

EXECUTIVE REPORT 2019

Coaching in the Middle East

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Middle East Research Consortium

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Lead research partners

The Henley Centre for Coaching



The Henley Centre for Coaching is a research and coach training centre at Henley Business School.

The Centre is recognised as a world leader for coach training and research, having trained over 2,500 coaches over the past decade. The Centre provides professional coach training with a Professional Certificate in Coaching and an MSc, which are delivered in the UK, across Europe and in the Middle East and Africa. Henley's team is actively engaged in research, contributing to journals, books and best practice publications.

Current research projects include neuroscience and coaching, coach identity and coach development, coaching competences, supervision and coaching ethics. The Centre also provides continuous professional development and supervision for coaches across the world. You can join the Henley Centre for Coaching and access our research, resources, supervision and bi-monthly webinars.

To find out more about Henley's coaching activities visit:

henley.ac.uk/coachingcentre

The International Coach Federation



The International Coach Federation (ICF) is a non-profit organisation dedicated to professional coaching. As

of April 2019, ICF has approximately 35,000 members in 140 countries. Founded in 1995, the ICF campaigns worldwide for professional standards within the

coaching profession, and provides independent certification for professional coaches and coach training programmes. ICF is considered the main accrediting and credentialing body for both training programmes and coaches.

ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential.

Introduction

This report provides an overview of the main findings from the 2019 Middle East coaching research project, undertaken by Jonathan Passmore, Hazel Brown, Joel DiGirolamo and Alicia Hullinger, in partnership with coaching colleagues in the region. The study was planned in Autumn 2018 and the survey undertaken during a 10-week period, between February and April 2019. This was followed by one-to-one qualitative interviews with a sample of coaches across the region.

This *Coaching in the Middle East* report is available free of charge. The aim of this and the other national reports in the series is to deepen understanding of coaching and how it can help organisations and individuals.

Research methodology

The aim of the research project was to reach the widest number of practising coaches in the Middle East region covering the following countries:

Bahrain	Oman
Egypt	Qatar
Jordan	Saudi Arabia
Kuwait	Syria
Lebanon	United Arab Emirates
Iran	Yemen
Iraq	

In addition, a parallel survey was undertaken of those who commission coaching services.

The levels of participation varied across the region. There was strong engagement in countries like UAE, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, demonstrating that coaching practice is flourishing in these hot spots. Meanwhile, in other areas – like Yemen, Iran, Iraq and Syria – engagement was zero. This reflects the difficulties some countries in the region face as a result of language, access to the web, and political issues.

The research questions were designed by the researchers in collaboration with colleagues in the region. The questions were designed to echo the research project undertaken in 2017 in Europe. The survey was publicised through established coaching federations, as well as online through LinkedIn interest groups and through a series of talks and webinars delivered to countries across the region, with the help and support of ICF local chapters.



National reports

Overall, the development of coaching has been fast paced over the 2010–2020 period. In this report we have provided a snapshot of coaching practices in nine of the fastest developing countries.

From qualitative interviews with coaches across the region, the biggest challenge they face in their profession is the misrepresentation and misconception of coaching. Some mentioned that they are embarrassed to call themselves coaches. Many of the coaches shared with us that their clients enter coaching expecting advice. As the coaches pointed out, true coaching is about the individual turning inward for 'advice' rather than getting answers from the coach; the coach facilitates the process for problem-solving.

Bahrain

Coaching in Bahrain commenced as a function of the Bahrain Society for Training & Development (BSTD), with annual forums held with the support of HE the Minister of Labour & Social Development. Development towards ICF credentialing started when the ICF Bahrain chapter was established in 2016. Since then the chapter has worked to raise public awareness of coaching and its benefits.

Due to the nature of the country, the speed with which credentialled coaches are developed has been variable. Women have been faster in acquiring credentialing and practising coaching, with private practices spreading around the country. While the public recognises the benefits of coaching, awareness campaigns by the ICF chapter will help to address, over the coming years, the challenge of deepening understanding and use of coaching by both individuals and organisations.

Egypt

Egypt is the fastest growing market in the Middle East. It is known to have the largest certified Arabic-speaking coaching community in the Arab world. However, the Egyptian market remains relatively immature when compared with more developed markets such as the UK or US. Individuals define coaching in many different ways and there is wide-spread misunderstanding about the nature and value of coaching. Coaching has been positioned under the

umbrella of human resources; this has had a negative impact on its perception due to human resources being held in relatively low regard in the region. This is similar to other regions across the world – the profession is unregulated and a lack of awareness is a challenge because anyone can describe themselves as a coach. It is very difficult to identify an estimate value of coaching activity due to Egypt's economic situation. As a result, there is a wide variation in fee rates. In business and executive coaching, hourly rates vary from US\$150 to US\$450, depending on the coach's credentialing level and the number of years of experience. The main issues for coaching in Egypt are the development of professional standards and public education.

