definitions of mindfulness in Table 3.A were most clearly understood and acknowledged by the coaches interviewed as reflected in their accounts of mindfulness in practice as noted in subthemes “practicing with greater awareness in the here and now” and “being present, having presence and focus” immediately above. These definitions included a focus on awareness, fully awake, consciousness, attention, attending, the here and now, present moment, and being in the moment (Table 3.1).

Being Non-judgmental, Practicing with Curiosity and Kindness.

Mindfulness in the last 15-20 years has taken hold in a secular context, as a process and an outcome which is based on cultivating moment to moment experience for the individual in relationship with the coach (Chiesa & Malinowski, 2011; Kabat-Zinn, 2003,

2005; Langer, 1989, 2000). This section most closely tracks Kabat-Zinn's definition of mindfulness in Table 3.A expressed as follows by one of the coaches interviewed.

> To change or transform whatever is difficult or unwanted without approaching it with curiosity and kindness is challenging. The key part for me is being nonjudgmental since we tend to be hard wired as a species to have an aversive relationship to anything that is difficult or unwanted (Coach 16).

Creating Space for Clients.

Mindfulness impacts on the coaches' presence and the degree of trust and intimacy in creating space for the clients' experiences to emerge where clients feel no sense of judgment with respect to this (Coach 16). It creates a psychological and physical space for clients to relax in the present to help them to get to a place where they can reflect and apply deeper thinking and expand their awareness. Examples of this include being out of doors in nature, connecting with themselves physically, and reflecting on what they hear and see, enabling them to access their creativity (Coaches 7, 18, 20). "Actually mindfulness impacts on everything" (Coach 16).

No one definition of mindfulness noted in Table 3.1 and 3.2 specifically or adequately captures the creation of space for clients. However, Chaskalson & McMordie (2018, p. 6) came close in terms of what is implied or required in a general sense to create the conditions for such a space by suggesting that "the simplest description [of mindfulness] is that it's a way of being aware of yourself, others and the world around you".

Practicing in a More Effective and Respectful Way.

It has been suggested by the coaches interviewed that mindfulness is a means for preparing the coach to enter into the coaching space with a more embodied sense of self and to practice in a more effective way. It allows coaches to respect and hold the coaching space, being as prepared, open, creative, and flexible psychologically as possible. This would be achieved using various mindfulness exercises and activities

such as breathing or related to intention, as a prelude to and during the coaching session. "I would see mindfulness being in the service of a more reflective way of coaching" (Coach 12).

A number of definitions of mindfulness have specifically included reference to these concepts used by the coaches interviewed. These include nonjudgmental, compassion, aversion to the unpleasant, kindly curiosity, acceptance, and sensitive awareness. (Bishop et al., 2004, p. 234; Dimidjian & Linehan, 2008, p. 327; Goldstein & Kornfield, 2001, p. 154; Hall, 2014, p.193; Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p.4; Langer, 1989, p. 220; Long & Christian, 2015, p.1409; Roche et al., 2014, p. 477; Segal et al., 2002, pp. 322–323;).

Mindfulness allows coaches and clients to make choices with conscious awareness as opposed to reacting and relying on the usual thinking processes. This enables them to move away from the standardised neural pathway which is essential for more effective and respectful practice. "Mindfulness is about the conscious choice to act or not act, in the light of an awareness of what is taking place" (Coach 19).

In summary, this section highlights that there is a logical coherence and interconnectedness amongst the factors or constituents reported by coaches on how they use mindfulness in their practice and the 38 definitions of mindfulness from the literature. These definitions were clearly understood and acknowledged in the above metatheme based on the responses of the coaches interviewed (Table 3.A). However, the sub-theme "creating space for clients" had an inferential connection to only one definition, that offered by Chaskalson & McMordie (2018, p. 6).

As the subthemes emerged and developed it became apparent that **i**t was difficult for coaches to use any one definition without reference or use of another, either simultaneously or in succession. For example, being present would help awareness,

which would invariably lead to creating space for clients and being respectful and nonjudgmental. It is suggested that these work together as a gestalt in that their effect or impact as an integrated whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This provides the basis for the enhanced operational definition of effective practice discussed below.

Metatheme 2: How Coaches Know Mindfulness Is useful or Beneficial for Themselves and Clients

"To know when mindfulness is useful for the coach and client is to ask if one was not mindful, how would that be useful?" (Coach 5). How mindfulness is useful or beneficial is an important question that logically follows and is directly related to how coaches use mindfulness. The analysis of the coaches' responses provided 10 subthemes in three thematic clusters from which emerged precursors and indicators that reflect and or account for how coaches know it is useful or beneficial. One cluster is coach-focused, another is client-focused and a third coach-client relationship focused (Table 3.3).

Coach-Focused Themes

Giving Meaning to Clients' Lives and Experience. The coaches interviewed were clear about the purpose and importance of meaning in their practice of mindfulness. Although none of the 42 definitions of mindfulness specifically used the word *meaning,* some of them directly or indirectly inferred as much (e.g., Collard & Walsh, 2008, pp.33-34; Krieger, 2005, p.137; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001, p.42). However, the coaches interviewed relied on their own understandings of how their approach to mindfulness was useful or beneficial.

> Many clients are exploring new ways of finding meaning in their lives. This includes experiencing and recognising some kind of value in it and ways of addressing identity which connect body and mind in a balanced way. It includes experiencing difficulties which are also part of life which the client may consider challenging but not thought of or accepted as part of

> their identity. It's also to do with giving meaning to your life, recognizing your own life story as a valuable pattern. (Coach 13)

Mindfulness allows coaches to focus on their clients' experience, how they relate, think about and engage with experience emotionally or psychologically. Through the awareness of their clients' experience, some coaches are able to comfortably explore the meaning of that experience in terms of different events and how the client thinks about these. If this creates a shift in the client, the coach and client will know it was useful for both of them.

Being Present and Having Presence. "It's so important to be present, to be grounded in the moment in order to be fully available for the coachee" (Coach 18). The rapport between the coach and client is enhanced by being in the present. The coach is able to reflect as to what is occurring presently and how they are connected to it or not. It allows for moving in a slower pace to be able to examine a client's concerns individually rather than all of these at once (Coach 25). In such conditions, coaches are able to be fully present and available for their client as well as being well positioned to know how mindfulness is useful or beneficial both to the coach and client (Coach 18).

Being present and having presence enables coaches to stay away from personal triggers or impulses and informs them of a wandering mind, enabling it to return to and stay in the present (Coaches 14, 25). It includes being very cognizant of the here and now, which provides a feeling of safeness and security for the client and playfulness. "The client recognizes the latter and feels very empowered by it. I'd say very simply mindfulness is being fully present, heart, mind and soul, in the exact moment of now" (Coach 5).

Being in the present, described in this way or with similar terms such as *the present moment* and the *here and now*, is explicitly referred to in almost 62% (26 of the 42) of the definitions of mindfulness (Table 3.1). This makes being present a highly prevalent feature for defining mindfulness. In addition, 28 definitions provided a breadth and scope beyond being in the present and, as such, had application for other themes as noted in the "Results" section.

The coaches' responses which emerged in relation to this subtheme support and overlap with those noted in a similar subtheme of Metatheme 1, how coaches use mindfulness in practice. The overlap of the responses captured by these subthemes is considered in the "Discussion" section.

Understanding What Is Going on for the Client. The usefulness of mindfulness for clients is based on four ongoing dynamics. These are having an understanding of what is occurring for coaches, how they are approaching the coaching engagement, and what it is delivering for coaches. The fourth is the problem cycle and what they need to do in terms of it. "The coach typically should have a shared understanding of what's happening for clients in their situation, as it pertains to whatever the issues are that they're working on" (Coach 22).

Furthermore, mindfulness is very useful for clients to be aware of and in identifying and naming their emotions and the impact or importance these have for them (Coach 30). "When you're fully mindful, you're not only just aware of what people are saying; it's how they're saying it, the way they're saying it, how they're feeling; you're picking up all these other informational things" (Coach 5).

None of the 42 definitions of mindfulness specifically or explicitly address what is going on for the client. However, the above noted 26 which included reference to being in the present, in the present moment, and the here and now do serve as a

context and enablers for understanding the client's position. As such, this points to the need for developing an enhanced definition and model of the practice of mindfulness in coaching, which clearly includes the place and role of the client as well as the coach.

Ability to Clear / Quieten the Mind and Create Space for Clients. Mindfulness and creating space for clients can be very powerful. It may be awkward or cause silence and tension, which is just part of that process. Mindfulness lets the coach become aware of how much chatter or clutter there is in the client's and their own head or how busy both their minds can be (Coaches 23, 30). It is important that the coach is able to quietly guide and hold the client, the result of which may be shock, surprise, and anything in between. "The ability to create that for a client is so, very special, because that's the thing that guides learning, self-discovery, and self-awareness" (Coach 23).

Although the definitions of mindfulness do not directly acknowledge the clearing and quieting of the mind, the two concepts that do appear most frequently are awareness and being in the present, that is, 28 and 26 times, respectively, for a total of 54 times across 42 definitions of mindfulness (Table 3.1). Considering these, Chaskalson & McMordie's (2018, p. 6) definition of mindfulness as "a way to being aware of [oneself] and others" would appear to offer an important means for clearing and quieting of the mind.

Acknowledging and Supporting Clients' Choices. The creation of a place where clients can choose to respond is needed so that the response about how to go forward, or if to go forward, comes entirely from the client and not from the coach (Coach 12). This is perhaps best illustrated by Coach 16's account of when coaches know to use mindfulness and when it is useful and beneficial.

> So my intention is always to be completely client led. If what the client is asking for and needing and wanting is not explicitly informed by mindfulness, I won't bring mindfulness into the equation. Not explicitly. Implicitly, mindfulness will always be there, because I'll be showing up with an embodied mindful presence. It will impact on my underlying process of holding an intention to pay attention on purpose in the present moment non-judgmentally, trusting that awareness will arise out of that. So, all of that is there without explicitly being in the relationship. In terms of it being explicitly in the relationship, I will only ever bring it explicitly into the coaching relationship if the coachee asks and that may be at the outset or it might be along the way. But it always has to be the coachee driving that. It's their agenda, not mine. It becomes an embodied presence. So, I can't turn that off. (Coach 16)

Even though acknowledging and supporting clients' choices does not explicitly appear as such in any of the 42 definitions of mindfulness, Coach 16 above considers it is an important aspect for using mindfulness in coaching and for knowing and ensuring it is useful or beneficial.

Ability to Recognize Change in the Client. There is something that goes on in the moments of mindfulness where clients are able to gain greater insight into their lives (Coach 5). "Mindful presence allows you to see because of something you've done, you see change" (Coach 8). To create or co-create a joint mindfulness which will produce something in clients they had not previously thought about can take many shapes and provide many opportunities (Coach 23). These may not be profound changes, but in most coaching assignments, at some point, there are "Aha!" moments (Coach 21). When coaches see a shift in how clients are relating to their thinking or behavior, it confirms for the coach that mindfulness has been useful for both the client and the coach. "There are thousands of ways of moving someone, and you always sense how much support and challenge someone needs" (Coach 8).

The biggest changes coaches notice when they are in a regular mindfulness practice is that they are able to respond versus react. They find clients sleep better;

are able to manage worry, thought patterns, and anxiety; are able to get much more done in their day; and feel more in a state of flow (Coach 29). For the coach, mindfulness quickly changes feedback from clients. Less dramatic are the small changes which have a more immediate effect, such as pauses during sessions to change focus or the agenda, and so forth, which gives both the client and coach a chance to move into a different space (Coach 8).

Although the definitions did not directly address how coaches know mindfulness is useful or beneficial, it is suggested that awareness and or being in the present are likely the necessary precursors for change to occur. How they recognize these changes is based on their own awareness of these in their practice. Twenty-eight (66.7%) and 26 (61.9%) of the 42 definitions of mindfulness, respectively, were clearly focused on awareness and being in the present, the present moment, and the here and now (Table 1). The predominance of these terms would suggest they are well known to coaches and part of their practice of mindfulness in coaching as illustrated by their above responses. Furthermore, they would be central in the coaches' recognition of change in their clients.

Client Focused Themes

Knowing What the Coach and Client Want. If mindfulness is to be useful for coach and client, it is very helpful at the beginning of the session to know what the coach and client want from the session, how they will know they have achieved it, and how the coach can support the client. These considerations require being and remaining open to the possibility of doing something different, such as adding a new challenge (Coach 15). Although the coach may consider mindfulness to be useful for the client, the coach and the client together need to consider if it is and for how long (Coach 10).

Again, as with ability to recognize change in the client, none of the definitions specifically addresses the theme of knowing what the client wants. However, many of the definitions do suggest what would enable the coach and the client to know this. The focus of 38 or 90.5 % of the 42 definitions was clearly about awareness and or attention, and supportive concepts such as being in the present, in the moment, the here and now, fully awake, consciousness, and presence of mind (Table 3.1). In particular, Kabat-Zinn's (2005, p. 4), definition of "paying attention in a particulate way; on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally" captures the essence of most of these definitions of mindfulness.

Being in Touch With the Mind and Physical Body. Mindfulness keeps the coach in touch with the physical body and how it communicates with the mind, which is helpful in gauging and knowing the usefulness of mindfulness (Coach 30). The practice of body scans is useful in this regard (Coach 25). The coach notices various physical and psychological dynamics such as changes in their clients' and their own breathing, the sound of each other's voices, the way clients are moving, and if it exists by the level of anxiety and the chatter in their own heads (Coach 26). "When the mind and body interfere with each other, it is getting used to just bringing yourself and the client back to the present, to this moment, this time" (Coach 17).

However, only two definitions directly acknowledged and referred to the body-mind dimension in mindfulness. Collard & Walsh (2008, pp. 33-34) considers mindfulness to include "being connected to the flow of every experience and enjoying a sense of oneness between mind and body". Harvey (2000, p. 38) noted it to be "a state of keen awareness of mental and physical phenomena as they arise within and around (oneself)". The lack of prominence of the mind-body connection in most

definitions is worthy considering the importance it has in coaching and allied fields such as health care (Attan et al., 2018; Delaney & Bark, 2019).

Coach-Client Relationship Themes

Effective Communications. Mindfulness is useful for the coach and client in alerting each other to the tone of voice or body language between the two. From the client's perspective, it gives them time to be in the now, rather than thinking about the next task, and so forth. The session allows for being able to reflect in the moment about how they are feeling and what is happening (Coach 7).

The coach's language and questions tend to be a matter of dialogue between the coach and the client. For example, this may include questions or comments such as "What do you think or what do you feel about this?" "I'm noticing this," which encourages reflection as well as greater awareness and attentiveness (Coach 26). Clients' responses here offer indications for coaches to gauge if mindfulness is useful or beneficial. A number of the 42 definitions in Table 3.A directly and indirectly support this assertion, two of which clearly set out the pre-conditions for effective communication:

> Mindfulness is a flexible state of mind in which we are actively engaged in the present, noticing new things and sensitive to context, with an open, nonjudgmental orientation to experience. (Langer, 1989, p. 220)

> In mindfulness practice, the focus of a person's attention is opened to admit whatever enters experience, while at the same time, a stance of kindly curiosity allows the person to investigate whatever appears, without falling prey to automatic judgment or reactivity. (Segal et al., 2002, pp. 322–323)

Ability to Work Together. Together, the coach and client can consider how they might work in a mindful and reflective way to see what they can learn. However, in the beginning, there needs to be consideration of the capacity and willingness to

engage in this conversation. “If there is the potential, the propensity for working in a mindful and reflective way with somebody, I can’t imagine any topic that I wouldn’t feel okay to tackle” (Coach 2).

None of the definitions specifically or explicitly address the ability of the coach and client to work together. However, considering the major concepts identified in 38 definitions of mindfulness, the purpose of attention, awareness, and being present or in the moment provides for the conditions to enable the coach and client to work together. Kabat-Zinn’s (2003, p. 145) definition of mindfulness provides for these conditions to prevail, that is, “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgementally to the unfolding of experience moment to moment”.

The range of the coaches’ responses related to Metatheme 2 serve to highlight how they know mindfulness is useful or beneficial. The related definitions that the coaches interviewed understood and acknowledged were clearly about awareness and or attention and supportive concepts such as being in the present, the present moment, the here and now, fully awake, consciousness, and presence of mind (Chaskalson & McMordie, 2018, p. 6; Collard & Walsh, 2008, pp.33-34; Harvey, 2000, p. 38; Kabat-Zinn, 2005, p. 4; Krieger, 2005, p.137; Langer, 1989. p. 220; Segal et al., 2002, pp. 322–323); Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001, p. 42).

In summary, the clearest indication of the impact of mindfulness in terms of being useful or beneficial was evident in the coaches’ responses related to their ability to recognize change in their clients. These included clients gaining greater insight into their lives; shifts in their thinking, relating, or behaviour; responding rather than reacting; and managing their thoughts, worry, or anxiety. These also included coaches and clients noticing the small changes, such as pauses when changing focus, during

coaching sessions. Whatever the difficulties clients may be going through, mindfulness gave the client the courage and steadfastness to deal with it in a more wholesome way, which was always considered useful. “Bringing mindfulness or a mindful awareness to anything is more than likely to enrich whatever experience it is, or help you handle whatever it is” (Coach 28).

