

**Tetiana Dunaievskia**

KIT Academy;

H.S. Skovoroda Kharkiv National Pedagogical University, Kyiv, Ukraine

E-mail: [tanyaevska@gmail.com](mailto:tanyaevska@gmail.com)ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-0303-8678>

## Emotional–Intuitive Approaches in Coaching: Barriers and Professional Identity of Women Coaches in Academic and Corporate Contexts

**Abstract**

This article examines how the emotional–intuitive approach is being integrated into academic and corporate environments. It focuses on female coaches whose professional practice is rooted in emotional intelligence, empathy and intuitive awareness. The study analyses how specialists working with emotions adapt to formalised systems that prioritise logic, evidence and standardised performance criteria. This study employed a qualitative design, combining autoethnography and semi-structured interviews (n = 10) with an online survey. This approach enabled the identification of internal and external barriers faced by female practitioners, including impostor syndrome, professional marginalisation and institutional expectations of objectivity. The findings suggest that participants develop adaptive strategies that combine emotional awareness with professional standards. The analysis identified several key themes that shape the professional experiences of women coaches. These themes include the tension between emotional authenticity and institutional expectations of rational professionalism, strategies for maintaining inner stability, and the development of intuition as a form of professional judgement based on experience. Rather than being obstacles, emotional sensitivity, empathy and embodied awareness emerge as structured professional competencies that contribute to relational trust, leadership development and organisational culture. These findings inform current discussions in professional education and leadership studies, demonstrating how emotional and relational competencies can be considered legitimate components of professional expertise in contemporary coaching practice. The study emphasises the growing importance of integrating emotional awareness into professional training environments, highlighting the role of reflective practice in strengthening professional identity and sustainability among coaching practitioners. This study makes a valuable contribution to the growing body of research on emotionally informed professional practice, offering qualitative insights into the negotiation of relational and intuitive competencies within institutional environments. It suggests that incorporating emotional and intuitive competencies into professional education and leadership training could enhance contemporary academic and corporate settings.

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.30525/2500-946X/2026-1-9>**Introduction**

In contemporary professional education and organisational environments, emotional intelligence and relational competencies are increasingly recognised as vital for effective leadership and sustainable development. However, despite the growing academic interest in the emotional and embodied dimensions of learning, emotional and intuitive approaches are still not widely integrated into formal academic and corporate systems. Professional standards often prioritise measurable performance indicators, rational analysis and objectivity, meaning emotionally grounded practices are not sufficiently recognised within institutional structures.

**Keywords**

emotional intelligence, coaching practice, professional identity, qualitative research, women's leadership, embodied cognition, organisational culture

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This creates a significant gap between the growing theoretical recognition of emotional competencies and their practical integration into professional environments. Specialists whose work is based on emotional awareness and relational interaction, including coaches, psychologists and educators, often face challenges related to professional legitimacy, institutional expectations and aligning their practice with standardised performance criteria.

This tension is particularly pertinent for female coaches, whose professional identity is often associated with relational sensitivity, empathy and intuitive perception. Their experiences mirror broader changes in contemporary understandings of professionalism,

where the cognitive and emotional aspects are increasingly considered to be interdependent rather than opposing.

This study examines how professionals using emotional-intuitive approaches navigate their roles in academic and corporate settings, identifies perceived institutional barriers and analyses strategies that promote professional legitimacy and stability. Particular attention is given to the experiences of women coaches, who are actively engaged in integrating emotional and relational competencies into their professional practice.

The article is structured as follows. The subsequent section presents a review of the extant theoretical and empirical literature on emotional intelligence, embodied cognition, and relational approaches in coaching and leadership. The methodology section delineates the qualitative research design and the procedures for data collection. The ensuing Results and Discussion section delineates the salient themes that were identified in the course of the study. The final sections of the text present practical implications, limitations, and directions for future research.

## Literature Review

The concept of emotional intelligence has received sustained scholarly attention over the past three decades. First defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990) and popularised by Goleman (1995), emotional intelligence is the ability to recognise, understand and manage emotions effectively. Empirical research has demonstrated that emotional competencies significantly contribute to professional effectiveness, adaptive capacity, and resilience in educational and organisational settings.

