Once a coach was selected, stakeholder interviews were conducted to determine whether characteristics of the coach matched their own needs. In our study, we defined ‘match’ as the executive and their coach meeting regularly over the course of the assignment where executive then co-created a development action plan specifying the coaching objectives. The coach and executive were involved in regular coaching feedback meetings and in the process of finalizing the coaching program goals. The coach and executive then co-created a development action plan specifying the coaching objectives. The coach and executive were involved in regular coaching feedback meetings and in the process of finalizing the coaching program goals.

Coaching is a complex process that involves selecting the right coach, assessing chemistry and fit for the engagement. During these meetings, the executive coach and their client match their own needs. In our study, we defined ‘match’ as the success of coaching. However, ‘match’ is often defined in the eyes of the executive as well as overall experience as a coach, as the comparison between perceived coach-coachee similarity and coaching outcomes.

During the coach selection process, the executive was asked to rate their perceived similarity to the coach on the same level and deep level diversity characteristics. There was no difference between perceived surface-level and deep-level diversity factors contributed to their contribution to coach selection.

Executive Coaching Process.

An online survey was administered to executives from different organizations who had completed a 6-month coaching engagement with a certified coach. Some of the survey participants or 360 underwent a coach selection process, whereas others were assigned a coach (n = 14). Those who participated in a selection process were asked to rate the extent to which coach characteristics (surface-level diversity, deep-level diversity, and experience factors) contributed to their coach selection on a 5-point scale (0 = not at all, 4 = to a great extent). All participants were asked to rate their perceived similarity to their coach on the same level and deep level diversity characteristics. Finally, participants answered questions to assess their perceptions of coaching outcomes.

- **Coach Characteristics:**
  - Surface-level: race, ethnicity, gender, age
  - Deep-level: values/philosophy, personality
  - Experience factors: experience in industry, experience as executive coach

- **Perceived Outcomes:**
  - Coaching satisfaction
  - Coaching effectiveness
  - Self-awareness
  - Career satisfaction
  - Affective commitment

Multiple regression analyses were conducted to determine which perceived characteristics impacted perceived coaching outcomes. Perceived similarity was determined by averaging ratings on surface-level diversity characteristics and deep-level diversity characteristics into two separate factors. Analyses showed that perceived similarity did not significantly predict perceived coaching satisfaction, coaching effectiveness, self-awareness, or affective commitment. As can be seen in Figure 2 on the left, perceived similarity on surface-level diversity did not significantly predict perceived career satisfaction, whereas perceived similarity on surface-level diversity did not. The career satisfaction items of the survey asked participants to reflect on their satisfaction with their career progress they have toward their career, advancement, and developmental goals. It is likely the case that coaches and executives who matched on values, philosophy, and personality engaged in more substantial and targeted coaching sessions, which in turn could have contributed to greater professional development and achievement of the coaching objectives.

**Figure 1:** Relationship between perceived similarity and coaching outcomes

**Figure 2:** Relationship between perceived similarity and coaching outcomes

**REFERENCES**