Discussion

The range of perspectives provided by coaches offered a deeper and better understanding of mindfulness in coaching practice. Their responses served to explicitly and implicitly answer both research questions and provide the basis for formulating an enhanced operational definition and practice model for mindfulness in coaching. Most of the themes supported concepts used by the majority of the 42 definitions of mindfulness which resonated with or reflected the views of the 30 coaches interviewed. Only four definitions did not.

Coaches’ Expertise, Experience and Use of Mindfulness

An overview of the interviews and results indicated there to be a range of expertise, experience and use of mindfulness. Generally-speaking, most coaches interviewed were knowledgeable about how and for which occasions or situations mindfulness might be used and what could be achieved by using it in their practice. Some coaches found mindfulness to be quite a natural approach to coaching; for others, mindfulness had become a way of being and living, a life habit in which they engaged on a daily basis. A few suggested their use of mindfulness was almost to the exclusion of any other approach in their practice. Some were very articulate and or confident about the meaning of mindfulness for them, whereas others found it more difficult to define. A few were less confident and used only select aspects of mindfulness depending on the occasion or need.

Coaches may be more effective if they are mindful, but that by itself does not compensate for lack of breadth of the coaching perspectives or models. The variation in coaches' expertise and use of mindfulness may have been due to differences in their experience of mindfulness or their reticence to use or rely on it more broadly in their practice. However, no observable or explanatory data for the variation in the use of mindfulness was evident during or after the interviews or in the data related to the coaches' age and their average length of coaching experience, which was between 39-70 years and 14.1 years respectively (Table 3.B).

The results, however, are helpful in explaining how coaches decide on what coaching model or framework to deploy and when or if to shift to another. The themes of being in the present, practicing with greater awareness in the here and now, having focus, being nonjudgmental, and practicing with curiosity and kindness in a more effective respectful way, would indicate that the mindful coach is aware if there was a need to shift to another coaching framework and which one. The model or framework chosen, in all likelihood, would depend on which would be the most appropriate for the occasion and on the coaches' skills and the coachees' needs. The results did indicate coaches had different styles in mindful engagement in that not all were equally engaged or engaged in the same way.

Effective coaching is based on and requires core coaching skills and use of tools and techniques which would apply coaching engagement, relationships and outcomes. However, someone who coaches with a limited toolkit of development frameworks and a limited appreciation for organizational dynamics can only deliver so much value. This may apply less to seasoned coaches than to those transitioning into coaching. There was an implicit acknowledgement amongst a number of coaches that to understand mindfulness "you really have to experience it to get it" and the getting it

is through doing it (Hall, 2013, p. 15). Hall's (2013) acquisition of mindfulness through experience resonates with Kolb & Yeganeh's (2011, p. 9) empirical work that supports the learning of the practice of mindfulness "from experience by enhancing presence and intentional attention".

Implications for Coach Practitioners

In the analysis and interpretation of the findings, a number of challenges emerged for coach practitioners in terms of what these meant for the practice and research of mindfulness in coaching.

1. It was difficult at times, for coaches to clearly discriminate between the use of mindfulness and its usefulness or benefit. Their focus on how they used mindfulness may inadvertently or unconsciously have led coaches to think or believe that using it also meant it was useful or beneficial. However, the question remains why would they use mindfulness if they did not find it to be useful or beneficial. The answer might be related to unresolved cognitive dissonance between their use of mindfulness and not knowing it was useful or beneficial.
2. At times, the two research questions may have seemed indistinguishable from each other for the coaches interviewed. Most subthemes were centred on or related to various aspects or uses of awareness, the here and now, and the present. To a greater or lesser extent, these may easily have been considered by the coaches interviewed as being interdependent, interactive or multidimensional and overlap with reflection.
3. The reasons to discriminate between how mindfulness is used and its usefulness or benefit are not compelling enough considering the latter may not be evident at the time it is attempted or used. This situation may be particularly

so if mindfulness is simultaneously used with other coaching modalities and which may distort its effect or impact or with which it may be conflated. Postsession structured reflection by the coach alone or in supervision, therefore, may be aided by various reflection models such as proposed by Johns (1995), Kolb (1984), Schön (1983), and Hullinger et al. (2019) to help clarify the use and usefulness or benefit of mindfulness, as noted below, with respect to our enhanced operational model for the practice of mindfulness in coaching.

4. Coaches are more concerned about the use of mindfulness than it being useful or beneficial because it is difficult to always specifically know when or if it is useful or beneficial or when it is not. Even though the coaches interviewed had an average of 14.1 years of coaching experience and were experienced in the use of mindfulness, no compelling explanation for this observation was forthcoming or evident in the results or analysis thereof.

Implications for Definitions

Although the definitions conceptually explained what mindfulness is, it was the interviews with the 30 coaches who practice mindfulness that offered insight in terms of what it is or means to use or apply these in practice. Together, these definitions of mindfulness and descriptions of their coaching practice in the “Results” section, which included various references to reflection, offered a more comprehensive or integrated understanding of mindfulness. This position begins to address Cavanaugh & Spence’s (2013) critique that there is no consensus, clarity or consistency with respect to the definition or nature of mindfulness. Furthermore, it offers a perspective and an opportunity to propose an enhanced operational definition and model of practice for mindfulness.

An Enhanced Operational Definition of Mindfulness in Coaching

An analysis of what coaches reported on their use of mindfulness in coaching practice was important in formulating an enhanced operational definition for practice. Most of the definitions were found to resonate or be explicitly reflected in the views of the 30 coaches interviewed as presented in the "Results" section. Thirty-eight of the 42 definitions of mindfulness as noted in Table 3.1 and 3.2 and Table 3.A greatly contributed to this enhanced operational definition of mindfulness. Specifically, they provided a conceptual framework for answering how coaches use mindfulness in a practice setting. The core of this framework was an inclusion and description of the concepts related to mindfulness such as awareness and attention and supportive concepts such as being in the present, in the moment, the here and now, fully awake, consciousness, as well as reflection.

In view of this, the most inclusive and clearest description of what mindfulness is in practice for the coaches interviewed is captured by an amalgam and integration of their positions on the use and usefulness or benefit of mindfulness in practice and select conceptual features of the 38 definitions of mindfulness. Some of these features were emphasized more clearly or strongly than others, such as Kabat-Zinn's (2003, 2005) definition of mindfulness, as is evident in our enhanced definition which emerged from the research as follows: Mindfulness in coaching is based on the use of greater awareness in the here and now, being present and having presence and focus, being non-judgmental, practising with curiosity and kindness, creating space for the client; and, and practicing in a more effective and respectful way.

An Enhanced Operational Model of the Practice of Mindfulness in Coaching

The responses by the coaches interviewed to the research question and Metatheme 2, how coaches know when mindfulness is useful or beneficial, provided the constituents for an enhanced practice model. The subthemes contributed to the model, but one in particular served to include or encompass them all. This subtheme was the ability of the coach and coachee to work together, which is also reflected by Subtheme 5 of Metatheme 1, practicing in a more effective and respectful way. The sub-themes of Metatheme 2 were integrated into a set of logical sequential steps to construct an enhanced model of practice for the coach and client's working relationship and effective communications.

- Being and having presence and understanding of what is going on with the client
- In turn, these allow for a clearing and quietening of the mind, being in touch with the mind and body, and the creation of space for clients
- In turn, this facilitates the coaches' understanding of the clients' experiences and what is occurring in clients' lives, which gives meaning and recognizes changes in their clients
- All of these help the coach to support and acknowledge clients and to know what each needs and wants from the coaching relationship

A number of unique aspects of mindfulness contributed by the coaches interviewed may serve to enhance the practice of mindfulness in coaching, reflection, and the application and testing of our enhanced model to mindfulness practice. These are as follows:

Impact of Mindfulness

1. Mindfulness impacts on the coaches' underlying process of holding an intention to pay attention on purpose in the present moment non-judgmentally, trusting that awareness will arise out of that.

2. Mindfulness impacts on the coaches' presence, the degree of trust and intimacy and in creating space for the clients' experiences to emerge where clients feel no sense of judgment with respect to this.

3. Mindfulness allows clients to gain greater insight into their lives; shifts in their thinking, relating or behaviour; responding rather than reacting; and managing their thoughts, worry, or anxiety. Mindfulness gives clients the courage and steadfastness to deal with these in a more wholesome way.

Awareness and Noticing

1. Mindfulness allows coaches and clients to make choices with conscious awareness as opposed to reacting and relying on the usual thinking processes.

2. The practice of mindfulness enables coaches to notice what is occurring inside themselves and their own reactions and feelings as detached observers with a critical attentional stance. They notice their clients' and their own reactions and thoughts but are not captured by them.

3. Mindfulness is very useful for clients to be aware of, identify and name their emotions and the impact or importance these have for them.

4. The coach notices various physical and psychological dynamics such as changes in their clients' and their own breathing, the sound of each other's voices, and the way clients are moving.

5. Mindfulness creates a psychological and physical space for clients to relax in the present to help them to get to a place where they can reflect and apply deeper thinking and expand their awareness.

6**.** Mindfulness lets the coach become aware of how much chatter or clutter there is in the client's and their own head or how busy both their minds can be. It is important that the coach is able to quietly guide and hold the client. It is what guides learning, self-discovery, and self-awareness.

7. Awareness and or being in the present are likely the necessary precursors for change to occur.

Attention and Being in the Present

1. Mindfulness is a particular use of attention focused on noticing what is unfolding in the present moment. It is the self-reflective that follows on from mindfulness.

2. The rapport between the mindfulness coach and client is enhanced by being in the present. The coach is able to reflect as to what is occurring presently and how they are connected to it or not. It allows for being able to examine a client's concerns individually rather than all of these at once.

3. Being present and having presence enables mindfulness coaches to stay away from personal triggers or impulses and inform them of a wandering mind, enabling it to return to and stay in the present.

4. Being very cognisant of the here and now provides a feeling of safeness and security for the client and playfulness. The client recognises the latter and feels very empowered by it.

Implications for Use of the Model

Our enhanced operational model is proposed as a source for coaches to consider in their practice and researchers to examine and test against various aspects of

mindfulness practice noted in this research above. The model is designed to encourage and enable coaches to go “beyond the rote application of models or techniques in order to practise with greater artistry and to devise novel, bespoke solutions for the needs of individual clients” (Kovacs & Corrie, 2017, p. 5).

Considering how or when to use our enhanced operational definition of mindfulness in coaching or aspects thereof in practice in terms of the particular client or coaching context, may help the coach become a more effective practitioner. Our enhanced definition and practice model proposed above were inspired and supported by definitions from the literature, the 30 coaches interviewed, and Johns’ (1995, 2013) model of structured reflection or “framing learning through reflection”, Schön’s (1983) model of reflection in action and reflection on action, Kolb’s (1984) model of experiential learning, and Hullinger et al.’s (2019) model of reflective practice. We look forward to seeing our enhanced definition and practice model tested, further developed and for them to contribute to the evidence-based practice of coaching and mindfulness (Bishop et al., 2004; Cacioppe, 2017; Passmore & Lai, 2019; Theeboom et al., 2017).

Finally, to ensure the effectiveness of our enhanced operational model above, it is important to realize that the consistent factor which contributes to the success of a coaching engagement, “of those within the influence of the coach, is the quality of the relationship between the coach and individual client” (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011, p. 78). Furthermore, according to Koroleva (2016, p. 85), “The promise of coaching is not so much that it provides instant solutions, but rather that it promotes learning and change over time”.

The Importance of Reflection, Supervision and Learning in Mindfulness Practice

Reflection plays a large part in mindfulness in coaching practice, either as an enabler or influencer. Reflective practice allows coaches "to examine their beliefs, assumptions, goals and methods in order to gain insights that might facilitate improved learning" (Kovacs & Corrie, 2017, p. 5). Main (1985, pp. 96-98) suggest that developing learning skills requires that the client initially be invited to open up, share their feelings, and develop trust to reflect on their experience, examining their inner world and being encouraged to reflect and learn about themselves with "confidence and ease". Reflection helps coaches to "become sensitive to, and take steps to resolve, any discrepancies between their espoused theories (that is, their stated beliefs and values about learning, development and practice) and their theories-in-use (what they actually 'do' and the results of their actions)" (Kovacs & Corrie, 2017, p. 5; Hullinger et al., 2019, pp. 7,9).

Reflective practice and skills involve "the act of reflecting on practice-based experience including the personal reactions of the practitioner, [and] the ability to reconstruct events in one's mind, including exploration of one's own reactions and behaviours" (Kovacs & Corrie, 2017, p. 6). These may occur in the context of supervision, self-supervision, or the use of reflective diaries. Supervising coaches report they look for "an open, safe, confidential and nonjudgmental environment" to be in place for supervision to be "most effective" (Passmore & McGoldrick, 2009, pp. 20-21).

Finally, the importance of reflection is recognized as an integral part of coaching supervision. The Association of Coaching (2019. pp. 1-2) considers that supervision offers "a formal protected time for facilitating a coaches' in-depth reflection on their

practice" that "ensures "the best interest of the client are being upheld' and "areas for further development for the coach" are identified.

Limitations of the Research

The themes that emerged from the research provided a comprehensive but incomplete mosaic of how coaches use and know when mindfulness is useful or beneficial. Even though the sample size was large for a qualitative study, the results are not generalizable to all coaching contexts.

The responses from most coaches on how they knew mindfulness was useful or beneficial for themselves and their clients were primarily related to its usefulness of mindfulness for themselves. These considerations would suggest it was easier for coaches to answer the question related to usefulness for themselves than for their clients. This condition may, to some degree, have served as a collective bias on behalf of the coaches interviewed and the interviewer.

Further Research and Training

The focus of future research should continue to seek broader as well as more in-depth understandings of how the formal definitions of mindfulness and reflection provide a common ground and support for mindfulness practice. Future research may therefore wish to consider using the above noted proposed enhanced definition and test the efficacy of the enhanced practice model. Research on the variations and levels of mindful coaching practice and personal mindfulness practice outside of coaching delivery would offer useful contributions to the findings of this and our future research. Additional research should be undertaken to include clients' own views on the use of mindfulness in various coaching contexts and consider how they determine it is useful or beneficial for them.

Being present, having presence and being aware of personal triggers and their impact, are very of much part the training received by many disciplines in the consulting and helping professions. Since the importance of this training for mindfulness in coaching was not specifically evident in the research, future research on this training for the preparation and practice of mindfulness in coaching is highly recommended.

Conclusion

The challenges and concerns identified in the coaching mindfulness literature affirmed the need for this research. The overall conclusion is that mindfulness was regarded by coaches to be useful or beneficial in their coaching practice. Although the literature claimed there is no consensus in defining mindfulness, this research found this to be somewhat of an overstatement. Mindfulness played a big part in informing and influencing practice, anchoring coaches in the present, or simply asking clients to pause and notice what is going on with them in their body in the moment to become more present. Even though mindfulness is difficult to define, it helped to keep coaches connected with whatever is real in the moment for them or their clients. Based on their own practice needs and insights, coaches are invited to reflect on both the descriptive and prescriptive elements of the research and to embrace these contributions in terms of applying or integrating them into their own practice.