Further advances in neuroscientific research have contributed to this discussion. Damasio (1994, 2010) demonstrated that emotional processes are integral to cognitive functioning and decision-making, thus challenging the traditional dichotomy between emotion and reason. His work emphasises that affective mechanisms play a fundamental role in rational judgement and have significant implications for learning and professional practice.

Recent empirical studies (Petrides, 2011; Boyatzis, 2019; Coronado-Maldonado & Benítez-Márquez, 2023) have positioned emotional intelligence as a significant predictor of both professional performance and relational effectiveness. Further research highlights the importance of emotional awareness and relational competence in coaching and leadership development (Jowett et al., 2024; Weiler et al., 2025). Furthermore, studies on emotional coaching models demonstrate the importance of emotional attunement in professional practice (Respizzi, 2016; Wilson et al., 2014).

Alongside the development of emotional intelligence theory, there has been an expansion of scholarly interest towards embodied and experiential models of cognition. Varela, Thompson and Rosch (1991) introduced the concept of embodied cognition, proposing that cognitive processes are rooted in bodily and emotional experience. This challenges purely rational models of knowledge production, highlighting the role of perception, emotion and lived experience in learning and professional practice.

These perspectives have been further developed in educational theory by Illeris (2018), who conceptualises learning as a multidimensional process involving cognitive, emotional and social components. According to this framework, emotional engagement is crucial for sustaining motivation and facilitating meaningful knowledge acquisition.

Research on women's leadership has also contributed to a more nuanced understanding of relational and emotion-centred professional models. As demonstrated in the works of Gilligan (1982), Nelson (2020) and Grant (2016), the influence of empathy, relational orientation and contextual sensitivity on leadership styles and professional identity formation has been explored. These studies suggest that such competencies could foster more collaborative organisational cultures and alternative conceptions of professionalism.

Overall, contemporary scholarship increasingly recognises the interdependence of cognitive and emotional processes in professional learning and decision-making. Emotional and intuitive competencies are now considered essential for effective leadership and educational practice. However, despite this theoretical recognition, there has been limited empirical research examining how professionals who rely on emotional and intuitive approaches negotiate their legitimacy within formal academic and corporate systems. In particular, insufficient attention has been given to the lived experiences of women coaches, whose professional identity is rooted in relational and embodied awareness.

Recent studies have also examined the significance of emotional awareness and reflective self-regulation within professional development contexts. The Emotional-Level Happiness Management (ELHM) framework, in particular, has been discussed as a structured approach to emotional awareness and adaptive functioning in coaching and educational environments (Dunaievska, 2025; Dunaievska, 2026). These studies emphasise the importance of incorporating emotional and reflective competencies into modern professional training programmes.

## Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore how women coaches experience and interpret emotional-intuitive competencies in professional practice. The study focused on understanding subjective experiences and professional identity formation, as

well as the role of emotional awareness in coaching interactions.

A qualitative study with elements of autoethnography was conducted to explore how the emotional-intuitive approach manifests in the professional lives of women coaches. This design enabled not only the collection of data, but also the examination of the inner processes, personal meanings and emotional experiences that accompany women in their professional development.

### **Approach and Rationale**

A qualitative approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to engage with lived human experience, which cannot be fully captured by numbers alone. The autoethnographic element enabled the researcher to connect their reflections with the participants' stories, striking a balance between empathy and academic rigour. This approach revealed individual nuances and broader patterns uniting women coaches who work through emotional and intuitive methods.

### **Participants**

The study involved ten female coaches from a variety of professional backgrounds, including education, business, psychology and personal development. Each participant had at least five years' experience conducting individual or group sessions on a regular basis. The participants' ages ranged from 30 to 55. They were selected based on their willingness to explore the topic of emotional awareness and share personal experiences, as well as their openness to participating in the study.

### **Data Collection**

Three main tools were employed: semi-structured interviews, an online survey and reflective field notes. All interviews were conducted online between 2022 and 2025.

