

## **DBA DISSERTATION COMMITTEE REPORT**

**NORIKO SATO**  
**ICS DBA PROGRAM**

### **DISSERTATION TITLE:**

**Exploring the Relationship between the Training of Coaches and Coach Efficacy among Undergraduate Students**

### **DBA DISSERTATION COMMITTEE:**

**Professors Patricia Robinson, Kangyong Sun, and Jinju Lee.**

ICS DBA Candidate Noriko Sato successfully defended her DBA dissertation, “Exploring the Relationship between the Training of Coaches and Coach Efficacy among Undergraduate Students,” on May 25, 2023. She addressed all suggestions, concerns and changes put forth by her DBA Dissertation Committee, consisting of Professors Patricia Robinson, Kangyong Sun, and Jinju Lee. The Dissertation Committee concludes that Noriko Sato’s DBA Dissertation has fulfilled the requirements for the DBA degree and recommends to grant her Hitotsubashi University’s doctoral degree in business administration. Below is a summary of her thesis, followed by the Committee’s evaluation and conclusion.

### **THESIS DESCRIPTION**

This thesis aimed to explore the relationship between the training of coaches and coaching efficacy in an educational setting. The research question driving this thesis was, “Does coaching affect personal self-awareness and change?” Noriko Sato extended the coaching literature by extending its focus from increasing coachee (recipient) efficacy to increasing coach efficacy, drawing on the literature regarding sense-making. She explored the topic of coaching efficacy by studying undergraduate students who learned and practiced coaching. Sato found that when students learn to coach their peers, that they show similar improvement in some competencies to other students who received coaching by professional coaches.

This thesis contributes most significantly in the area of the practical implications of helping college undergraduates become more prepared for careers after graduation in response to corporate demand for better interpersonal skills. Specifically, many new college graduates seeking jobs are considered unsuitable for immediate employment, especially in the area of essential ‘soft’ interpersonal skills needed in employment. This study thus explored whether providing undergraduate students with coach training could help improve their interpersonal skills and career visioning, thereby making them ostensibly more employable. The study also explored how students who receive coach training make meaning out of their learnings from their training. In addition to validating the effectiveness of coach training, the study explored the comparative efficacy of gaining coaching skills versus receiving coaching by assessing being a student coach (coach efficacy) with being a coaching client (client efficacy).

The thesis took a mixed methods approach and was comprised of several studies. First, Study A explored how coach training impacted the coach’s interpersonal skills and career visioning. Study A compared students who learned and provided coaching to a control group who did not and assessed both groups pre-

and post-training in terms of their interpersonal skills and career visioning. Second, Study B explored how coach training impacted student motivation, comparing students pre- and post-training on their motivation. Third, Study C compared students who provided coaching to those who received coaching, to explore differences between in their interpersonal skills and career visioning. Study C addressed the research question: "Does coach training have a greater effect on students' interpersonal skills than receiving coaching?" Study C found that there was no statistically significant difference in interpersonal skills or career visioning between students who coaches and students who were coached. Finally, Study D took a qualitative approach to explore the research question, "How are students *making meaning* of their learning from the coach training?" Some of the themes along which sense-making occurred included: self-understanding, relationship building, motivation, the importance of focusing on the other in interpersonal skills, change processes.

This research extends the literature on coaching in education by exploring the relationship between coach training and coach efficacy: 1) finding that training of coaches enhances their interpersonal skills, self-understanding, motivation, and soft skills, 2) demonstrating that training coaches is just as effective as receiving individual coaching, and 3) demonstrating that coach training helps coaches focus on both oneself and others in relationship building and in personal transformation.

The practical implications of this thesis suggest that universities might better prepare undergraduates for careers by providing coach training as part of college curricula. The thesis also suggests that coach training might also be useful in leadership development in corporate Human Resources Management to enhance their leaders' interpersonal skills and active listening.

#### **DISSERTATION COMMITTEE EVALUTION AND APPROVAL**

Noriko Sato addressed committee requests for expanded explanations of unsupported hypotheses, and her committee accepted her dissertation as her final submission to complete her DBA. Noriko Sato's DBA dissertation was approved by her DBA Dissertation Committee, which consisted of: Professors Patricia Robinson, Kangyong Sun, and Jinju Lee. The DBA Dissertation Committee concludes that Noriko Sato's dissertation fulfills the requirements for the DBA degree, successfully demonstrating her qualifications as a scholar. The Committee therefore recommends that Hitotsubashi University ICS grant Noriko Sato a DBA degree.

Patricia Robinson  
Kangyong Sun  
Jinju Lee