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Table 3.A *Definitions of Mindfulness Identified in the Literature*

Authors	Definitions
Baer et al. (2004, p. 191)	"Mindfulness is generally defined to include focusing one's attention in a nonjudgmental or accepting way on the experience occurring in the present moment [and] can be contrasted with states of mind in which attention is focused elsewhere, including preoccupation with memories, fantasies, plans, or worries, and behaving automatically without awareness of one's actions"
Bishop et al. (2004, p. 232)*	"The self-regulation of attention ... allowing for increased recognition of mental events in the present moment" and "adopting a particular orientation toward one's experiences in the present moment, [which] is characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance"
Bodhi (2011, p. 25)	"Sati . . . provides the connection between its two primary canonical meanings: as memory and as lucid awareness of present happenings"
Brantley (2007, p. 4)	"Friendly, nonjudgmental, present-moment awareness"
Brown and Ryan (2003, p. 822)*	"An enhanced attention to and awareness of current experience of present reality"
Chaskalson and McMordie (2018, p. 6)*	"Perhaps the simplest description [of mindfulness] is that it's a way of being aware of yourself, others and the world around you"
Collard and Walsh (2008, pp. 33-34)*	"Mindfulness is about being fully awake, about being in the here and now, about being connected to the flow of every experience and enjoying a sense of oneness between mind and body"
Dane (2011, p. 1000)	"Mindfulness may be defined as a state of consciousness in which attention is focused on present moment phenomena occurring both externally and internally"

Authors	Definitions
Dimidjian and Linehan (2008, p. 327)	"Mindfulness practice has been described as the intentional process of observing, describing, and participating in reality nonjudgmentally, in the moment, and effectively"
Epstein (1995, p. 96)	"Mindfulness, or bare attention, in which moment-to-moment awareness of changing objects of perception is cultivated"
Fletcher and Hayes (2005, p. 322)	"Mindfulness can thus be defined as the defused, accepting, open contact with the present moment and the private events it contains as a conscious human being experientially distinct from the content being noticed"
Germer (2005, p. 7)	"Awareness, of present experience, with acceptance"
Goldstein and Kornfield (2001, p. 154)	"Mindfulness means awareness, openness, and acceptance of whatever arises, without attachment to pleasant, aversion to the unpleasant, or forgetfulness of natural feelings"
Hahn (1976, p. 11)	"Keeping one's consciousness alive to the present reality"
Hall (2014, p. 193)*	"A particular way of being, doing, and nondoing; of paying attention in and to the present moment, with nonjudgment, curiosity and compassion"
Harvey (2000, p. 38)	"A state of keen awareness of mental and physical phenomena as they arise within and around (oneself)"
Herndon (2008, p. 32)	"Being attentively present to what is happening in the here and now"
Hick (2009, p. 1)	"Mindfulness is an orientation to our everyday experiences that can be cultivated by means of various exercises and practices"
Kabat-Zinn (2003, p. 145)*	"The awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgementally to the unfolding of experience moment to moment"
Kang and Whittingham (2010, p. 170)	"Mindfulness is nonreactive, nonelaborative, nonreified awareness that has metacognitive functions, monitoring ongoing awareness and discriminating wisely between aspects of awareness content so that awareness and behavior can be directed according to the goals of genuine happiness, virtue and truth"

Authors	Definitions
Krieger (2005, p. 137)*	"A psychological state in which individuals engage in active information processing while performing their current tasks such that they are actively analyzing, categorizing, and making distinctions in data"
Langer (1989, p. 220)	"Mindfulness is a flexible state of mind in which we are actively engaged in the present, noticing new things and sensitive to context, with an open, nonjudgmental orientation to experience"
Lau et al. (2006, p. 1447)	"A mode, or state-like quality, that is maintained only when attention to experience is intentionally cultivated"
Long and Christian (2015, p. 1409)	"*Mindfulness*, a psychological construct associated with nonjudgmental attention and awareness of present-moment experiences"
Longshore (2015, pp. 15-17)*	"In its most basic conceptualization, [it] is awareness of experience with acceptance"
Marlatt & Kristeller (1999, p. 68)	"Bringing one's complete attention to the present experience on a moment-to-moment basis"
Nanavira (1987, p. 155)	"Mindfulness is in general connectedness, not being scatter-brained; whereas awareness is more precisely keeping oneself under constant observation, not letting one's actions (or thoughts, or feelings, etc.) pass unnoticed"
Nyanaponika (1962, p. 5)	"The clear and single-minded awareness of what actually happens to us and in us at the successive moments of perception"
Passmore (2017, p. 28)*	"A state of mind, that when cultivated regularly, promotes an inclusive, accepted and authentic experience of the present moment"
Roche, Haar and Luthans (2014, p. 477)	"Mindfulness refers to an open state of mind where the leader's attention, informed by a sensitive awareness, merely observes what is taking place: worry about the future and negative ruminations or projections are brought back to the present moment where the situation is seen for what it is"
Rosch (2007, p. 259)	"A simple mental factor that can be present or absent in a moment of consciousness. It means to adhere, in that moment, to object of consciousness with a clear mental focus"

Authors	Definitions
Salzberg (2008, p. 135)	"Mindfulness is a quality of relationship to the object of awareness. Just having an experience, say hearing a sound, is not really being mindful. Knowing a sound without grasping, aversion, or delusion is being mindful"
Schmidt (2004, p. 9)	"Mindfulness is a bare and continuous moment-to-moment awareness of our experience"
Segal et al. (2002, pp. 322–323)	"In mindfulness practice, the focus of a person's attention is opened to admit whatever enters experience, while at the same time, a stance of kindly curiosity allows the person to investigate whatever appears, without falling prey to automatic judgment or reactivity"
Siegel (2007, p. 5) *	"Mindful awareness actually involves more than just simply being aware: It involves being aware of aspects of the mind itself. … Mindfulness helps us awaken and with this reflection on the mind we make choice and change possible. How we focus attention helps directly shape the mind. When we develop a certain form of attention to our here-and-now experiences and to the nature of our mind itself, we create a special form of awareness called mindfulness"
Spence and Cavanagh (2019, p. 25)*	"A motivated state of decentred awareness brought about by receptive attending to present moment experience"
Stanley (2013, p. 6)	"*Sati* can be translated as mindfulness or awareness and can be defined as an *embodied and ethically sensitive practice of present moment recollection*"
Sternberg (2000, pp. 11, 24)*	"'Preferred way of thinking'. It has characteristics of a 'cognitive ability', a 'personality trait', a 'cognitive style'. It is 'at the interface of between cognition and personality'"
Thondup (1996, p. 48)	"Giving full attention to the present, without worries about the past or future"
Watford and Stafford (2015, p. 90)	"Mindfulness is a mental state characterized by particular qualities of attention and awareness that has its origins in Buddhist and other Eastern meditative traditions"

Authors	Definitions
Weick and Sutcliffe (2001, p. 42)*	"The combination of ongoing scrutiny of existing expectations, continuous refinement and differentiation of expectations based on newer experiences, willingness and capability to invent new expectations that make sense of unprecedented events, a more nuanced appreciation of context and ways to deal with it, and identification of new dimensions of context that improve foresight and current functioning"
White (2014, p. 283)*	"The concept of mindfulness encompasses intricately connected attributes: it is a transformative process, where one develops an increasing ability to experience being present with awareness, acceptance and attention"

Note. Total: 42 definitions, of which 28 were identified by Nilsson and Kazemi (2016:186-187) and 14 by the researchers of this study

*Definitions identified by the researchers.

TABLE 3.B *Biographical Data Related to Coaches Interviewed*

Respondents	Age	Gender	Practitioner level as per EMCC	Training as coach	Years of coaching experience	Country
1	58	M	Senior	MSc	4	UK
2	57	F	Master	MSc	15	UK
3	61	M	Senior	MSc	18	UK
4	59	M	Senior	MSc in progress	3	Ireland
5	46	F	Practitioner	MSc in progress	7	UK
6	49	F	Senior Master	MSc	10	UK
7	56	F	Senior	MSc in progress	31	UK
8	57	F	Master	Coaching certificates	30	UK
9	63	M	Senior Master	Continuing prof develop courses	20	Ireland
10	54	M	Senior	MSc in progress	5	UK
11	66	M	Senior Master	Informal sessions and readings	24	UK
12	65	M	Senior Master	Master's	10	Ireland
13	57	M	Senior	Clinical pastoral training	30	Netherlands
14	53	M	Senior	Post grad diploma	8	Spain
15	39	F	Senior	Post grad certificates	10	UK
16	48	M	Senior Master	Advanced diploma	16	UK
17	70	F	Senior Master	Post grad family therapy	20	UK
18	58	F	Senior Master	MSc	18	UK
19	61	M	Master	MSc	13	UK
20	44	F	Master	Master's	20	UK
21	47	F	Senior Master	Post grad diploma	15	UK
22	55	M	Master	Master's	20	Australia
23	52	F	Senior	MSc	5	UK
24	41	F	Senior	Master's	4	Ireland
25	43	F	Senior Master	Master's in Progress	8	Ireland
26	59	F	Master	MSc	20	UK
27	55	F	Senior	First level ACC	8	UK
28	41	F	Senior	Master's in progress	6	UK
29	50	F	Master	Certified by CTI	14	Canada
30	56	F	Senior	MSc in progress	10	UK

Note. ACC = Associate Certified Coach; CTI = Coaching Training Institute; EMCC = European Mentoring and Coaching Council; MSc = Master of Science.

Chapter 4

How coaching supervisors experience and use mindfulness within their practice: An IPA study

Citation: Van Den Assem, B., Passmore, J., & Dulewicz, V. (2022). How coaching supervisors experience and use mindfulness within their practice: An IPA study. *Organisationsberating, Supervision, Coaching*, 29(4), 523-541. https://doi: 10.1007/s11613-022-00782-3

Abstract This qualitative study aimed to explore the use of mindfulness in the practice of coaching supervision and the perceived contribution mindfulness makes to the nature and quality of supervision. Major constructs and dynamics of mindfulness in supervision and insights into the perceived benefits of mindfulness practice are considered. Fifteen in-depth qualitative interviews were conducted with experienced coaching supervisors and analysed using Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Four major themes emerged with respect to the present and presence, attention and noticing, awareness, non-judgmental, and eight related subthemes. The challenges and applications for supervisors are explored, including mindfulness training to develop effective mindfulness coaching supervision. A coach supervisor interactive mindfulness framework is proposed to facilitate an understanding of the dynamics and content of the supervisor-supervisee relationship.

Keywords Coaching Supervision; Mindfulness; Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis

Wie Coach-Supervisoren Achtsamkeit in ihrer Praxis erleben und nutzen: Eine IPA-Studie

Zusammenfassung Diese qualitative Studie hatte zum Ziel, den Einsatz von Achtsamkeit in der Praxis der Coaching-Supervision und den wahrgenommenen Beitrag von Achtsamkeit zur Art und Qualität der Supervision zu untersuchen. Die

wichtigsten Konstrukte und Dynamiken von Achtsamkeit in der Supervision und die Erkenntnisse über die wahrgenommenen Vorteile der Achtsamkeitspraxis werden betrachtet. Fünfzehn qualitative Tiefeninterviews wurden mit erfahrenen Coaching-Supervisoren geführt und mit Hilfe der Interpretativen Phänomenologischen Analyse (IPA) ausgewertet. Es kristallisierten sich vier Hauptthemen in Bezug auf Gegenwart und Präsenz, Aufmerksamkeit und Wahrnehmen, Gewahrsein, Nicht-Urteilen sowie acht damit verbundene Unterthemen heraus. Die Herausforderungen und Anwendungen für Supervisoren werden erforscht, einschließlich Achtsamkeitstraining zur Entwicklung einer effektiven Achtsamkeits-Coaching-Supervision. Es wird ein interaktiver Achtsamkeitsrahmen für Coach-Supervisoren vorgeschlagen, um das Verständnis für die Dynamik und den Inhalt der Beziehung zwischen Supervisor und Supervisand zu erleichtern.

Schlüsselwörter Coaching-Supervision; Achtsamkeit; Interpretative Phänomenologische Analyse

1 Introduction

During the past two decades there has been an increase in published research focusing on mindfulness across a variety of settings, from clinical to education, but also extending to benefits at work (see for example Good et al. 2015). These studies have been wide-ranging from randomized controlled trials, to neuroscience and qualitative studies (Frank and Marken, 2022; Vonderlin et al. 2020; Tang et al. 2015; Spence et al. 2008).

Passmore (2019b, p. 171) noted that few studies in coaching have considered “mindfulness with comparable intervention” or attempted to measure the “benefits” or impact on coaching practice or outcomes. In reviewing parallel disciplines, however,

the evidence suggests mindfulness has positive effects in a number of areas, from well-being (Chan and Woollcott, 2007) and performance (Jha et al., 2010) to cognitive processing (Zeiden et al. 2010) and present moment awareness (Turner 2008). Such impacts are likely to be beneficial not only for coaches but also for coaching supervisors. This study aimed to explore supervisor perspectives as to their experiences of using mindfulness as part of their practice and its impact on their work.

2 Literature Review

This study will consider two aspects. Firstly, the field of mindfulness, with a specific focus towards coaching, and coaching supervision. Secondly, the field of coaching supervision. Initially, it may help to establish the definitions of each.

2.1 Defining mindfulness

There are many definitions of mindfulness in the literature (Greif et al. 2022; Van Den Assem and Passmore 2022), some of which were particularly useful in guiding the front-end work and conceptualization for this research (Nilsson and Kazemi 2016). According to Longshore (2015, p.15), Kabat-Zinn (1994), Brown and Ryan (2003) and Langer (2000), “mindfulness in its most basic conceptualization is awareness of experience with acceptance”. This conceptualization of mindfulness is expanded by each author as follows:

a) Mindfulness is “paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and nonjudgmentally” (Kabat-Zinn 1994, p. 4);

b) It is “open or receptive attention to, and awareness of, ongoing events and experience” (Brown and Ryan 2004, p. 242);

c) It is “a flexible state of mind in which we are actively engaged in the present, noticing new things and [being] sensitive to context” (Langer 2000, p. 242).

When exploring the debate within coaching, Marianetti and Passmore (2010) consider mindfulness to be “a state of mind that cultivated regularly promotes an inclusive and authentic experience of the present moment”. Another definition sees mindfulness as “[a] motivated state of decentred awareness brought about by receptive attending to present moment awareness” (Cavanagh and Spence 2013, p.117).

2.2 Defining coaching and supervision

Coaching has been explored and defined by the literature from a number of perspectives. Since it draws on various areas of knowledge and disciplines, there are many definitions of coaching (Bachkirova et al. 2017, 2018; Passmore et al. 2013). Depending on the subject or nature of research, some definitions are more appropriate than others. Since this research is about the ongoing professional development of the supervisees, the definition offered by Silbee (2012) more than many others reflects the focus and purpose of the research.

“… [We will] define [coaching] quite broadly as that part of a relationship in which one person is primarily dedicated to serving the long term development of effectiveness and self-generation in the other” (Silbee 2010, p. 4).

Clutterbuck has suggested supervision is “the practice of reflecting on your client work” (Clutterbuck et al. 2016, p. 5). Hawkins and Shohet (2012, p. 60) offer a more elaborate definition as follows:

> “Supervision is a joint endeavour in which a practitioner with the help of a supervisor, attends to their clients, themselves as part of their client practitioner relationships and the wider systemic context, and by so doing improves the quality of their work, transforms their client relationships, continuously develops themselves, their practice and the wider profession”.

Professional bodies have also been keen to offer their perspective. The Association for Coaching (2019, p. 1) defined supervision “as a formal and protected time for facilitating a coach’s in-depth reflection on … practice with a coaching supervisor”. The definitions of supervision are still debated and reflect the dynamic nature of coaching supervision. Some of these have questioned the perception of a hierarchical aspect of supervision implied by the term, and its application in case management and clinical settings. They have advocated that it may be more helpful to view the process as super-vision, emphasising the overview inquiry nature of the process over the normative aspects of the process (Passmore and McGoldrick 2009).

2.3 Effects of mindfulness

Mindfulness has a positive impact on attention, cognition, emotions, behaviour and working memory across various discipline. It also has a broad impact on health and wellbeing and workplace outcomes in terms of performance and relationships (Good et al. 2016, pp.115, 118, 122-132; Passmore 2019a; Passmore and Marianetti 2007). Mindfulness can improve attention in terms of “stability” (Smallwood and Schooler 2015), “control” (Ocasio 2011) and “efficiency” (Neubauer and Fink 2009), reduce mind wandering and the effect of distracting information (Hasenkamp et al. 2012; Brewer et al. 2011; Tang et al. 2007; Cahn et al. 2013). In so doing, mindfulness “appears to influence emotions via attention” and the “reactivity to emotional stimuli” (Good et al. 2016, p.120). As well it can also reduce the negative affect of these (Arch and Craske 2010) and subdue the reaction to positive stimuli (Brown et al. 2013; Desbordes et al. 2012; Taylor, et al. 2011).

Furthermore, mindfulness can increase cognitive capacity and flexibility (Good et

al. 2016; Walsh, 1995) and working memory (Roeser et al. 2013). Mindfulness and attention have been shown to be related to cognitive performance (Smallwood and Schooler 2015) while mindfulness meditation has been associated with creativity, divergent and convergent thinking (Colzato et al. 2012). Mindfulness training has a positive effect on cognitive tasks "that required sustained attention and executive processing efficiency" (Zeidan et al. 2010, pp. 597, 602, 603) as it has on improving students' retention of material presented in class (Ramsburg and Youmans 2014).

In terms of research in organizations, Passmore and Marianetti (2007, p. 133) report "physiological benefits, contentment, job satisfaction and communication significantly increased or improved with mindfulness training whereas tension, anxiety, nervousness and physical symptoms of stress significantly decreased". Furthermore, Passmore (2019a, p.108) reports "individuals who were more mindful at work provided higher performance, a positive relationship between higher manager ratings and higher individual mindfulness, … and self-compassion was positively associated with mastery goals and negatively associated with performance goals".

2.4 Contributions and challenges of coaching supervision

"Even though the scope of coaching supervision research is still rather limited … recognition of supervision's importance and its increasing uptake have been consistently identified across the coaching field …" (Bachkirova et al. 2020, p.16). At this point in time, the focus of the main functions of coaching supervision is about "developing the competence and capability of the coach, provide a supportive space for the coach to process the experiences … with clients, and encourage professional practice related to quality, standards and ethics" (Bachkirova et al. 2020, p.7). These contributions range from the operational such as "working through a client challenge"

(McAnnaly et al. 2019, p.12), to organisational development and impact (Hawkins and Schwenk 2011). Contributions related to the developmental function include “the development of insights and new perspectives” (Grant 2012, p.21) and the “continual growth and development of practice” (Jepson 2016, p.137), both of which help to ensure “good quality coaching particularly in dealing with difficult cases” (Grant 2012, p.21).