- The interviews took the form of open, trust-based conversations, enabling participants to share their emotions, professional challenges and strategies for coping.
- The online survey revealed general trends in the perception of emotions and intuition in coaching practice.
- The researcher's reflective notes included personal observations and emotional insights that arose during the analysis process.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were analysed using thematic coding to identify four core themes.

1. Barriers to the recognition of emotional work in professional environments.
2. Strategies for inner stability and self-support.
3. Awareness of intuition as a professional tool.
4. Rethinking the role of the woman coach in contemporary developmental culture.

### **Ethical Considerations**

All participants provided informed consent and granted permission for the use of anonymised quotations.

Personal data was altered to ensure confidentiality. Special care was taken to protect the emotional well-being of participants during the interviews.

This research design enabled the combination of academic objectivity and personal engagement, resulting in a study that recognises professional experience, emotion and self-awareness as equal sources of knowledge.

Moreover, the study was conceptually informed by the author's framework Emotional-Level Happiness Management (ELHM), which conceptualises emotional awareness as a structured process of reflective self-regulation and interpersonal perception. From a theoretical perspective, Emotional-Level Happiness Management (ELHM) can be interpreted as an integrative framework that connects emotional intelligence, embodied cognition, and reflective self-regulation within the context of coaching practice. The model emphasises the role of conscious emotional awareness in supporting adaptive decision-making, fostering interpersonal understanding, and enabling sustainable professional functioning. In the present study, this framework was used to analyse how emotional and intuitive competencies manifest in coaching practice.

### **Results and Discussion**

Analysis of interviews and questionnaires revealed several recurring themes in the experiences of women coaches using an emotional-intuitive approach. Despite their differences in age, professional background and level of training, the participants demonstrated consistent patterns relating to the negotiation of the balance between professional rationality and relational sensitivity, the pursuit of institutional recognition of emotional work as a legitimate component of professionalism, and the maintenance of professional integrity within systems structured by formal performance criteria.

#### **1. Inner Barriers:**

##### **Between Professionalism and Feeling**

One of the study's central findings concerns the tension between institutional standards of professionalism and participants' relational and intuitive professional approach. The majority of respondents described a perceived conflict between maintaining emotional sensitivity and meeting the expectations of objectivity, efficiency and measurable performance. This tension reflects the broader structural dynamics of contemporary academic and corporate environments.

Several participants reported that, in the early stages of their professional development, they had tried to align their practice with traditional professional norms. This involved emphasising restraint, analytical communication and maintaining emotional distance during client interactions. Some described limiting their emotional responsiveness on purpose to meet

perceived expectations of competence. However, these adaptations were associated with increased professional strain and a reduced sense of engagement over time.

Over time, participants reported a shift in their understanding of what constitutes professional competence. Rather than equating professionalism with emotional restraint, they increasingly recognised the importance of integrating emotional awareness into their practice. Respondents suggested that sustained professional effectiveness was associated with congruence between personal values and professional behaviour, and with the capacity to maintain reflective self-regulation during client interactions.

Participants emphasised that trusting their emotional perception did not undermine their professional objectivity, but rather enhanced their capacity for a nuanced understanding of client dynamics. They described coaching interactions as collaborative processes based on mutual reflection and awareness of relationships. Rather than prioritising control, respondents emphasised the importance of dialogue and shared meaning-making in their professional practice.

Participants conceptualised partnerships as not merely a professional technique, but as a relational orientation characterised by presence, mutual respect and ethical responsibility. They described coaching interactions as non-hierarchical processes, where practitioners adopt a collaborative stance rather than an authoritative one. They interpreted emotional sensitivity as a resource that enhances perceptual attunement to verbal and non-verbal cues, facilitating a deeper contextual understanding of client narratives.

Several participants described a significant change in their perception of themselves as professionals over time. One respondent noted: "I used to try to be perfect – now I simply am." These reflections suggest a transition from performing a role based on external expectations to developing a more integrated professional identity. Respondents reported that greater alignment between their personal values and their professional practice boosted their confidence and improved their relationships with others.

