

From The Top: Examining How Changes in Coaching Instruction Affect Perceived Task Difficulty

01. Introduction

Coaching in the workplace is a popular and effective developmental practice with many practical benefits. There is, however, a positive bias in the coaching literature and a gap in understanding of how multiple coaches affect coachee performance. This is significant, as coaching is becoming a title that is commonly held with other pre-existing titles in organizations (i.e., a manager who is also a coach). Coaches will be rotated, filled, or changed, so the coachee may experience more than one coach with a different coaching dynamic. This experience of the coachee and their subsequent perception of task performance is the focus of this research.

02. Objective

The purpose of this research is to examine mechanisms of coaching that could negatively affect participant perceptions of task difficulty and overall performance on a task. The study will look at the impact the interactions of instruction type and number of coaches has on the participant.

Further, the results will also contribute to the very limited research regarding more than one coach and coaching dynamics in the coaching literature, and aim to inspire more research in the field.

03. Methodology

Participants will complete the Tower of Hanoi (TOH) task three times and be exposed to two of four conditions of coaching between each completion of the task - experiencing one or two coaches, and being given continuous or interrupted instructions.

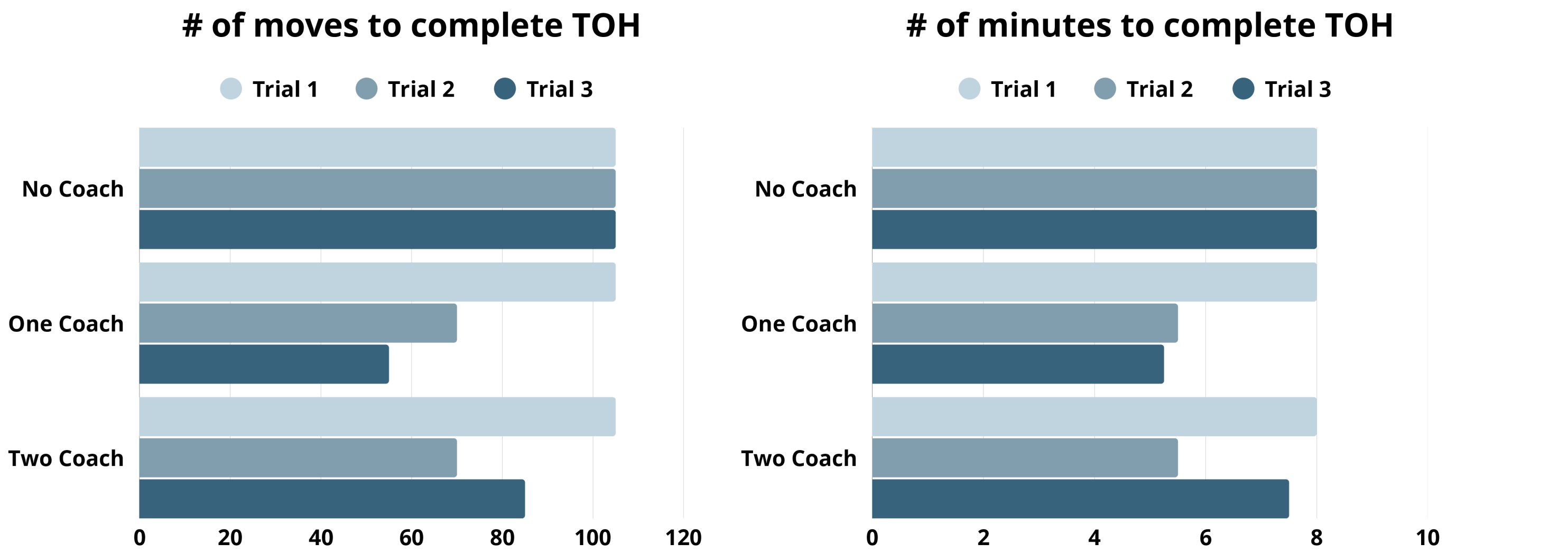
- Adapted GROW Model of Coaching
- Tower of Hanoi
- Surveys

04. Hypothesis

- Hypothesis 1** Two coaches will increase perceived post-task difficulty in a coachee.
- Hypothesis 2** Interrupted coaching instruction will increase perceived post-task difficulty in a coachee
- Hypothesis 3** An interaction that suggests the effect of number of coaches on perceived post-task difficulty will depend on the type of coaching instruction provided to coachee.

05. Predicted Results

A two-way between-subjects ANOVA will be conducted that examines the effect of number of coaches and coaching instruction on perceived task difficulty. An *F* test will reflect there being a statistically significant interaction between the effects of number of coaches and coaching instruction on perceived task difficulty. A simple main effects analysis will show that two coaches significantly increased perceived difficulty in comparison to one coach when coaching instruction is interrupted ($p < .05$), and there will be a decrease in perceived task difficulty in the one coach ($p < .05$) and continuous instruction conditions. The descriptive results will reflect an interaction effect of the amount of coaches present on perceived task difficulty by showing non-parallel lines that intersect.



06. Conclusion

Coachee's exposed to more than one coach while completing the TOH task will experience an increase in perceived post-task difficulty and take longer to complete the task, and those in the one coach condition will experience a decrease in perceievd post-task difficulty and completion time. This research will contribute in expanding the coaching literature, emphasizing continual coaching instruction, and prioritizing retention of coaches in organizations.