Bachkirova et al. (2020, p.15) consider that “coaching supervision had a significant buffer effect on coaches' job satisfaction when they experienced a high amount of work-related mental strain”. Furthermore, they see “the value of supervision is in the reflective space” [it offers] (e.g. Armstrong and Geddes 2009) to present and explore cases (e.g. Butwell 2006) with an opportunity to be challenged and to validate one’s practice” (e.g. Lawrence and White 2014) and “in promoting continuous learning (e.g. McGivern 2009) and development of reflexivity (e.g. Hodge 2016)”. The challenges related to coaching supervision are with respect to choosing “appropriate approaches and processes during supervision …, how to skilfully work with dilemmas …, how to work with low levels of trust” (Bachkirova et al. 2020, p.17), and the self-deception of coaches (Bachkirova 2015).

The review of the literature revealed that mindfulness has a direct impact and effect on the intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions of the individual. In addition, the role of supervision has been clearly acknowledged to be about developing the competence and capability of the coach. However, the definitions for both mindfulness and supervision themselves are still being debated (Van Den Assem and Passmore 2022). The “theoretical work in coaching supervision is piecemeal” and in spite of “the diversity of practice and contexts, no specific theoretical model for effective coaching supervision exists” (Bachkirova et al. 2020, pp. 9, 10).

Considering these gaps, the focus of this study is to identify and describe from the practising coaching supervisors' perspective what are the meaningful dynamics and themes in mindful coaching supervision. In so doing, this study seeks to contribute to the furtherance of the development of effective mindful coaching supervision and the coaching supervisors who use it. The study is an initial step aimed to gain a better understanding of this area of practice, and answer the research question *How do coaching supervisors experience and use mindfulness within their practice?*

The term coaching supervision in this study is used to describe the role or function of the coaching supervisors who participated in the research. All coaching supervisors interviewed were both coaches and supervisors who supervised other coaches and who also practiced mindfulness in their supervision of these coaches.

3 Method

This research took a phenomenological and social constructivist approach to the study of coaching supervisors and their use of mindfulness. Phenomenology considers "what our experiences of the world are like" and "how to examine and comprehend lived experience" (Smith et al. 2009, pp. 11, 21). Furthermore, phenomenology "sees behaviour as determined by the phenomena of experience rather than by external, objective and physically described reality" (Remenyi et al. 1998, p. 34). Social constructionist theory considers "the process by which phenomena in the social world are formed and sustained by social structures and interactions rather than being constants that conform to natural laws" (Somekh and Lewin 2011, p. 329). A social constructivist approach allows for the meaning of the supervisors' experience to emerge, and be interpreted and integrated into a number of major themes and concepts (Crotty 1998).

An inductive approach and a qualitative methodology with a ground-up view were employed to explore what mindfulness meant to the coaching supervisors in their supervision practice (Creswell 2007). The inductive approach was considered congruent with the interpretive approach for the analysis of data discussed below. The themes which emerged were "strongly linked to the data themselves" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 83).

Since IPA is appropriate to facilitate our understanding of the supervisors' lived and shared experiences of mindfulness in coaching supervision, it was selected for the analysis of the data. It provided "intensive qualitative analysis of detailed personal accounts" and helped to explore, describe and interpret "the means by which supervisors made sense of their experiences" (Smith 2011, p.10; Denicolo et al. 2016; Mousakas 1994). IPA was consistent with the purpose of this qualitative research and "the epistemological position of [the] research question" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 46). The emphasis of the interpretive approach was "grounded in the language of the people [coaching supervisors] studied and as much as possible on their own words and concepts" (Huberman and Miles 2002, p. 49). In keeping with the philosophical orientation of interpretivism and the inductive approach to this research (Spinks 2018, p. 8), many coaching supervisors' contributions included in this paper are quoted verbatim or have been paraphrased.

3.1 Participants

Coaching supervisors who practiced mindfulness in their supervision were identified and recruited through purposive sampling. The sample obtained was based on referrals from coaching colleagues; practicing coaches; university coaching faculties, their staff and researchers; and professional coaching organizations, i.e., International

Coaching Federation, the Association for Coaching, Global Supervisors' Network and the Association of Coaching Supervisors. The sample comprised 15 coaching supervisors, all of whom were both experienced coaches and coaching supervisors. All had training or qualifications in coaching, and the large majority (13) had had training or possessed qualifications in supervision. The mean length of their coaching experience was 18.4 years, with a mean of 10.8 years of supervision. Their age range was 45 to 77 years with a mean of 58.9 years. The gender ratio was 80 percent female to 20 percent male. The participants interviewed were primarily from the UK and continental Europe.

3.2 Procedure

Data were collected through face-to-face and on-line interviews between November 19, 2019 and April 21, 2020. A semi-structured Interview Schedule was developed with questions informed by the literature reviews of mindfulness and supervision(see Appendix C). To ensure the participants' contributions were their own, no definitions, information or suggestions related to mindfulness or supervision were provided in the questions or at any time during the interviews. The interviews provided the participants with optimum breadth and flexibility to "express their concerns and make their claims on their own terms" and for "insights into [their] lived experiences" to emerge. (Rose et al. 2015, p. 237; Smith et al. 2009, p. 42). Consequently, a well-developed and deeper sense of meaning in terms of the supervisors' use of mindfulness was found.

Prior to the interview, each participant was briefed and provided with an Information Sheet describing the research. Each was requested to sign a consent form, which stated they could withdraw from the research at any time. All interviews were

audiotaped and professionally transcribed verbatim. A few days after the interviews were completed the data were transferred from voice files to written transcripts, checked for completeness and analysed side by side and in detail. The data were securely stored and anonymized. Ethical approval for the research was granted through the University.

3.3 Data analysis

The data analysis process for IPA involves three basic activities - “multiple reading [of the transcripts] and making sense”, “transforming notes into emergent themes”, and “seeking relationships and clustering themes” (Pietkiewicz and Smith 2014, pp. 12-13), which entail the following specific steps.

The *first* requires an immersion into the “original data”, which for this study meant listening to the voice recordings and reading and re-reading the written transcripts of the 15 interviews (Smith et al. 2009, p.82).

The *second step* considers the “semantic content and language use on a very exploratory level”, keeping “an open mind and noting everything of interest within the transcript” (ibid., p.83). This step comprised three distinct exploratory processes, one which was “analysing the transcript to describe content”, another “how the content and meaning were presented” and the third considered the “conceptual” and “interpretive” levels of the data. (ibid., pp.83-88).

The *third step* was one of “developing emergent themes” by considering “discrete chunks of transcript”, which involves a “synergistic process of description and interpretation”, turning these into “concise and pithy” statements and themes, which “reflect the participant’s original words [and lived experience] and the thoughts of the analyst’s interpretation” (ibid., pp.91-92).

The *fourth step* involves finding "connections across emerging themes" by identifying patterns and differences or contrasts between themes, from which a "superordinate theme" emerges. This process includes identifying "contextual or narrative elements", the "specific function of [emergent themes] in the transcript" and the frequency with which these appear and are supported (ibid., pp.92-99).

These four steps are not mutually exclusive. The step which followed these considered the next coaching supervisor's transcript, which meant revisiting, reconfiguring or relabelling themes in previously analysed cases. The authors followed these steps in reviewing and analysing the data collected for this research.

4 Results

The purpose of the research was to invite coaching supervisors (the participants) to respond to what mindfulness in supervision meant to them in their own words. In spite of not having been provided with any definitions, information or suggestions related to mindfulness or supervision by the researchers, participants' responses did reflect aspects of definitions of mindfulness proposed by Kabat-Zinn (1994), Brown and Ryan (2003) and Langer (2000) noted above. These aspects reflected the participants' philosophy and understanding of mindfulness in coaching supervision and provided the basis of the themes which emerged from the interview data as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Major and sub themes from IPA analysis

Major themes	Sub themes
1.Present and presence	"At its heart, mindfulness is being present" Presence as enabler of mindfulness and the present
2.Attention and noticing	The purpose of attention and noticing How they complement each other
3. Awareness	Purpose of awareness Benefit and challenges of awareness
4. Non-judgmental	Enhancing the present and presence, attention and noticing, and awareness Enabling quality supervision

4.1 Displaying presence in the present

"At its heart, mindfulness is being present" It is helpful before considering participants' experience to explore the concepts of present and presence. Firstly, when participants spoke about being in the present moment, this felt experience was contrasted by them with past or imagined futures. Second, the dwelling in the present moment was manifested in the presence they believed their clients felt during coaching supervision sessions.

The present was one of the concepts which was often used by participants in describing their philosophy of mindfulness and its role in their coaching supervision practice. Participants often viewed the present as being part of, or influenced by, mindfulness. Being in the present allowed them to be aware and open to what happened in their supervision sessions and to observe their own reactions to what occurred therein.

> "When I'm in the session, if I am feeling challenged or triggered in any way, then for me … the compassionate elements of mindfulness help to steady and ground me, so keeping me present and connected rather than disappearing into my head".

Participants considered mindfulness to enhance the capability and capacity of supervisees to actually be fully present in the here and now. Specifically, coaching supervisors considered the function of the present in practising mindfulness to make connections between the present and other concepts related to mindfulness, including being more aware. One supervisor summed up her position on the present as follows:

> "My philosophy of mindfulness is about being fully present in the moment to all that's happening and to all that you are sensing in your body, and using the self as an instrument for coaching or supervision".

Presence as enabler of mindfulness and the present Participants considered presence to be another key concept of mindfulness in the coaching supervision relationship. They saw presence as an enabler of mindfulness and the present. For example, two supervisors noted:

> "Mindfulness is about presence; about being here and now; noticing where my attention is, how that may show up with my clients; and what may be happening for them".

> "Presence is the capability and capacity of supervisees to be fully present and aware of silence as well as the actual structure of the session".

Another participant described how presence contributes to supervision practice:

> "Presence plays a role in the way I start up and use mindfulness with myself to be fully present for the supervisee. It helps me take care of myself and being in the right state when I'm coming into supervision. Presence develops my capacity for

embodiment and creating a safe space for supervisees in developing rapport with supervisees. It reduces stress and calms down supervisees to help me be present and de-stressed. Presence increases the psychological safety experienced by the supervisees. Finally, I look for the presence of ability, capability, values that are being looked at, you know, and authenticity is a huge one, which I think would be the biggest one".

4.2 Attention and noticing

The purpose of attention Participants noted that attention in supervision requires significant personal and professional skill, which were described as follows:

"The supervisor and supervisee both need to focus their attention. They are paying attention to the whole body-mind-feeling state of being. Supervisees are paying attention to the breath or the mantra of how the supervisor introduces the session. The supervisor and supervisee are paying attention to what is happening around them".

The purpose of noticing Mindfulness was reported by participants to have sharpened their capacity to notice. It also helped their supervisees to notice themselves and bring their attention to what is occurring in the present. Important for their practise was that participants noticed their impact on supervisees. Helping supervisees to slow down and to notice where their attention is was considered to be useful for both the coaching supervisors and the relationship, in terms of informing supervisees how they show up for their own clients. One coaching supervisor described this as follows:

> "Part of helping supervisees to notice is about understanding what's going on for the supervisees themselves and how they can be more present with their own clients".

How they complement each other Participants considered attention and noticing to be inter-related concepts within the practice of mindfulness supervision. It is the interaction or their complementarity which helps to clarify their distinct contribution to practice, as illustrated by one supervisor's poignant summary:

> "I practice as mindfully as I have capacity at any given time and my awareness and noticing is where my attention and my client's attention is. And how we come back to the present, because that is all there is, is how my awareness and noticing shows up in my work".

4.3 Awareness

Purpose of awareness Participants identified and acknowledged awareness to be one of the most important concepts in their philosophy and practise of mindfulness. One participant described the role of awareness in mindful coaching supervision as follows:

> "When mindfulness is implicitly or explicitly brought to supervision, it's an awareness practice which will increase awareness of what's going on in the supervisee in the present moment in the mind-body system. This practice is purposeful around heightening and increasing awareness as supervisees think about supervisory issues, and particularly about emphasizing non-judgmental awareness".

Benefits and challenges of awareness The benefit of awareness for coaching supervisors and supervisees was that they both were "aware of those moments, in an encounter when something deeply personal just touches the dialogue and they can

sense it". However, at times coaching supervisors noted there was concern for supervisees using awareness in dealing with the issues and choices supervisees had while practising in the moment. Furthermore, some coaching supervisors were more able to relate to using mindfulness than others. Consequently, it appeared that supervisees raising their awareness in the moment with their own clients could be challenging for these supervisees themselves, as well as their own coaching supervisors and the supervision session.

4.4 Being non-judgmental

Enhancing mindfulness and enabling quality supervision Coaching supervisors considered being non-judgemental, including accepting and compassionate, to be part of the supervisory relationship, in how the relationship was conducted and the quality of it ensured. Non-judgemental also appeared to be the source or means for enhancing the other three concepts of mindfulness in the use of coaching supervision, i.e. present and presence, attention and noticing, and awareness.

Participants considered the non-judgmental concept as an integral part of their philosophy and their practise of mindfulness and supervision. The concept was considered by them to enable events to unfold in supervision and to allow whatever to arise without expectation. Supervisees were able to be in contact with the "felt sense" of supervisory issues and to connect with what was emerging in their present moment awareness, a key concept in mindfulness. For example,

> "So my philosophy I suppose is about self-care, quality relationships, meaningful work and inner harmony, and inner harmony is about self-kindness and without judgment. I guess the non-judgemental aspect is being more self-compassionate and less judgmental about oneself".

In summary, the above results identified a number of themes based on the several key concepts and their place in the practice of mindful coaching supervision. These concepts were presence, the present and the relationship between them; attention and noticing and the relationship between them; the purpose, benefits and challenges of self-awareness; and, being non-judgmental. The coaching supervisors' contribution of these concepts were highlighted in and illustrated by various explanations and quotations related to their application and use in practice.

5 Discussion

5.1 Interconnectedness of major themes

The major contributions which emerged from the research identified and described the participants' perspectives of the meaningful dynamics and themes in mindful coaching supervision and their interconnectedness. These support the phenomenological approach to the research which was "not reductionist but holistic" (Remenyi et al. 1998, pp. 4, 36). The themes were usually not presented as stand-alone constructs or concepts of mindfulness by the coaching supervisors but often in terms of the context or relationship these had to each other. This interconnectedness characterised the complexity of the use of mindfulness in coaching supervision and the nature of the relationship between coaching supervisors and supervisees as described by the participants.

5.2 Contributions from the participants and the literature

Coaching supervisors' contributions with respect to the positive effects of mindfulness are also reflective and generally supported by the literature reported in section 2.3 above. In particular, these concern the content of definitions of mindfulness provided by Kabat-Zinn (1994), Brown and Ryan (2004) and Langer (2000); and supervision

provided by Hawkins and Shohet (2012) which stresses the joint endeavour of the supervisor-supervisee relationship in which the practitioner works with the supervisor. Additional literature with respect to well-being (Chan and Woollcott 2007), performance (Jha et al. 2010), cognitive processing (Zeiden et al., 2010), present moment awareness (Turner 2009), and mindfulness promotion of inclusiveness and authentic experience of the present moment (Marianetti and Passmore 2010), offer further support to the participants' contributions. However, no evidence emerged from the participants of this study that coaching supervision was hierarchical conceptually or in practise. Rather quite the opposite was found, in that the supervisor-supervisee relationship was considered to be based on mutual respect and the supervisee's needs and goals.

5.3 Implications for the coaching supervisor-supervisee relationship

The results of this study related to the interconnectedness of the supervisor-supervisee relationship provided the basis for explaining what transpired during supervision.

There is an exchange between the coaching supervisor and the supervisee, which includes the four themes of mindfulness in supervision. These themes, which may initially emanate from the coaching supervisor, would also appear to be part of a reciprocal dynamic in and of the supervisory relationship itself. Since the four themes are not mutually exclusive, there may also be reciprocity between and across all four themes. However, since only coaching supervisors were included in this research, it is only their perspectives on the exchange which can be offered at this time.

5.4 Importance of providing an enabling context

Participants often spoke of creating or providing space for supervisees which was mutually beneficial for both coaching supervisors and supervisees. The meaning of creating this space essentially referred to the recognition or acknowledgment by coaching supervisors of their supervisees' presence during supervision, particularly at the beginning and in assessing clients (Möller and Kotte 2022). In creating space for supervisees, participants often began their supervision sessions by focusing their attention and attuning their own feelings and embodied sensations as well as those of their supervisees. This included an awareness of the environment around them.