This redefinition of professionalism was linked to greater professional stability and self-regulation. Participants increasingly viewed emotional sensitivity as a functional resource that supports trust-building and client engagement, rather than as a liability. Previously perceived vulnerabilities were reframed as components of adaptive leadership and authentic professional presence.

## **2. Strategies of Inner Stability and Self-Support**

Participants identified several adaptive strategies that helped them to remain stable professionally within emotionally demanding environments. These

included reflective practices, peer supervision, managing boundaries, and regulating emotions consciously. Rather than suppressing emotional responses, respondents emphasised the importance of structured self-reflection and ongoing professional dialogue in sustaining resilience.

Among the strategies identified as most supportive of professional stability were structured reflective and self-regulatory practices, including:

- Regular periods of intentional reflection;
- maintaining a professional reflection journal;
- embodied regulation practices such as controlled breathing, mindful movement, and yoga;
- participation in ongoing professional supervision.

Participants described professional communities and supervision groups as psychologically supportive environments within performance-oriented institutional contexts. These settings provided opportunities to openly discuss emotional experiences, professional fatigue and uncertainty, free from the fear of negative evaluation. Respondents emphasised that such spaces alleviated the pressure to project an image of constant competence, fostering greater professional authenticity and emotional sustainability.

One participant reflected: "I used to think that resilience meant being strong. Now I understand it differently." Such statements illustrate a shift in the way resilience is conceptualised, moving away from emotional suppression towards conscious self-regulation and sustainable engagement. Respondents increasingly associated resilience with the ability to stay emotionally aware while maintaining professional composure.

Participants reported that practising structured emotional regulation reduced burnout and improved long-term professional sustainability. This shift was linked to a greater reliance on peer support and collaborative professional communities. Rather than emphasising individual endurance, respondents described resilience as a relational and reflective competence embedded within supportive professional networks.

## **3. Experiential Judgment in Professional Practice**

In professional coaching practice, intuition is not understood as spontaneous inspiration, but rather as a form of experiential, context-sensitive judgement. Participants in this study described intuitive processing as emerging from accumulated professional experience, heightened awareness and sensitivity to relational dynamics during client interactions. Rather than viewing intuition as speculation, respondents associated it with the ability to recognise subtle contextual cues and embodied signals that inform the rapid interpretation of complex interpersonal situations. In this sense, intuitive perception functions alongside analytical reasoning as an additional method

of professional assessment and decision-making. According to this interpretation, intuition acts as an integrative process that links cognitive evaluation with affective information, thereby supporting more reflective and context-sensitive professional decisions.

In this study, intuition was conceptualised as the ability to detect subtle relational and contextual cues that emerge during professional interactions. Participants reported an increased awareness of micro-level signals, such as changes in breathing patterns, facial expressions, pauses in speech and variations in tone. This heightened perception was said to contribute to a more nuanced interpretation of client communication, going beyond explicit verbal content. Rather than referring to an inexpressible "inner knowing", respondents associated intuitive perception with embodied awareness and professional experience gained over time. This form of perception facilitates integrative decision-making by combining emotional and cognitive information in complex interpersonal situations.

Participants described intuition as a rapid form of information processing based on experience, integrating cognitive evaluation, emotional responses and embodied cues. This integrative processing informs subsequent professional actions, such as targeted questioning, reflective observations and intentional pauses during client interactions. Such attentional attunement extends beyond explicit verbal content to include sensitivity to non-verbal and contextual signals within the coaching process. Participants emphasised that intuitive competence does not emerge spontaneously, but rather develops through sustained professional practice and reflective self-regulation. This development is supported by deliberate attentional training, emotional awareness, and structured supervision.

This definition of intuition aligns with the theory of embodied cognition (Varela & Thompson, 1991; Damasio, 2010), which posits that cognition is rooted in bodily and emotional processes. Participants described intuitive perception as an increased awareness of relational dynamics and emotional cues in client interactions, such as changes in tone, pace, engagement and non-verbal behaviour. Such attunement informs decisions about when to intervene, ask questions or allow reflective pauses during the coaching process. Intuitive competence is therefore conceptualised as an integrative dimension of professional practice, connecting analytical reasoning with relational awareness to support ethical engagement, reflective dialogue and the creation of psychologically safe coaching environments.