The purpose of the space allowed supervisees to feel safe to openly discuss any issues, professional or personal, and to reflect on approaches or solutions thereto. Coaching supervisors could explore their identities as practitioners and to see themselves more holistically including their own development. According to one participant:

> "The space informed the way I respond to issues, which is generally to pause, let them come in and try to hold them in the space between us, to come at it with enquiry and noticing".

5.5 Challenges for coaching supervisors

There was a range of perspectives amongst the coaching supervisors regarding their interpretation and use of mindfulness in practice. Some claimed to have a natural affinity for mindfulness whereas others suggested their relationship or capacity for mindfulness varied. For example, one participant considered "mindfulness in coaching as being explicitly or implicitly brought into supervision because coaching supervisors have a depth of mindfulness which influenced the way they show up as supervisors".

Not all supervisees were considered to appreciate mindfulness or its impact or effect. Coaching supervisors were at times reluctant to use the label of mindfulness or specifically refer to it in practice for fear of apprehension or it being misunderstood by supervisees. In response, they would integrate concepts or elements of mindfulness in their supervision practice, which would not stand out as being related to mindfulness. Others did not frame their coaching supervision practice around mindfulness but rather considered it to be about learning and change.

The challenge for coaching supervisors handling difficult supervision situations was commented on by them. When kindness was present supervisees were more able to be open to reflect on their experience, even where it was difficult, unwanted, or it involved change. These challenging situations allowed the coaching supervisors and supervisees to connect without judgment, with compassion and acceptance. These situations helped supervisees to transcend the notion that supervision was only about quality assurance of client interactions.

These challenges may be seen to have important considerations for the mindfulness training of coaching supervisors. Questions such as whether mindfulness could be included in their training, or should be added to their competencies as part of the development of mindful coaching supervisors, takes on an important meaning for the development of coaching supervision.

5.6 Limitations of the research

The study was a qualitative study, the results of which may not be generalizable to all coaching supervisors. Only coaching supervisors' accounts of their use of mindfulness in supervision and their interpretation of supervisees' experience with mindfulness were included in this research. Furthermore, since the study only

included experienced coaching supervisors, less experienced supervisors may have had different views.

Addendum post publication

A comparison group, such as one of less experienced supervisors, could have been incorporated into the study and would potentially have offered different results with respect to those of the 15 coach supervisors who contributed to the study. For example, a group less experienced in the use of mindfulness in supervision may have had a less robust or integrated set of mindfulness skills. This may have shown up in terms of a lower level of confidence in using mindfulness, and less expertise or range of practice skills related to their use of mindfulness. The specific areas in question may have included those noted in Table 4.1 above, i.e., present, presence, attention and noticing, awareness and being non-judgmental. Furthermore, the less experienced group may not have been as confident or capable of seeing the interconnectedness of the major features of mindfulness, or the subtleties thereof, or been able to engage in non-judgmental reciprocal coaching relationships as experienced supervisors. These are areas to be aware of and strive for in the coaching-coachee relationship.

Secondly, other coaching and coaching supervision groups not experienced in the use of mindfulness in coaching or supervision would conceivably be even more disadvantaged in demonstrating in practice these mindfulness abilities or skills. Further research would offer an opportunity to confirm if such differences between and across these comparison groups exist and to what extent.

Concerning the sample size used for this IPA study, Smith et al. (2022) note it is difficult to suggest a sample for PhD level work. Others, such as Rajasinghe (2020,

p.183), would suggest that “appropriate sample size” in using IPA is a matter of the sample being able to “adequately answer the research question”.

A sample of 10 in IPA allows the individual participant’s contributions to be considered as well as enhance the credibility of the findings. Samples of 10 or more require greater attention in identifying and constructing themes, which bring together the experiences of the individual participants and identify themes at the group level. Although sample sizes reported by coaching and supervision studies may be small, between 3 and 5 (McManus and Giraldez-Hayes, 2021; Cousins and Giraldez-Hayes, 2022), samples of 6-12 in coaching studies are not unusual. Larger samples, such as 18 were recently reported by McEwan and Rowson (2023) with respect to coaches’ wellbeing and 39 by Goodwyn et al. (2022) in peer coaching.

Using larger samples may be difficult in capturing information at the level of the individual participant and that the focus therefore may shift to the level of the group. To ensure that the depth of the analysis was not compromised in this study, great effort and care were taken in exploring the contributions of the individual participants for their insights with respect to their use of mindfulness in supervision as well as of the group.

5.7 Further research

Much useful qualitative research remains to be done to enhance the understanding of mindful coaching supervision. However, engaging realist perspectives and quantitative methods in observing the impact of the research would also offer new questions and insights to follow on from this study. For example, neuroscience studies of coaching supervisors or quantitative studies evaluating mindful supervisors and non-practicing mindful supervisors, would be useful for future

investigation. Measuring the impact of coaching supervisors using mindfulness with those using other methods is another area of interest. These examples offer additional dimensions for understanding both the practice and enhancement of the theory of mindful coaching supervision and the development of mindful coaches.

6. Conclusion

The research was designed to explore the felt experience of coaching supervisors and their relationship with mindfulness. The literature provides compelling evidence of the power of mindfulness as a generic intervention, and recent work has summarised the contribution coaching supervision can make to coaching. In this study the evidence suggests that experienced coaching supervisors also value mindfulness. They see it as helping them in managing their present moment focus, and how their supervisees experience their supervisors' presence during sessions. Instrumental in this regard were attention, noticing, awareness and being non-judgmental.

The coaching supervisors' lived experience of mindfulness in supervision should become an essential ingredient for supervisor training. Greater attention to coaching competencies, and other guidance to highlight the value mindful practice, can advance the contribution of supervision as a supportive learning space for coaches. In this way, the study seeks to make a contribution to the furtherance of the development of effective mindful coaching supervision and the coaches who use it and are part of it.

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Chapter 5

Discussion

Integration and review of the major contributions of the three studies

The relevance of the three studies to enhancing the understanding of the use of mindfulness in coaching is related to the practice of mindfulness and to the development of mindful coaches through training, experience and coaching supervision. These three major phases in the development of mindfulness in coaching are an important addition to the existing understanding of the theory and practice of mindfulness in coaching. Together they provide an expanded scope to examine the use of mindfulness in practice, each of which provided a number of specific insights and related contributions to the development of mindfulness in coaching. An interconnected framework to illustrate these three phases, the derivation and contribution of which are a major focus of this Chapter, is provided below (see Figure 5.2, p. 184). In one of the published studies (Chapter 3) for this dissertation the term 'model' is used reflecting journal editor preferences, however, the authors believe the more appropriate term to describe it is 'framework' (Evans et al., 2014).

The development of mindfulness in coaching practice as presented in this dissertation is focused on the contributions from novice coach trainees, who are engaged in the training and practice of acquiring mindfulness coaching skills, and experienced coaches and coaching supervisors. The contributions by experienced coaches and supervisors were solely based on their personal accounts of their experience in their own voice that allowed for in-depth descriptions, analysis and synthesis of what mindful coaching and supervision in practice meant to them. The literature offered a useful conceptual framework for the examination and analysis of their personal observations and the subsequent themes that emerged from them. (Nilsson and Kazemi, 2016; Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Brown and Ryan, 2004; Langer, 2000;

Hawkins and Shohet, 2012; Chan and Woollcott, 2007; Jha et al., 2010; Zieden et al., 2010; Turner, 2009; Marianetti and Passmore, 2010).

Major contributions by trainee coaches, experienced coaches and coach supervisors

A majority in each of the three participating groups supported the following contributions.

Mindful coaching is considered useful and beneficial. The training, practice and supervision in coaching by those who participated in this research indicated that mindfulness was considered useful or beneficial in coaching practice.

Mindful coaching skills may be acquired and developed through formal training, practice and experiential learning. In support of the literature the contributions by the post graduate trainee coaches, experienced coaches and supervising coaches, to the development of mindfulness in coaching compliments and aids in the development of professional and personal skills and the use of mindfulness in coaching (Kolb, 1984; Hall, 2013, 2014; Spence et al., 2008; Bakosh et al., 2016; Chambers et al., 2008; Collard and Walsh, 2008; Ramsburg and Youmans, 2014).

Conceptual commonalities across definitions of mindfulness Conceptual commonalities across definitions of mindfulness were recognised or identified by coach trainees, experienced coaches and coaching supervisors as aspects or features of mindfulness or through the use of the Five Facets of Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) (Baer et al., 2008) in the training of mindfulness (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1 Concepts from definitions of mindfulness in the literature, FFMQ and training and the practice of mindful coaching*

Most frequently used concepts in 38 definitions of mindfulness	Trainee Coach – training and practice based on FFMQ concepts & constructs	Experienced coaches	Coaching supervisors
Awareness, fully awake, consciousness	Awareness, attending to activities in the moment	Greater awareness in the here and now	Awareness
Attention, attending	Observing includes noticing or attending to experience	Being non-judgemental, practicing with curiosity and kindness	Attention and noticing
Present, in the moment, here and now	Non judging inner experience	Being present	Present and presence
	Non reactivity to inner experience	Presence	Non judgemental
	Describing - labelling internal experience with words	Focus	
		Creating space for clients	
		Practicing in a more effective and respectful way	

*Some concepts appeared in all three studies presented in this dissertation as well as in 38 definitions from the literature. Others appeared in one or two of the studies.

The conceptual commonalities identified by these three groups in the three studies submitted for this dissertation and 38 definitions of mindfulness in the literature included the following: Awareness and present / in the moment appeared in the definitions and in the three studies of mindfulness. In addition non-judgment/judgmental also were identified in the three studies, as were the four complimentary concepts of attention /attending /noticing /focus. Presence was identified by the experienced coaches and coaching supervision papers.

Choi at al's. (2022, p.50) position that "research and practice on mindfulness may be enhanced to the extent that factors complementary to current definitions of mindfulness are considered more fully" was seriously considered by this research. Although the 38 definitions of mindfulness were clear about which concepts define it, this challenged the critique that there is no precision or consensus regarding clarity and consistency with respect to the definition or nature of mindfulness (Cavanagh and Spence, 2013). On the contrary, it be may be argued that the 38 definitions of mindfulness have a conceptual core for those who practice mindfulness in coaching which may be agreed to offer a definition of mindfulness practice within a coaching context. This may warrant a re-visitation of the literature (for example, Cavanagh and Spence, 2013; Brown and Ryan, 2004; Langer and Moldoveanu, 2000, p.1), to qualify the notion that mindfulness is "not an easy concept to define" and state that it may be less so for practitioners using mindfulness in coaching.

Major contributions by coach trainees

Trainee coaches were at the beginning of their training which also included mindfulness training and the practice of mindfulness skills. The findings of the research indicated that 85% of trainees increased their mindfulness and 78% were positive about the training and practice which they found beneficial. The research offered insight into the enablers for the development of mindfulness, in terms of the coach trainees' opinions, their potential commitment to training and practice of mindfulness, and academic performance.

> "Those with higher levels of mindfulness, and those whose mindfulness had improved, tended to have more favourable opinions of mindfulness, showing positive effects of practice in contrast to those with lower mindfulness. These and a positive relationship between increases in mindfulness during training

and the days available spent practising mindfulness are the important findings" (Van Den Assem, Dulewicz and Passmore, 2022, p.1).

The training offered to coach trainees was presented in terms of the development of insight and mindfulness skills of attention, presence, empathy, self-regulation and non-judgment, which are fundamental to mindful coaching, and the introduction of several of the major concepts used in the practice of mindful coaching. The trainee coaches' study also provided guidance about how best to set up and conduct the training.

The contributions of the trainee coaches' study on the use of mindfulness in coaching provided a starting point for the more in-depth focus of mindfulness in coaching practice provided by experienced coach practitioners and coaching supervisors.

Major contributions by experienced coach practitioners

The important themes identified from the contributions of experienced coach practitioners in their practice of mindfulness were with respect to practicing with greater awareness in the here and now; being present, having presence and focus; being non-judgmental, practising with curiosity and kindness; creating space for clients; and practising in a more effective and respectful way. These themes also reflected the mindfulness skills of attention, presence, empathy, self-regulation and non-judgment which were introduced to trainee coaches in their training and practice of mindfulness.

An important contribution by experienced coaches was with respect to how they knew their mindfulness practice was of use or benefit for themselves and clients. This included a number of areas such as,

- giving meaning to clients' lives and experience;
- being present and having presence;
- understanding "what is going on for clients";
- ability to clear/quieten the mind and create space for clients;
- acknowledging and supporting clients' choices;
- ability to recognize change in clients;
- knowing what the coach and client want;
- being in touch with the mind and physical body;
- effective communications; and
- an ability of the coaches and clients to work together.

The clearest indication that mindfulness was useful or beneficial was related to the experienced coaches being able to recognize change in their clients. This included clients gaining greater insight into their lives; shifts in their thinking or relating to behaviour; responding rather than reacting; managing their thoughts, worries or anxiety; as well as coaches and clients noticing small changes, such as pauses when changing focus, during coaching sessions. A number of these are related to the challenges identified below for coaches in their practice of mindfulness.

Although most experienced coaches knew how and for which occasions to use mindfulness and were quite familiar, comfortable or confident using mindfulness in their practice, a few were less so and used only selected aspects of it. The themes which emerged from their interviews with respect to their practice of mindfulness was related to them being in the present when practicing, practicing with greater awareness in the here and now, having focus, being non-judgemental, and practicing with curiosity and kindness in a more respectful effective way. As mindful coaches, these

themes indicated that they were aware of when or if to switch styles of mindful engagement if there was not *an equally engaged relationship* between the coach and client.

Another major contribution was with respect to the debate in the literature concerning the definitional lack of clarity of mindfulness (Passmore, 2017; Cavanagh and Spence, 2013). The experienced coaches offered an alternative perspective to this debate by highlighting the conceptual similarities or compatibilities across the existing scope of definitions of mindfulness in the literature with those based on their experience of practicing mindfulness. In so doing, it shifts the focus of the literature away from the predominant position of mindfulness being a "confused" concept to one where the focus is on the existing conceptual congruence of the concepts used in the practice of mindfulness coaching which gives it a more cohesive core. The advantage of this shift is that it allows for a more optimistic or positive position and a more integrated connection to be established based on what research and practice have in common, potentially offering clearer connections between the theory, research and practice of mindfulness in coaching. This would address Choi et al's. (2022, p.50) issue that "research and practice on mindfulness may be enhanced to the extent that factors complementary to current definitions of mindfulness are considered more fully".

Major contributions by coach supervisors

Coach supervisors explored their use of mindfulness in supervision, its impact on their practice and what in their own words this meant to them as supervisors. Their contributions identified a number of themes based on the several key concepts in the practice of mindful coaching supervision. The concepts were presence, the present and the relationship between them; attention and noticing and the relationship

between them; the purpose, benefits and challenges of self-awareness; and, being non-judgmental. It should be noted that these concepts are evident in the definitions of mindfulness proposed by Kabat-Zinn (1994), Brown and Ryan (2003) and Langer (2000). They are also reflected in the coaching supervisors' philosophy and understanding of mindfulness in coaching supervision, the contributions of the experienced mindful coaches and trainee coaches and the FFMQ measures used to gauge the trainees' development of mindfulness for coaching practice (see Table 5.1 above).

The definitions of supervision, like the definitions of mindfulness, are still debated in the literature at this point in time (Bachkirova et al., 2020; Passmore et al., 2013). However, the focus of the main functions and purpose of coaching supervision may be somewhat more clearly stated as being about "developing the competence and capability of the coach, provide a supportive space for the coach to process the experiences … with clients, and encourage professional practice related to quality, standards and ethics" (Bachkirova et al., 2020, p.7).

Although the exchange between coaching supervisors and the supervisees may initially emanate from the coaching supervisor, it may also be considered part of a reciprocal dynamic between the supervisor and supervisee that serves to contribute to the supervisee and the supervisory relationship.

Explaining variations in practice

There was a closer conceptual connectedness of a number of the contributions provided by the experienced coaches and supervisors than those by the coach trainees. This appeared to be related the greater length of coaching experience of the experienced coaches and supervisors, an average of 14 and 18 years

respectively, compared to the trainee coaches, an average of 4 years (see Table 1.1, Chapter 1). Although the age range of the three groups was wide, between 34 and 77 years, this by itself was considered not to explain the differences in their contributions. Trainee coaches were not expected to provide as detailed or nuanced understanding of the use of mindfulness in practice or how or why they used what they had been provided in their training as were experienced coaches or coach supervisors with their longer experience and training. This difference was noted in the responses from those who participated in this research, which in part may be explained by the observation that "older and more experienced coaches, and those who took more supervision, [had] higher levels of trust and safety" (Bachkirova et al., 2020, p. 15).

It should be noted that most experienced coaches interviewed were knowledgeable about how and for which occasions or situations mindfulness might be used and what could be achieved by using it in their practice.

> "Some coaches found mindfulness to be quite a natural approach to coaching; for others, mindfulness had become a way of being and living, a life habit in which they engaged on a daily basis. … A few experienced coaches suggested their use of mindfulness was almost to the exclusion of any other approach in their practice. Some were very articulate or confident about the meaning of mindfulness for themselves, whereas others found it more difficult to define. However, a few were less confident and used only selected aspects of mindfulness depending on the occasion or need" (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022, p.129).

The experienced coaches also had different styles of mindful engagement in that not all were equally engaged or engaged in the same way in their practice. It was difficult at times for them to clearly discriminate between the use of mindfulness and its usefulness or benefit. Furthermore, they also appeared at times to be more concerned about their own use of mindfulness for themselves than it being useful or beneficial for those they coached.

Some coaching supervisors claimed to have a natural affinity for mindfulness whereas others suggested their relationship or capacity for mindfulness varied. Not all supervisees according to their supervisors were considered to appreciate mindfulness, its impact or effect. Coaching supervisors were at times reluctant to use the label of mindfulness or specifically refer to it in practice for fear of apprehension or it being misunderstood by supervisees. In response, supervisors would integrate concepts or elements of mindfulness in their supervision practice, which would not stand out as being related to mindfulness. Others did not frame their coaching supervision practice around mindfulness but rather considered it to be about learning and change. However, what was of concern was that some coaches appeared “more concerned about the use of mindfulness than it being useful or beneficial” (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022, p.130).

Identifying the challenges for mindfulness in coaching practice

A major contribution of this research was the identification of a number of challenges with respect to the development and practice of mindfulness in coaching. The impact of these on practice and research are noted and suggestions and actions to constructively consider or address these are offered in the remaining sections of this Chapter (also see Table 5.A, p. 197). The challenges are as follows:

- Knowing how mindfulness is useful or beneficial in practice,
- Knowing how and when to use mindfulness in practice,
- Knowing what is going on for the client,
- Knowing what the client wants and needs,
- Recognizing change in the client,
- Being able to create space and an enabling context for clients,
- Being clear in the use of mindfulness concepts in practice,
- Understanding the connection of concept and context in practice,
- Improving the definitional framework for practice.

Knowing how mindfulness is useful or beneficial in practice

Although the definitions of mindfulness did not directly address how experienced coaches know mindfulness is useful or beneficial, it is suggested that awareness and/or being in the present are likely the necessary precursors for this and for change to occur. In spite of the so called "definitional limitations" in the literature noted above, it would appear experienced coaches recognized that change was based on their own awareness of it in their practice. Furthermore, 38 of the 42 definitions of mindfulness in the literature included the concepts of awareness, attention, being in the present, attending, fully awake, consciousness (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022). The predominance of these in the definitions would suggest they may already have been known to experienced coaches or be part of their mindfulness in coaching practice, but not necessarily always well understood or used in their practice.

> "[T]he clearest indications of the impact of mindfulness in terms of being useful or beneficial was evident in the experienced coaches' responses

> related to their ability to recognize change in their clients. These included clients gaining greater insight into their lives; shifts in their thinking, relating, or behavior; responding rather than reacting; and managing their thoughts, worry, or anxiety. These also included coaches and clients noticing the small changes, such as pauses when changing focus, during coaching sessions" (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022, p. 129).

Client experiences - "What is going on for the client"

Twenty-six of 42 definitions mindfulness identified in the literature included reference to being in the present, the present moment, and the here and now, which serve as a context and enablers for understanding the client. However, none of the 42 definitions specifically or explicitly addressed what the experienced coaches interviewed for the research described as "what is going on for the client". The absence of this essential ingredient in the definition of mindfulness in coaching points to the need for an enhanced operational definition and enhanced operational framework of mindfulness in coaching which clearly conceptualises and includes this aspect in practice. (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022, pp.126-127). This challenge has been included as a feature of the enhanced operational definition of mindfulness in coaching presented below.

Knowing what the client wants and needs

Although many of the definitions suggest what would enable the coach and the client to know *what the client wants and needs* (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022, p.128), none specifically addresses this. Difficult situations in coaching supervision provided some useful insight in this regard. When kindness was present supervisees were more able to be open to reflect on their experience, even where it was difficult,

unwanted, or it involved change. Kindness allowed coaching supervisors and supervisees to connect without judgment, with compassion and acceptance, which helped supervisees transcend the notion that supervision was only about quality assurance of client interactions. This challenge has been included as a feature of the enhanced operational definition of mindfulness in coaching presented below.

Recognizing change in the client

"[T]he clearest indication of the impact of mindfulness in terms of being useful or beneficial was evident in the experienced coaches' responses related to their ability to recognize change in their clients. These included clients gaining greater insight into their lives; shifts in their thinking, relating, or behavior; responding rather than reacting; and managing their thoughts, worry, or anxiety. These also included coaches and clients noticing the small changes, such as pauses when changing focus, during coaching sessions" (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022, p. 129) which may also be reflected as changes in the mind-body connection. Considering the importance the mind-body connection has in coaching and allied fields such as health care (Attan et al., 2018; Delaney and Bark, 2019), there was a lack of prominence of it in most definitions of the mindfulness in coaching. This challenge has been included as a feature of the enhanced operational definition of mindfulness in coaching below.

Creating space and an enabling context for clients

None of the 42 definitions of mindfulness in the literature specifically or adequately captured the creation of space for clients. However, the subtheme "creating space for clients" (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022, p. 122) had only an inferential connection to one definition of mindfulness which was offered by Chaskalson and McMordie (2018, p. 6). They implied what was required in a general sense to create

the conditions for such a space was to engage “the simplest description [of mindfulness which is] … a way of being aware of yourself, others and the world around you” (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022, p.125). This challenge has been included as a feature of the enhanced operational definition of mindfulness in coaching below.

Perhaps also the most important and difficult challenge for ensuring mindfulness in the practice of coaching and supervision is the challenge about providing an enabling context (Van Den Assem, Passmore and Dulewicz, 2022) or space for clients (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022) to be recognised or acknowledged. The purpose of this being that they feel safe, can reflect and expand their awareness and reflect on approaches or solutions related to their issues. What it requires in terms of positive outcomes are related to the coach’s ‘personal qualities’.

> “… [T]he potency of a coaching engagement is founded on a set of basic communication and interpersonal skills that determine how well a coach is able to listen to a coachee’s concerns, process that information, display empathy, build trust, provide feedback to them, notice patterns of thought and action, manage transference and counter transference, etc. Whilst mindfulness is central to all these skills, arguably its most important contributions come via the stabilization of attention (which enhances the ability to listen for long periods of time) and the noticing of patterns of thought and action (which can generate insight and assist future planning and action)” (Spence, 2019, pp.198-199).

In view of the importance the creation of space for clients in the practice of mindfulness in coaching and the lack of it in definitions of mindfulness in coaching, it has been included as a feature of the enhanced operational definition of mindfulness in coaching presented below.

4. Developing an enhanced operational definition and framework for mindfulness in coaching practice

“Although seemingly a simple idea, the phenomenon is quite complex, as reflected in controversies concerning how to conceptually define and operationalize mindfulness” (Donald et al., 2020, p.1122; Chiesa et al., 2011; Monteiro et al., 2014; Van Dam et al., 2018).

The challenges identified and experienced in the practice of mindfulness by the participants of the three groups in this research offered useful contributions to the development of an enhanced operational definition and framework for mindfulness in coaching practice. Choi et al. (2022) observations provided a broad contemporary perspective of the issues and a context to propose feasible options for these challenges and for mindfulness in coaching.

- An “absence of a proper framework for understanding mindfulness” and “definitions of mindfulness [demonstrating] significant variation” (Choi et al., 2022, pp. 49-50, 60);

- Enhancing research and practice so that “factors complementary to current definitions of mindfulness are considered more fully” (Choi et al., 2022, p. 50);

- Consideration of how “mindfulness may interact with other variables and appreciating the way in which different facets of mindfulness may interact among themselves” (Choi et al., 2022, p. 47);
- Contextual sensitivity. “[T]he degree to which mindfulness is valuable, appropriate, and hence desirable, [it] may be influenced by the context in which it occurs” (Choi et al., 2022, p. 50);

- Considering “[m]indfulness as part of a system of engagement” and enhancing the research “by considering a broader set of processes and outcomes than those conventionally studied” (Choi et al., 2020, pp. 48-49);

- “[A] more systematic, integrated way of conceptualizing mindfulness may be advantageous. A balanced understanding of mindfulness at work encourages more sophisticated research and more effective practice that may better support employees and organizations” (Choi et al., 2022, p. 62);

- “[A] more balanced perspective may provide practitioners with a more effective way to think about mindfulness and apply it” (Choi et al., 2022, p. 38);

- “A balanced approach could therefore complement mindfulness with goals, motivations, values and/or ethical frameworks that serve an orienting function that promotes larger life and work objectives” (Choi et al., 2022, p. 49).

A number of the issues described by Choi et al. (2022) above which were found useful in developing an enhanced operational definition and framework for mindfulness in coaching practice may be subsumed and discussed under the following headings, i.e., the context in practice, interconnectedness of the constituents of practice, and experience and experiential learning.

Importance of the context in practice

Context is essential for understanding or defining the concepts used in the practice of mindfulness. Paradoxically both concept and context also need to be considered as two distinct but interdependent entities and contributors that influence each other and the coaching relationship. This recognition allows mindfulness to have the interpretive

latitude to deal with the complexities of the modern world (Langer and Moldoveanu, 2000).

The importance of context in the practice of mindfulness in coaching became evident with the review and integration of the findings and themes that emerged from the three research studies. Themes were often found to be interconnected as well as often considered as stand-alone constructs or concepts related to mindfulness in coaching or supervision. This interconnectedness illustrates the complexity of the use of mindfulness in coaching as well as the nature of the relationships between coaches and coachees and supervisors and supervisees.

In addition to the many definitions of mindfulness that may be relied upon in the practice of coaching are the interpretations of these by coaches using them in practice, which creates two levels of interpretation. One level is related to the definition itself and the other to the interpretation and use of it in practice (Crotty, 1998). The language used by coaches and supervisors to describe the use of concepts in their coaching practice may therefore at times be a challenge for both coach and client. It was through carefully listening to coaches' explanation of their use of the concept and particularly the context in or the situation for which it was used, that the meaning of both - concept and context - for the coach, emerged and was clarified by the researchers.

This challenge of concept within context calls for an awareness and a need for clarity with respect to this by coaches and supervisors in their coaching practice. One case in point in the research which illustrates this was their apparent interchangeable use of *present* and *presence.* The meaning of present in everyday language means,

being in the here and now. However, presence appeared to mean, having *presence in the present* in that these are seen to be simultaneously working together.

Interconnectedness of the constituents of practice

This section is specifically related to two challenges, i. knowing how and when to use mindfulness in practice, and ii. being clear in the use of mindfulness concepts in practice.

Conceptual commonalities across definitions of mindfulness were recognized or identified by coach trainees, experienced coaches and coaching supervisors as aspects or features of mindfulness and used directly or through the use of the FFMQ in the practice of mindful coaching and training. The conceptual base of mindfulness in practice identified in the three studies included the following: Awareness and present/in the moment appeared in the 38 definitions of mindfulness in the literature and all three studies. In addition non-judgment/judgmental also appeared in all three studies although most of the complimentary concepts of attention/attending/noticing /focus were most clearly evident in two of the three studies. Presence appeared in the experienced coaching and coaching supervision studies.

The conceptual interrelatedness or connectedness of the major contributions made by the experienced coaches' and supervisors' studies may be illustrated as follows:

- **"**Coaches described how they used mindfulness as a meta-theme and five supportive subthemes". The five subthemes were "practicing with greater awareness in the here and now; being present or having presence and focus; being non-judgemental, practicing with curiosity and kindness; creating space for clients; and, practicing in a more effective and respectful way". "These five

subthemes are highly interrelated and reported in a descending order of importance in terms of the attention coaches gave these in their use of mindfulness in practice”(Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022, p.122-123) .

- Furthermore, these five subthemes identified by the experienced coaches, were also reflected the coaching supervisors’ philosophy and understanding of mindfulness in supervision. The four major themes expressed by the coaching supervisors included concepts and reference to the “present and presence”; “attention and noticing”; “awareness”; “being non-judgemental”, and a number of related subthemes, as being part of and instrumental to their mindful supervision practice. These four major themes also overlapped with the above noted five sub themes identified by the experienced coaches. (Van Den Assem, Passmore and Dulewicz, 2022, pp. 530-533).

The meaning of this conceptual and operational diversity and commonality for the practice of mindfulness is very important. The implications of this overlap of concepts used in mindfulness by experienced coaches and supervisors has been further discussed by Langer and Moldoveanu (2000, pp.1-2). Although it may be argued that, the many definitions of mindfulness might make it difficult for practitioners and researchers to function, this warrants further comment. The variety in definitions noted in the three studies would, as characterized in the literature (Cavanagh and Spence 2013, pp.113-114), suggest this to be a detriment to practice of mindfulness. In fact, the many definitions indicated there was a degree of consistency in the areas or concepts they had in common, which would suggest that mindfulness can operate in diverse conceptual and practice environments and address clients’ needs. Furthermore, it may be argued from a position which is congruent with Langer and

Moldoveanu (2000) that such an environment enables mindfulness to have the latitude it needs to thrive in a complex modern world.

> "Mindfulness is not an easy concept to define but can be best understood as the process of drawing novel distinctions. It does not matter whether what is noticed is important or trivial, as long as it is new to the viewer. Actively drawing these distinctions keeps us situated in the present. It also makes us more aware of the context and perspective of our actions than if we rely upon distinctions and categories drawn in the past. … The process of drawing novel distinctions can lead to a number of diverse consequences, including (1) a greater sensitivity to one's environment, (2) more openness to new information, (3) the creation of new categories for structuring perception, and (4) enhanced awareness of multiple perspectives in problem solving. The subjective 'feel' of mindfulness is that of a heightened state of involvement and wakefulness or being in the present. This subjective state is the inherent common thread that ties together the extremely diverse observable consequences for the viewer. Mindfulness is not a cold cognitive process. When one is actively drawing novel distinctions, the whole individual is involved" (Langer and Moldoveanu, 2000, p.1).

Although Langer and Moldoveanu's (2000) position and Choi et al's. (2022) afore noted issues provided the major impetus for the development of an enhanced operational definition and framework for the practice of mindfulness in coaching, it was the consolidated contributions by the trainee coaches, experienced and coach supervisors which provided the structure and content for these. Initially presented by Van Den Assem and Passmore (2022, p.131) based on the findings of the experienced

coaches study, these are presented below as an integrated enhanced operational definition and framework based on the findings of all three studies.

This definition and framework are designed to encourage and enable coaches to draw “novel distinctions” while simultaneously to encourage greater conceptual cohesiveness in the practice of mindfulness, as identified by similar concepts used by the definitions of mindfulness which already exits as noted above in all three papers, without sacrificing the “novel distinctions”. Since practitioners are required to balance and use what they may regard intuitively as markedly different goals or techniques, it is identified by the research for this dissertation as one of the major challenges in the development of the use of mindfulness in coaching.

The practice of mindfulness coaching acknowledges and relies on the coaches personal definitions of mindfulness in coaching and their professional perspectives on how they use it in practice, and secondly on the related literature. Since the literature declared there is no precision or consensus regarding clarity and consistency with respect to the definition or nature of mindfulness (Cavanagh and Spence, 2013) coaches appear to predominantly rely on their own experience to define mindfulness in their coaching practice. However, the research for this dissertation has identified a conceptual core within these definitions that offers an opportunity to change the basis of this narrative of “no precision or consensus”.

> **“**Thirty-eight of the 42 definitions of mindfulness resonated with or explicitly reflected and supported the views on mindfulness of the 30 [experienced] coaches interviewed. The themes that emerged related to how coaches use mindfulness and know it is useful or beneficial. Many of the themes are broad, are not mutually exclusive, and often include more than one concept related to

mindfulness. As such, any one definition may apply to more than one theme that emerged during this research" (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022, p.123).

This importance of this contribution suggests the opportunities exist which allow or encourage coaches to draw upon Langer and Moldoveanu's (2000, p.1) notion of "drawing novel distinctions".

The importance of experience and experiential learning

The acquisition of mindfulness through experiential learning provides coaches with a compelling approach for developing and using it in their practice. A number of authors have offered words to the effect that to understand mindfulness "you have to experience it to get it" (Hall, 2013, p.15), or how mindfulness is used is perhaps the most direct indication of how it is understood and experienced (Nhat Hanh, 1991).

In addition to Langer and Moldoveanu's (2000) construct of mindfulness, a number of models provided support in the development and use of an enhanced operational definition and framework for mindfulness in coaching practice. These were Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning, Schön's (1983, pp. viii, 49-69) model of knowing, i.e., reflection in and on action, and Theeboom et al's. (2017) temporal map of coaching.

Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning connects learning and development by proposing that learning is how development occurs. Furthermore, Yeganeh and Kolb's (2009, p.16) contribution proposed "a practical model" based on the work in "mindfulness and experiential learning", which tracks Kolb's (1984) Model of Experiential Learning and Kolb's (2007) Learning Style Inventory. Kolb's (1984) model seeks to address which mindfulness practices may be useful for developing

coaches' capacity in the four modes of the learning cycle (Figure 5.1). These modes offer the means to develop, enhance and assess the effectiveness of learning through "experiencing, reflecting, thinking and acting", the process of which is cyclical, iterative, experiential, and action oriented. Supporting the practise of mindfulness within a context of experiential learning enhances "mental and physical health, creativity, contextual learning and presence and intentional attention" (Kolb and Yeganeh, 2011, p. 9). Yeganeh and Kolb's (2009) model helps to identify which mindfulness practices may be useful for coaches developing their capacity in these modes of the learning cycle in Kolb's (1984) model in Figure 5.1.

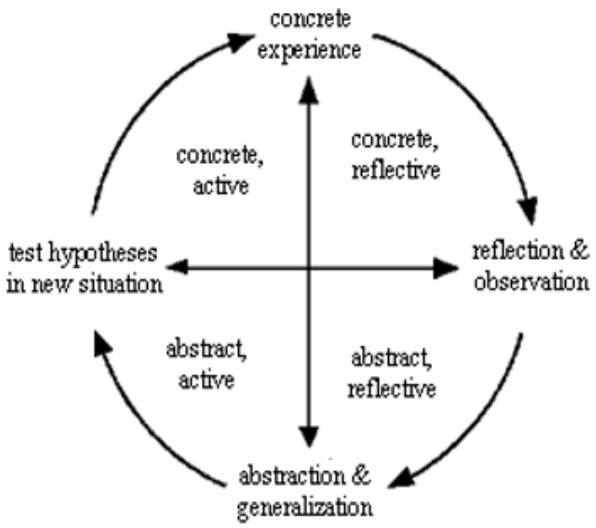


Figure 5.1 Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning

Source: Kolb (1984, p. 42), adapted by Corbett, A.C. (2005). Experiential Learning within the Process of Opportunity Identification and Exploitation. *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice,* 29(4), p. 480.

Following on from Kolb's (1984) model, Yeganeh and Kolb (2009) proposed a connection between mindfulness and learning which is helpful in building a link between these two concepts for this research. Yeganeh and Kolb (2009) affirm a stream of mindfulness proposed by Langer (1997) and Langer and Moldoveanu

(2000), namely the “socio-cognitive”, which they (Yeganeh and Kolb, 2009) consider what mindfulness is and how it works.

> **“**[S]ocio-cognitive mindfulness … emphasizes cognitive categorization, context and situational awareness” and “mindful learning places a value on context, uncertainty and doubt’ which ‘often relates mindfulness to learning” (Yeganeh and Kolb, 2009, p.14).

The third major contribution, which provides a better understanding of how mindfulness fits into the coaching experience and within the larger context of experiential learning which guided the development of this framework, is Theeboom et al’s. (2017, p.1) “integrated theoretical framework” or “temporal map of coaching”. Succinctly stated, it connects mindfulness with experience as follows:

> “… mindfulness may not only help the coachee to recognize what he/she truly needs and desires, and to set goals accordingly, but may also help to sustain learning from previous experiences” (Theeboom et al., 2017, p. 4).

An important additional place for experience in the development of mindfulness is post session structured reflection by the coach alone or in supervision. This “may be facilitated by the use of various reflection models, such as those proposed by Johns (1995), Kolb (1984), Schön (1983), or Hullinger et al. (2019) … to help clarify the use and usefulness or benefit of mindfulness, with respect to the enhanced operational framework … for the practice of mindfulness” in coaching (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022, p. 130).

In summary, Choi et al’s. (2022) call for a “more systematic, integrated way of conceptualize mindfulness”, “a proper framework for understanding mindfulness”, and

consideration of “factors complimentary to current definitions of mindfulness” were particularly relevant to the findings of this research. These provided direct support for the development of an enhanced operational definition and framework of mindfulness in coaching. Theeboom et al’s. (2017, p.1) observation that “… the current literature on coaching [lacked] solid theoretical frameworks that are needed to build a cumulative knowledge-base and to inspire evidence-based practice” lent additional support to Choi et al’s. (2022) issues.

5. An enhanced operational definition and framework for the practice of mindfulness in coaching

The major impetus and need to propose an enhanced operational definition and framework for the practice of mindfulness in coaching was evident from the findings of this research. Initially introduced and based on the study on how experienced coaches use mindfulness in practice, the definition and framework were reviewed and or revised accordingly in light of the findings of all three studies included in this dissertation on the practice of mindful coaching and the related challenges therein. The definition and framework aim to assist the development of effective practice of mindfulness in coaching.

Enhanced operational definition

Most of the definitions of mindfulness in coaching were reflected in the views of the coaches interviewed.

> “[These views] provided description of the concepts related and supportive of mindfulness such as *awareness and attention, being in the present, in the moment, the here and now, fully awake, consciousness, as well as reflection.* [T]he most inclusive and clearest description of what mindfulness is in practice

> for the experienced coaches interviewed [which finally emerged from the research] is captured by an amalgam and integration of their positions on the use and usefulness or benefit of mindfulness in practice and select conceptual features of the 38 definitions of mindfulness [from the literature]. Some of these features were emphasized more clearly or strongly than others, such as Kabat-Zinn's (1994, 2003) definition of mindfulness, as is evident in the enhanced operational definition which emerged from the research" (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022, p. 131).

The final version of the enhanced operational definition, which emerged from all three studies conducted for this dissertation, was as follows:

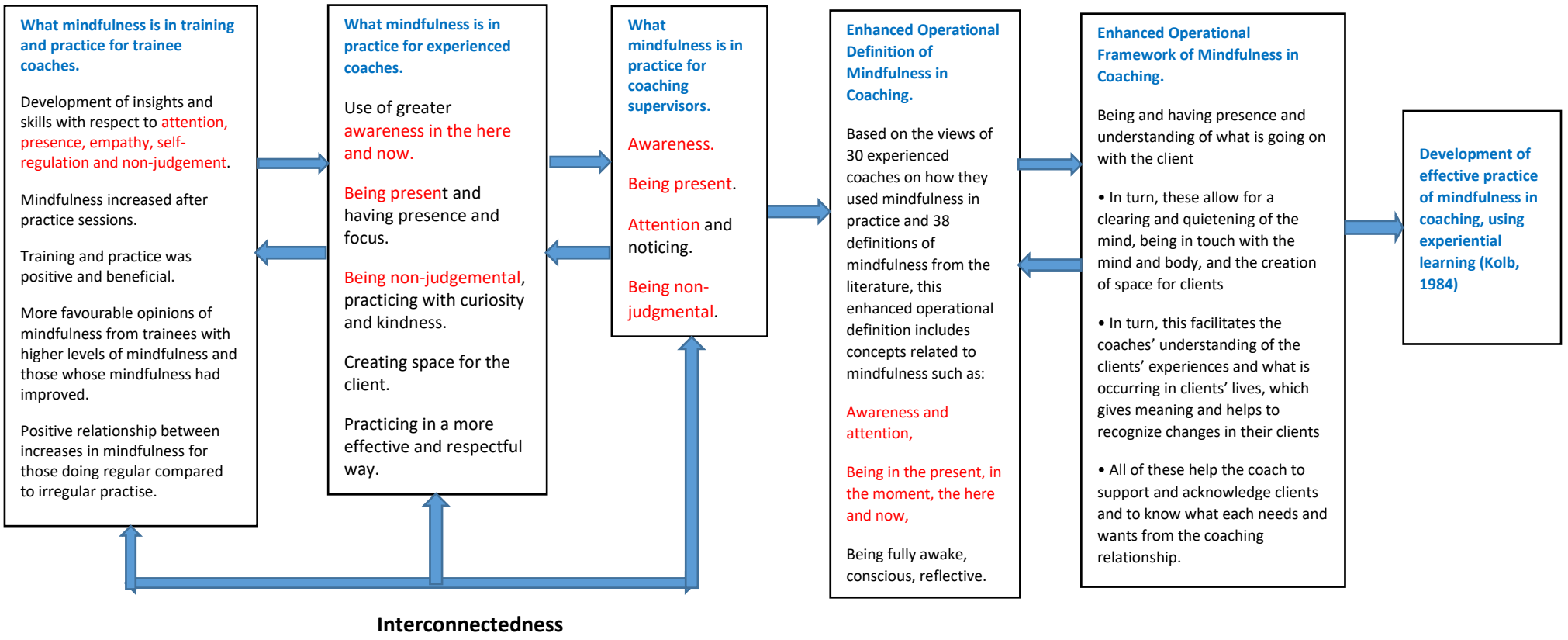
> *Mindfulness in coaching is based on the use of greater awareness in the here and now, knowing what is going on for the client and what the client wants and needs; being present and having presence and focus; recognizing changes in the client including the mind-body connection; creating space for the client; practicing in a more effective and respectful way; and being non-judgmental, practicing with curiosity and kindness.*

Enhanced operational framework

The enhanced operational framework, initially proposed as a model in the experienced coaches' study in Chapter 3, was also found to be applicable to the coaching practice and needs of coach trainees and coaching supervisors (Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2

Interconnected Framework for the Development of Mindfulness in Coaching based on the Constituents of Training, Practice and Supervision



Red highlights the interconnectedness of the findings

A number of subthemes contributed to the framework but one which served to include or encompass them all was the ability of the coach and coachee to work together, which was also reflected in the subtheme *practicing in a more effective and respectful way*. The subthemes which emerged from the research question *how coaches know when mindfulness is useful or beneficial* were integrated into a set of logical sequential steps which also accounted for and reflected most challenges identified by the three studies included in this dissertation. Together these steps helped to construct an enhanced operational framework of practice for the coach and client's working relationship and effective communications.

• Being and having presence and understanding of what is going on with the client,

• In turn, these allow for a clearing and quietening of the mind, being in touch with the mind and body, and the creation of space for clients,

• In turn, this facilitates the coaches' understanding of the clients' experiences and what is occurring in clients' lives, which gives meaning and helps to recognize changes in their clients,

• All of these help the coach to support and acknowledge clients and to know what each needs and wants from the coaching relationship.

Implications for training and the development of mindfulness in coaching

The study on the training of post-graduate trainee coaches in mindfulness contributed to understanding of the initial phase of the development of mindfulness in coaching practice, that of the coach trainee. It identified notable features and conditions related to the training and the implications how these may apply to present and future training. The study considered training "in terms of the development of insights and the mindfulness skills of attention, presence, empathy, self-regulation and non-judgement,

the impact of which are fundamental in mindfulness coaching" (Van Den Assem, Dulewicz and Passmore, 2022, p. 5). It also described some of the major considerations for enabling the acquisition and development of mindfulness to take place that included the trainees' opinions about training and practice and their commitment to regular practice of mindfulness (Van Den Assem, Dulewicz and Passmore, 2022).

The importance of training for the development of mindfulness in coaching implies that the purpose and process of the training be understood in the context of practice. Specifically, what the training or development may be or include would be dependent on the particular stage of coaches' development and the use or need of mindfulness in their practice, which would consider involving more than one approach or choice for delivery (Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009) and acknowledge the "demand of the consumer voice and the client autonomy" (Lane, 2011, p.93).

Although experienced coaches reported they knew mindfulness was useful or of benefit for themselves more so than they reported for coachees, coaching supervisors reported that not all supervisees appreciated mindfulness or its impact or effect. In response, some supervisors did not frame their supervision practice around mindfulness but rather learning and development. These findings suggest that there may be some apprehension about what mindful coaching or supervision entails, or what mindfulness is and that it may not be well received by some clients. This would appear to be an area for closer examination in the structuring, delivering or monitoring of training and related continuing professional development.

Coaches acquire and develop mindfulness competencies at both a conscious and unconscious level in their practice (Epstein, 1999). Some authors and

researchers suggest this is due to a compelling connection or overlap between reflection and mindfulness in that the aims of mindfulness do not appear to differ from those of reflectiveness - at least from some perspectives (Passmore and Amit, 2017; Passmore, 2009; Langer and Moldoveanu, 2000). These may well be important considerations for coaches conducting mindfulness training, coach trainees or those considering experiential training on their own. They may therefore be advised to take into account the aims of their development of mindfulness and the approaches available to them. What will be most appropriate for each trainee and trainer will be in terms of the intended impact or effects of the training and the focus of the relevant mindfulness skills for their development of mindfulness.

Whether mindfulness could be included as a mandatory part in the training of coaches or coaching supervisors and/or be added to their competencies as part of their development as mindful coaches, would offer positive support for the use of mindfulness in coaching practice. This would be of particular importance for the development of coaching supervision and the furtherance of evidence based coaching. The FFMQ may prove to be a useful and independent source in this regard to help indicate or identify the appreciation, predisposition or abilities of coaches with respect to mindfulness and related training.

Further research

Based on the findings of the three studies submitted for this dissertation, a number of areas were identified for further research that would provide a larger perspective for the development of mindfulness in coaching practice.

Experienced coaches

Research to test the utility and robustness of the enhanced operational definition and framework and their application and relevance across various practice contexts would serve to further test the findings of the research conducted for this dissertation. In so doing, this would further pursue an evidence-based approach for testing the efficacy of mindfulness in coaching.

"The focus of future research should continue to seek broader and more in-depth understandings of how the formal definitions of mindfulness and reflection provide a common ground and support for mindfulness practice" (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022, p.133). Future research may therefore wish to consider using the enhanced operational definition to test the efficacy of the definition to develop a deeper or more comprehensive understanding of the practice of mindfulness in coaching.

Research on the variations and levels of mindful coaching practice and personal mindfulness practice outside of coaching delivery would offer useful contributions to these findings and future research.

Coaching supervision

Much useful qualitative research remains to be done to enhance the understanding of mindful coaching supervision. Future investigations measuring the impact of coaching supervisors using other methods, such as neuroscience or quantitative studies evaluating mindful supervisors and non-practicing mindful supervisors, would provide additional dimensions for understanding both the practice and enhancement of the theory of mindful coaching supervision and the development of mindful coaches (Van Den Assem, Passmore and Dulewicz, 2022).

The voice of the practitioner and client

The nature of mindfulness often defies neat categorizations as the definitional breadth of mindfulness described in this dissertation indicates. Engaging only on a conceptual understanding of mindfulness in coaching practice, without testing it against the lived experience of the practitioner and client serves as a limitation of the research. Although this research did include the coaches' voice, it did not include the voice of the coaches' clients. Future research which does would offer additional perspectives and evidence related to the use of mindfulness in the coaching relationship and its value for clients. Clients' views on the use of mindfulness in various coaching contexts and how they determine it is useful or beneficial for them would offer additional valuable insights and evidence about how mindful coaching works, under what conditions and for which purpose.

Training

Given that practice frequency has a relationship to the opinion students had about mindfulness meditation practice, it is suggested further research be conducted on this relationship for other programmes, in terms of the development of trainee-coaches and practising coaches, who are seeking to develop their mindfulness meditation skills. Such research could also examine the short- and long-term impact of mindfulness training and practice and the trainee coaches' continued commitment to these in their day-to-day coaching practice. (Van Den Assem, Dulewicz and Passmore, 2022).

The premise that students with more coaching experience might logically be expected to score higher on mindfulness meditation since they would be considered to have a broader or more in-depth appreciation of coaching and how and where

mindfulness meditation could most appropriately be used in coaching, should be considered in future research on other programmes.

Since the trainee coaches' study did not find a significant difference between males and females or provide a compelling explanation for this, it is suggested that future research into mindfulness meditation further examine the impact of gender in mindfulness meditation training.

Being present, having presence, and being aware of 'personal triggers' and their impact are important aspects of the training received by many disciplines in the consulting and helping professions. Since the importance of these areas was not specifically evident in the experienced coaches' study, future research of them in the training for the preparation and practice of mindfulness in coaching is highly recommended. (Van Den Assem and Passmore, 2022).

Research on the use of the FFMQ for the selection of trainees for mindfulness training and trainers, and their subsequent performance on their training and practice, should provide additional useful insights into development of mindfulness practice.