#### **4. Professional Identity and Coaching Philosophy**

Participants described coaching as both a professional activity and an integral component of

their broader professional identity. The competencies associated with emotional and relational awareness were reported to influence participants' communication styles, decision-making processes and approaches to interpersonal relationships, not just in formal coaching sessions but in everyday professional contexts too. In this sense, coaching was perceived as an ongoing reflective practice that shapes how professionals interpret interactions, construct meaning and engage with others in organisational and personal environments. Participants emphasised that effective coaching involves more than the technical application of methods; it also requires maintaining reflective awareness and relational presence during professional interactions.

Several participants reported that effective coaching requires a balance between analytical reasoning and sensitivity to emotional and relational dynamics. One respondent noted that developing greater self-awareness had improved her ability to understand her clients' experiences beyond what they said.

These reflections suggest that professional coaching competence involves integrating cognitive, emotional and relational awareness during client interactions. They also indicate a shift in how participants conceptualise professional coaching practice. Rather than viewing coaching as a task-oriented intervention focused on problem-solving, respondents described it as a relational process characterised by dialogue, mutual reflection and collaborative exploration of clients' experiences.

Participants emphasised that effective coaching interactions involve establishing a psychologically supportive environment that fosters trust, openness and reflective engagement. In these interactions, both the coach and the client actively engage in processes that generate meaning and support personal and professional development.

Participants emphasised that intuitive competencies do not replace analytical reasoning, but rather complement it in professional coaching practice. They described intuition as a sensitivity to relational and contextual cues that emerge during client interactions, such as changes in tone, pauses in communication and non-verbal expressions.

At the same time, participants emphasised the importance of maintaining clear professional boundaries during coaching sessions. They described effective practice as combining attention to interpersonal dynamics with established coaching techniques, such as structured questioning, trust-building and outcome-oriented dialogue.

Participants reported that coaching competencies frequently transcend the confines of formal coaching sessions, influencing broader patterns of professional interaction and decision-making. Many respondents indicated that developing intuitive and reflective capacities supported their ability to remain attentive and adaptable in complex interpersonal situations.

In this sense, intuitive competence was described as facilitating the integration of analytical understanding and experiential awareness. Participants suggested that this integrative capacity enables coaches to interpret their clients' experiences more holistically, supporting reflective exploration of personal and professional challenges.

These findings suggest that coaches who integrate emotional and intuitive competencies have a stronger professional identity characterised by a greater focus on relational awareness, reflective practice and collaborative interaction. Participants described professional effectiveness as emerging from the integration of cognitive evaluation with emotional and interpersonal sensitivity, rather than prioritising hierarchical control or purely analytical problem-solving.

Respondents indicated that this orientation fosters leadership approaches rooted in empathy, dialogue and mutual engagement. In organisational and educational contexts, these competencies can foster more collaborative professional cultures and leadership practices that prioritise relational trust and reflective decision-making. The main themes identified in the qualitative analysis are summarised in Table 1.

**Conclusion to the “Results and Discussion” Section**

The findings of this study indicate that the integration of emotional and intuitive competencies expands conventional understandings of professional coaching practice. Participants reported that emotional awareness, relational sensitivity, and reflective self-regulation function not as obstacles to professionalism but as important components of effective client interaction.

The experiences described by respondents suggest that coaching competence involves integrating analytical reasoning with emotional and relational awareness. This integration fosters trust, reflective

dialogue and collaborative exploration of clients' experiences.

These findings emphasise the increasing significance of relational and emotional competencies in contemporary coaching and leadership development practices. In educational and organisational contexts, incorporating such competencies can foster more adaptive, reflective and human-centred professional cultures.

Based on the findings of this study, the Emotional-Level Happiness Management (ELHM) method can be interpreted as a conceptual framework integrating the key dimensions of emotional awareness and professional practice, as identified in the analysis.

**Conceptual Model of the Emotional-Level Happiness Management (ELHM) Method**

The Emotional-Level Happiness Management (ELHM) method can be represented conceptually as a reflective framework with three levels, integrating cognitive awareness, emotional perception and embodied regulation.

The model includes the following interrelated levels:

- **Cognitive level** (individuals develop reflective awareness of emotional triggers, interpretative patterns, and cognitive responses to life situations).
- **Emotional level** (practitioners cultivate the ability to recognise, differentiate, and consciously experience emotional states without suppression).
- **Embodied level** (emotional awareness is integrated through somatic perception and reflective regulation practices that support internal balance and relational presence).

This integrated framework views emotional awareness as a structured professional competency relevant to coaching practice, leadership development and reflective learning environments, rather than merely as a psychological phenomenon.

In this sense, the ELHM can be seen as a conceptual model that describes the interaction between

TABLE 1 Key Themes Identified in the Study

Theme	Description	Example
Emotional Awareness	Participants emphasised the importance of recognising and understanding emotional states during coaching interactions.	Coaches reported that an increased awareness of their own emotions improved their ability to support their clients.
Authentic Professional Identity	Many participants described coaching as being integral to their broader professional identity, rather than merely a technical method.	Coaches observed that authenticity and self-reflection helped to build trust with clients.
Intuitive Perception in Coaching	Participants emphasised that intuition involves being sensitive to relational and contextual cues in communication.	During sessions, subtle changes in tone, pauses and body language were described as meaningful signals.
Reflective Professional Communities	The coaches emphasised the importance of having a supportive professional environment in which to reflect and develop.	Both peer supervision and reflective dialogue were identified as key sources of professional resilience.

cognitive, emotional and embodied processes in the development of professional awareness and reflective practice in coaching and leadership contexts.

In the present study, this framework was used to interpret how emotional and intuitive competencies manifest in professional coaching practice.

These observations suggest that incorporating emotional and reflective competencies into coaching practice could lead to a more comprehensive understanding of professional expertise. In this context, analytical reasoning and emotional awareness would be considered complementary aspects of effective leadership and interpersonal development.

## Conclusions

This study examined how female coaches integrate emotional and intuitive competencies when performing their professional roles within academic and organisational contexts. The findings suggest that emotional awareness, relational sensitivity and reflective self-regulation are important factors in shaping professional coaching practice.

Participants emphasised that intuitive perception does not replace analytical reasoning, but rather complements it by facilitating a more nuanced interpretation of interpersonal dynamics during coaching interactions. Integrating cognitive, emotional and relational forms of awareness was associated with greater professional adaptability and more effective client engagement.

These results suggest that contemporary coaching practice could be improved by recognising emotional and relational competencies as components of professional expertise. Incorporating these competencies into coaching and leadership development programmes could help create more reflective, collaborative and human-centred professional environments. These findings contribute to current discussions on professional education and leadership development, highlighting the importance of emotional competencies in modern organisational learning environments. In this context, the author's Emotional-Level Happiness Management (ELHM) method is examined in detail. Developed by Tetiana Dunaievska, it is a framework for understanding emotional awareness and reflective self-regulation in coaching practice. This method offers a structured way of working with emotional states. It conceptualises subjective well-being as a process that can be influenced by developing conscious emotional awareness and self-regulation.

The author developed the method through more than two decades of professional coaching practice and reflective research on emotional awareness in personal and organisational development contexts. Over time, the framework evolved into an integrative model aimed at systematising experiential

knowledge about emotional regulation, intuitive perception and reflective self-regulation in coaching interactions.

## Implications for Practitioners

The findings of this study have several implications for coaching practice, professional education and developing reflective professional communities. The results suggest that emotional and intuitive competencies could strengthen relational awareness, reflective dialogue and adaptive communication in coaching.

Based on the findings, several directions for practical application can be identified:

1. Integrating structured emotional awareness models into coaching education programmes.

Training programmes for coaches could be improved by incorporating frameworks that promote emotional awareness, reflective self-regulation and relational sensitivity. One such framework is the author's Emotional-Level Happiness Management (ELHM) model, which conceptualises well-being as a process supported by conscious emotional awareness and reflective self-regulation.