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Table 5.A An integrated map of challenges and implications for practice, training and research of mindfulness in coaching to guide the operationalizing and use of the enhanced definition and framework

Number	Challenges	Related issues	Implications for Practice	Implications for Training	Implications for Research
1	*What is going on for the client*	Include enhanced operational definition of mindfulness in coaching.	Use FFMQ to select and or identify interests /abilities of trainees	Incorporate the enhanced operational definition of mindfulness practice into training	FFMQ and IPA provides useful practice data
2	*Knowing what the client wants and needs*	Include enhanced operational definition of mindfulness in coaching.	Use enhanced operational definition of mindfulness in practice in coaching	Incorporate the enhanced operational definition of mindfulness practice into training	FFMQ and IPA provides useful practice data
3	*Recognizing change in the client*	Include enhanced operational definition of mindfulness in coaching.	Use enhanced operational definition of mindfulness in practice in coaching	Training and practice in recognition of change, small and large, and in being aware and open to what is happening in practice	FFMQ and IPA provides useful practice data
4	*Being able to create space and an enabling context for clients*	Include enhanced operational definition of mindfulness in coaching.	Use the enhanced operational definition and framework/model of mindfulness in coaching	Training and practice in being aware of self, others and the world around you	FFMQ and IPA provides useful practice data
5	*Knowing how and when to use mindfulness in practice*	Most coaches were knowledgeable about how and for which occasions or situations mindfulness might be used and what could be achieved by using it in their practice.	Use the enhanced operational definition and framework of mindfulness in coaching	Training in the impact/effect of mindfulness, when and when not to use it.	FFMQ and IPA provides useful practice data
6	*Knowing how mindfulness is useful or beneficial in practice*	Being aware of the present and recognizing change in clients	Use the enhanced operational definition and framework of mindfulness in coaching	Training and or supervision focused on awareness and being present.	FFMQ and IPA provides useful practice data
7	*Understanding the connection of concept and context in practice.*	*Understanding the connection of concept in a practice context and the "recognition of novel distinctions".* (Langer & Moldoveau, 2000, pp1-2) Being clear in the use of mindfulness *concepts in practice.*	Use the enhanced operational definition and framework of mindfulness in coaching	Training and supervision which focuses on the understanding and use of concept and context in practice.	FFMQ and IPA provides useful practice data
8	*Being clear in the use of mindfulness concepts in practice*	Awareness of the need for clarity in practice in using concepts in context	Use the enhanced operational definition and framework of mindfulness in coaching	Training in listening to clients and supervision which focuses on the understanding and use of concept and context in practice.	FFMQ and IPA provides useful practice data
9	*Improving the definitional framework for practice without stifling/limiting innovation in practice*	Include enhanced operational definition of mindfulness in coaching practice	Use the enhanced operational definition and framework of mindfulness in coaching	Training in awareness and openness to what is happening in practice. Awareness of interconnectedness of factors in practice.	FFMQ and IPA provides useful practice data

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The overall contributions of the research for this dissertation illustrates that mindfulness works and that mindfulness in coaching is considered useful and beneficial. The focus of the contributions is with respect to three important phases in the development of mindfulness in coaching and the inter-relationships between them. These phases were addressed by three separate research studies, which considered the training, practice and supervision in the development of mindfulness in coaching. The three studies, with the exception of a few of its participants, supported the benefit and purpose of mindfulness in the practice in coaching. This would suggest that the majority of the 112 participants who took part in the research were committed to the use of mindfulness in their coaching practice, which would potentially translate into their intention to continue to develop and use mindfulness in their practice going forward.

The research identified a common set of concepts across a number of definitions of mindfulness, which offered a clearer understanding of what was the basis for mindfulness and a more manageable scope for considering its use in coaching practice. These conceptual commonalities were also recognized, identified or used by coach trainees, experienced coaches and coaching supervisors in their practice of mindful coaching and training. They were also useful in formulating an enhanced operational definition of mindfulness and enhanced operational framework for the practice on mindfulness, offering guidance with respect to the development of mindfulness in coaching practice.

The identification and description of the challenges within the development of mindfulness in coaching is a major contribution of the research. Since both mindfulness and coaching require a high level of competence, there is a need for coaches practising mindfulness to be highly skilled in both. The expectation would be that experienced coaches have a well-developed and nuanced understanding of their coaching experience with mindfulness, the place and need for supervision and training in relation to this, and an ongoing commitment to the continuous development of mindfulness in their coaching practice. This would include an appreciation and awareness of as well as competence with respect to the related challenges, which are areas of major importance for coaches practicing mindfulness to be aware of in their practice and for the training of mindfulness to include as subject areas in its curriculum.

In summary, the practice of mindfulness in coaching acknowledges and relies primarily on the coaches' personal definitions and professional perspectives and understanding of these and how they use it in practice. Their contribution to the research for this dissertation provides a clear indication of the status of the use of mindfulness in coaching, its current challenges and its way forward in terms of practice and research. The aim of these contributions is to offer options and assurances for the ongoing development of mindfulness in coaching, and in particular, the engagement and commitment of mindful coaches to their own development and competence.

Appendices A Information Sheets and Consent Forms

Guidance

The following two pages provide templates of an information sheet and consent form for use when conducting interviews.

The templates provide a suggested structure and content, although they are not prescriptive or exhaustive. Ensure that you adapt the template to meet the specific requirements of your project.

You are advised to keep the descriptions of your research straightforward and non-technical. You should also consider the appropriateness of the language and presentation used for your particular participants.

Information sheet

Research project

The title of the research project is The learning and development of mindfulness through training and practice

This research project investigates the acquisition of mindfulness skills and practice by coaching students who have undertaking mindfulness training as part of their MSc program.

Part of the research, involves the recording of the mindfulness training undertaken by the coaching students. The research forms part of my PhD academic qualification at Henley Business School at the University of Reading.

If you agree, you will be asked to participate in completing a short questionnaire before and after the training, which should take around 4 minutes to complete, and to maintain a record of when to you undertook mindfulness practice during the training period.

The data will be kept secure and destroyed after the completion of the project or retained securely for inclusion in publications based on this research.

At every stage, your identity will remain confidential. Your name and identifying information will not be included in the final report or in any publications. A copy of the completed report will be available on request.

The project has been subject to ethical review in accordance with the procedures specified by the University of Reading Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

Thank you for taking part in this research. If you have any further questions about the project, please feel free to contact me.

Name of researcher: Ben Van Den Assem PhD DBA

Email:

Consent form

Title of research project: The learning and development of mindfulness through training and practice

I have read and had explained to me by Dr Ben Van Den Assem the information sheet relating to the project and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

1. I agree to the arrangements described in the information sheet.
2. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the project at any time.
3. I agree to the interview being audio recorded.
4. I have received a copy of this consent form and of the accompanying information sheet.
5. I am aged 18 or over.

Name of participant: .....

Signed*:* .....

Date: .....

Information sheet

Research project

The title of the research project is How experienced practitioners use reflectiveness and mindfulness in their coaching practice. This research project investigates this area in order to better understand from a practice point of view what the use and meaning of mindfulness and reflection is in the practice of coaching.

The research forms part of my PhD qualification in coaching at Henley Business School of the University of Reading.

Part of the research involves interviewing coaches who use of mindfulness and reflection in coaching and, for this reason, I would like to invite you to take part.

If you agree, you will be asked to participate in an interview of about an hour or less. During the interview I will ask you questions on how you use mindfulness and reflection in coaching.

You can choose not to answer any particular questions and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

With your permission, I would like to audio record the interview for later analysis. The data will be kept secure and destroyed after the completion of the project.

At every stage your identity will remain confidential. Your name and identifying information will not be included in the final report.

The project has been subject to ethical review in accordance with the procedures specified by the University of Reading Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

If you have any further questions about the project, please feel free to contact me by email, using the address below.

Name of researcher: Ben Van Den Assem PhD DBA

Email:

Consent form

Title of research project: How experienced practitioners use reflectiveness and mindfulness in their coaching practice.

I have read and had explained to me by Dr Ben Van Den Assem the information sheet relating to the project and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

1. I agree to the arrangements described in the information sheet.
2. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the project at any time.
3. I agree to the interview being audio recorded.
4. I have received a copy of this consent form and of the accompanying information sheet.
5. I am aged 18 or over.

Name of participant: .....

Signed*:* .....

Date: .....

Information sheet

Research project

This research project **i**nvestigates t**he supervision of coaches practicing mindfulness** in order to better understand the use and meaning of mindfulness in coaching. It is part of my PhD at the University of Reading, the topic of which is mindfulness informing the practice of coaching, self-reflection and experiential learning.

This specific part of the research involves interviewing supervising coaches who use mindfulness in coaching and, for this reason, I would like to invite you to take part.

If you agree, you will be asked to participate in an interview of about an hour or less. During the interview I will ask you questions on how you use mindfulness in your supervision of coaches.

You can choose not to answer any particular questions and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

With your permission, I would like to audio record the interview for later analysis. The data will be kept secure and destroyed after the completion of the project.

At very stage your identity will remain confidential. Your name and identifying information will not be included in the final report.

The project has been subject to ethical review in accordance with the procedures specified by the University of Reading Research Ethics Committee and has been given a favourable ethical opinion for conduct.

If you have any further questions about the project, please feel free to contact me by email, using the address below.

Name of researcher: Ben Van Den Assem PhD DBA

Email:

Consent form

Title of research project: The supervision of coaches practicing mindfulness.

I have read and had explained to me by Dr Ben Van Den Assem the information sheet relating to the project and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

1. I agree to the arrangements described in the information sheet.
2. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I may withdraw from the project at any time.
3. I agree to the interview being audio recorded.
4. I have received a copy of this consent form and of the accompanying information sheet.
5. I am aged 18 or over.

Name of participant: .....

Signed: .....

Date: .....

Appendices B Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (Pre Training)

Name:_____**Age:**____**years**

Gender: Male____**Female**____ **Experience as a coach:**_____**years**

Please rate each of the following statements using the scale provided. Write the number on the blank lines that best describes ***your own opinion*** of what is ***generally true for you***.

Never or very rarely true = 1, Rarely true = 2, Sometimes true = 3, Often true 4, Very often true = 5

_____ 1. When I'm walking, I deliberately notice the sensations of my body moving.

_____ 2. I'm good at finding words to describe my feelings.

_____ 3. I criticize myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions.

_____ 4. I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them.

_____5. When I do things, my mind wanders off and I'm easily distracted.

_____ 6. When I take a shower or bath, I stay alert to the sensations of water on my body.

_____ 7. I can easily put my beliefs, opinions, and expectations into words.

_____ 8. I don't pay attention to what I'm doing because I'm daydreaming, worrying, or otherwise distracted.

_____ 9. I watch my feelings without getting lost in them.

_____10. I tell myself I shouldn't be feeling the way I'm feeling.

_____ 11. I notice how foods and drinks affect my thoughts, bodily sensations, and emotions.

_____ 12. It's hard for me to find the words to describe what I'm thinking.

_____ 13. I am easily distracted.

_____ 14. I believe some of my thoughts are abnormal or bad and I shouldn't think that way.

_____15. I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face.

_____16. I have trouble thinking of the right words to express how I feel about things.

_____17. I make judgments about whether my thoughts are good or bad.

Never or very rarely true = 1, Rarely true = 2, Sometimes true = 3, Often true 4, Very often true = 5

_____ 18. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.

_____ 19. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I "step back" and am aware of the thought or image without getting taken over by it.

_____ 20. I pay attention to sounds, such as clocks ticking, birds chirping, or cars passing.

_____ 21. In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting.

_____ 22. When I have a sensation in my body, it's difficult for me to describe it because I can't find the right words.

_____ 23. It seems I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I'm doing.

_____ 24. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I feel calm soon after.

_____ 25. I tell myself that I shouldn't be thinking the way I'm thinking.

_____ 26. I notice the smells and aromas of things.

_____ 27. Even when I'm feeling terribly upset, I can find a way to put it into words.

____ 28. I rush through activities without being attentive to them.

_____ 29. When I have distressing thoughts or images I am able just to notice them without reacting.

_____ 30. I think some of my emotions are bad or inappropriate and I shouldn't feel them

_____ 31. I notice visual elements in art or nature, such as colours, shapes, textures, or patterns of light and shadow.

_____32. My natural tendency is to put my experiences into words.

_____ 33. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I just notice them and let them go.

_____ 34. I do jobs or tasks automatically without being aware of what I'm doing.

_____ 35. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I judge myself as good or bad, depending what the thought/image is about.

_____36. I pay attention to how my emotions affect my thoughts and behaviour.

_____ 37. I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail.

_____ 38. I find myself doing things without paying attention.

_____39. I disapprove of myself when I have irrational ideas.

Thank you

Appendices B Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (Post Training)

Name:_____**Age:**____**years**

Gender: Male____**Female**____ **Experience as a coach:**_____**years**

Please rate each of the following statements using the scale provided. Write the number on the blank lines that best describes ***your own opinion*** of what is ***generally true for you***.

Never or very rarely true = 1, Rarely true = 2, Sometimes true = 3, Often true 4, Very often true = 5

_____ 1. When I'm walking, I deliberately notice the sensations of my body moving.

_____ 2. I'm good at finding words to describe my feelings.

_____ 3. I criticize myself for having irrational or inappropriate emotions.

_____ 4. I perceive my feelings and emotions without having to react to them.

_____5. When I do things, my mind wanders off and I'm easily distracted.

_____ 6. When I take a shower or bath, I stay alert to the sensations of water on my body.

_____ 7. I can easily put my beliefs, opinions, and expectations into words.

_____ 8. I don't pay attention to what I'm doing because I'm daydreaming, worrying, or otherwise distracted.

_____ 9. I watch my feelings without getting lost in them.

_____10. I tell myself I shouldn't be feeling the way I'm feeling.

_____ 11. I notice how foods and drinks affect my thoughts, bodily sensations, and emotions.

_____ 12. It's hard for me to find the words to describe what I'm thinking.

_____ 13. I am easily distracted.

_____ 14. I believe some of my thoughts are abnormal or bad and I shouldn't think that way.

_____15. I pay attention to sensations, such as the wind in my hair or sun on my face.

_____16. I have trouble thinking of the right words to express how I feel about things.

_____17. I make judgments about whether my thoughts are good or bad.

Never or very rarely true = 1, Rarely true = 2, Sometimes true = 3, Often true 4, Very often true = 5

_____ 18. I find it difficult to stay focused on what's happening in the present.

_____ 19. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I "step back" and am aware of the thought or image without getting taken over by it.

_____ 20. I pay attention to sounds, such as clocks ticking, birds chirping, or cars passing.

_____ 21. In difficult situations, I can pause without immediately reacting.

_____ 22. When I have a sensation in my body, it's difficult for me to describe it because I can't find the right words.

_____ 23. It seems I am "running on automatic" without much awareness of what I'm doing.

_____ 24. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I feel calm soon after.

_____ 25. I tell myself that I shouldn't be thinking the way I'm thinking.

_____ 26. I notice the smells and aromas of things.

_____ 27. Even when I'm feeling terribly upset, I can find a way to put it into words.

____ 28. I rush through activities without being attentive to them.

_____ 29. When I have distressing thoughts or images I am able just to notice them without reacting.

_____ 30. I think some of my emotions are bad or inappropriate and I shouldn't feel them.

_____ 31. I notice visual elements in art or nature, such as colours, shapes, textures, or patterns of light and shadow.

_____32. My natural tendency is to put my experiences into words.

_____ 33. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I just notice them and let them go.

_____ 34. I do jobs or tasks automatically without being aware of what I'm doing.

_____ 35. When I have distressing thoughts or images, I judge myself as good or bad, depending what the thought/image is about.

_____36. I pay attention to how my emotions affect my thoughts and behaviour.

_____ 37. I can usually describe how I feel at the moment in considerable detail.

_____ 38. I find myself doing things without paying attention.

_____39. I disapprove of myself when I have irrational ideas.

How beneficial was the mindfulness training in terms of your practice? Please explain.

Thank you

Appendices C Interview Schedule for Experienced Coaches

1. Background questions

a. Could you tell me something about yourself, your background and experience, etc.?

Prompts:

- Gender, age, formal education, work experience
- Training in coaching

b. What made you decide to do coaching?

Prompts:

- General thoughts about coaching?
- How long have you been a coach? Full time or part-time?
- Do you do coaching as part of other employment? Such as, consulting, etc.?
- What has been your usual or preferred approaches or methods you use in coaching?

2. How does mindfulness inform your coaching practice?

Prompts

- How would you describe it?
- How does it work?
- Do you use it? When? How?

3. Coaches thoughts about mindfulness and reflection.

a. What is the connection for you between mindfulness and reflection?

b. How does reflectiveness inform your coaching practice?

Prompts

- How would you describe it?
- How does it work?
- Do you use it? When? How?

4. How do you think coachees respond to the use of mindfulness?

5. How do you know when mindfulness is useful for you and your coachee?

6. In what ways can mindfulness impact learning and development in coaching?

Thank you.

Appendices C Interview Schedule for Coach Supervisors

1. Background questions

    a. Could you tell me something about yourself, your background and experience, etc.?

    b. How long have you been supervising coaches?

    c. What, if any, is the typical profile of your client base of your supervisees, such as age, gender, years of coaching experience?

2. How would you describe your approach to coaching supervision, e.g., what is your primary aim for using supervision?

3. What role does mindfulness have in your supervisory relationship?

4. What are the important concepts or constructs which underpin mindfulness in your supervision practice?

5. How does your philosophy of mindfulness impact on the issues or concerns coaches bring to supervision?

6. How do the coaches you supervise respond to or regard your use mindfulness in relation to these?

7. In what ways does mindfulness during supervision impact on their *learning* and *development* in coaching? What are the important indicators of this?

8. How do you know when mindfulness is useful for you and your coach supervisee?

9. What would you say are the conditions that help coaches to learn to use mindfulness in practice?

10. What are your thoughts on training coaches to use mindfulness in their coaching practice?

11. What are the challenges and or limitations in using mindfulness in the supervisory relationship?

12. Do you wish to add anything else that you feel is important to the subject discussed?

Thank you for your thoughtful comments and helpful discussion

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