2. Developing emotional awareness and embodied perception skills.

The study suggests that the ability to recognise and interpret emotional states is an important skill for coaching professionals. Improving these skills could lead to more effective communication, deeper client reflection and greater adaptability during coaching sessions.

3. Creating professional communities and reflective support networks.

Participants emphasised the importance of professional environments that facilitate reflection, peer learning and emotional support. Such communities can foster professional resilience, facilitate knowledge exchange and encourage the development of reflective coaching cultures.

4. Application of emotional and relational competencies in leadership and organisational development. Integrating emotional awareness and intuitive perception may also be beneficial for leadership development and organisational training programmes. These competencies can promote trust-building, collaborative communication and reflective decision-making within professional teams. Overall, integrating emotional and reflective competencies into coaching practice could help create more adaptive, relational and human-centred professional environments.

Thus, emotional-intuitive coaching and the Emotional-Level Happiness Management (ELHM) framework may provide a practical way of supporting the development of reflective, resilient and people-centred professionalism. Such approaches integrate analytical reasoning with emotional awareness and empathy, contributing to a more holistic understanding of coaching practice.

From this perspective, professional effectiveness is not only viewed in terms of measurable outcomes, but also through the quality of interpersonal interactions, reflective awareness and the internal state from which professional actions originate.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

As with any qualitative study, this research has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The study was based on a relatively small sample of ten women coaches from different professional backgrounds who shared an approach grounded in emotional awareness and intuitive perception. While this sample enabled detailed personal reflections to be collected, it does not allow for statistical generalisation to the broader coaching population.

As the research design focused primarily on subjective experience and reflective self-reports, the findings highlight patterns of meaning-making and professional interpretation rather than quantitative indicators.

Future research could involve a larger and more diverse sample of coaching professionals, as well as the use of mixed research methods, including quantitative approaches. This would provide further insight into the role of emotional and intuitive competencies in coaching practice and professional development.

Future research could expand this exploration in several directions:

- Including a broader and more international sample to examine how emotional and intuitive coaching approaches manifest in different cultural and professional contexts.
- Involving male coaches to explore possible gender-related differences in the perception and use of intuitive competencies in coaching practice.
- Applying mixed research methods (qualitative and quantitative) to evaluate the potential effectiveness of the Emotional-Level Happiness Management (ELHM) framework, using measurable indicators such as emotional resilience, job satisfaction and self-awareness levels.

Further empirical research could examine the relationship between emotional awareness, professional resilience and decision-making processes in coaching and leadership development using the ELHM framework as a model. Further studies could focus on developing educational models based on this approach and assessing their potential impact on coach training and professional development programmes. This could contribute to a deeper understanding of how emotional and reflective competencies function in contemporary coaching and leadership practices.

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Artificial intelligence tools (OpenAI ChatGPT) were used solely to edit the text, assist with formatting, and improve the clarity of the English. The author remains solely responsible for all conceptual development, research design, analysis and interpretation of the findings.

### **Declaration of Interest Statement**

The author declares that there are no potential conflicts of interest with regard to the research, authorship or publication of this article.

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### **Ethics Approval**

All procedures involving human participants were conducted in accordance with the ethical principles set out in the 1964 Declaration of Helsinki, including its subsequent amendments, and with comparable ethical standards.

This qualitative study involved the voluntary participation of adult coaching professionals, and did not include medical interventions or the collection of biological materials. Therefore, formal approval from an institutional ethics committee was not required.

All participants provided informed consent prior to taking part in the study.

### **Consent to Participate**

All participants gave their informed consent prior to their involvement in the study.

Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, the procedures involved and how the collected data would be kept confidential and anonymised. They were also informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without facing any negative consequences.

### **Data Availability Statement**

The qualitative data supporting the findings of this study, including anonymised interview transcripts and analytical notes, are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

The analysis did not use any custom code or specialised software.

### **Author Contributions**

The author was solely responsible for conceiving and designing the study, collecting the data, conducting the qualitative analysis, and preparing the manuscript.

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