Jordan

In Jordan, coaching remains relatively unknown; it is not yet considered a career. The types of coaching are becoming very diverse, partly as purchasers don't understand what coaching is or how it can best help individuals and organisations. There remains a need for more education about the nature and value of coaching. Credentialing also remains an issue, with a large number of uncertified coaches offering their services.

Kuwait

Coaching in Kuwait has been applied as a leadership practice since 2010 and is largely delivered by external coaches, mainly from USA and Europe. Despite the presence of coaching in the country for nearly a decade, there remains a lack of understanding in many companies about the benefits that coaching can offer. Kuwait can be divided into two broad coaching communities: ICF members (credentialled and non-credentialled coaches) and a more eclectic group of individuals with diverse experience and understanding of coaching. The diversity of practices of the latter group can, in some cases, have a negative impact on the reputation of coaching as a whole. Greater work needs to be undertaken to help potential clients understand what they are purchasing and how to improve the quality of their buying decisions.

Lebanon

In Lebanon, coaching is relatively unknown, with economic factors restricting its growth. Lebanon has 76 ICF members and several coaching schools supporting coach development. The most common issue for coaching is the relatively large number of coaches compared with the demand for new coaches; there is a need in the Middle East in this growing market to explain more what coaching does.

Oman

The Oman coaching community consists of around 100 individuals, of which around 40 are ICF-accredited. The demand for coaching is growing and may be estimated to be US\$15 million. Coaches are coming in from UAE, Europe, Asia and Africa to provide the services. The biggest problem remains untrained or unqualified coaches and their effect on the market, where understanding of the nature and purpose of coaching is still developing. Educating the general public about the difference between coaching and training or consulting will be a priority in the coming 3–5 years, as will be the provision of training in Arabic.

Qatar

One of the main issues for the growth of professional coaching in Qatar is the lack of awareness of what coaching is and how it can benefit individuals and organisations. The Qatar chapter was founded in 2019 and is growing quickly; there are approximately 50 ICF members, around 15 of whom are credentialed.

There are several organisations working towards coaching cultures and training leaders-as-coaches, with particularly strong interest in the education sector. One of the common issues is the professional development of coaches; many programmes take place outside of the country, although the number and experience of native providers is growing.

Saudi Arabia

Coaching has been known for a decade or more in the Kingdom. However, only in the last few years has coaching become accepted more widely as a tool for individual self-improvement. It is no longer surprising to see both private and public sector organisations demanding executive coaching; there is now a general movement towards the creation of a coaching culture. This is being supported by the work of professional bodies like ICF.

Today, in Saudi, coaching (both life and executive) has become an important intervention for personal and professional development. The number of coaches in Saudi has tripled since 2015. This, along with work carried out by professional bodies, has helped increase public knowledge and awareness about coaching and its importance for HR and talent in organisations. The coming five years are expected to witness continued growth and development.

United Arab Emirates (UAE)

The UAE coaching market has been developing in recent years. The interest in coaching is increasing, yet there remains considerable further potential for organisations to adopt coaching within their people strategy to deliver change.

At the same time, awareness about coaching within the community, private and public sectors is still relatively low. There are 250–300 ICF members in the country, but the quality of coaching overall is variable and many non-credentialed coaches operate in the market. Rates vary widely from US\$100 to US\$500, with higher rates in the commercial sector. The sector faces the following challenges:

- Lack of awareness of coaching and its potential value to individuals and organisations
- Challenge of ensuring that coaching is meeting the needs of both the client and the organisation
- Finding tangible ways to demonstrate return on investment
- Improving the quality of practice
- Organisations taking a one-sided approach – requesting coaching for a specific level of management rather than approaching it from a holistic, cultural-change approach

Given that coaching is becoming a trend in the market and may double in size, ensuring the production of quality coaches will be an issue.

Biographical information

In total, 83 coaches and 6 commissioning managers completed the questionnaire. As noted in Table A, the majority of participants were female (75.9%). This was a higher proportion than in the other regional studies we have conducted. The division of those who engaged with the survey was approximately equal between expatriates and nationals. This reflects the high number of workers from other countries who are economically active within some countries of the Middle East, such as UAE and Bahrain.

The level of coach qualification was high, with almost 60% of participants holding higher degrees (Masters or doctorates).

The levels of participation varied across the region. There was strong engagement in the UAE, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, demonstrating that coaching practice is flourishing in these hot spots.

Table A: Gender of respondents

Male	24.1%
Female	75.9%

Table B: Citizenship

Expat (living in Middle East)	45.7%
National citizen	53.1%
Does not live in the region	1.2%

Table C: Qualifications

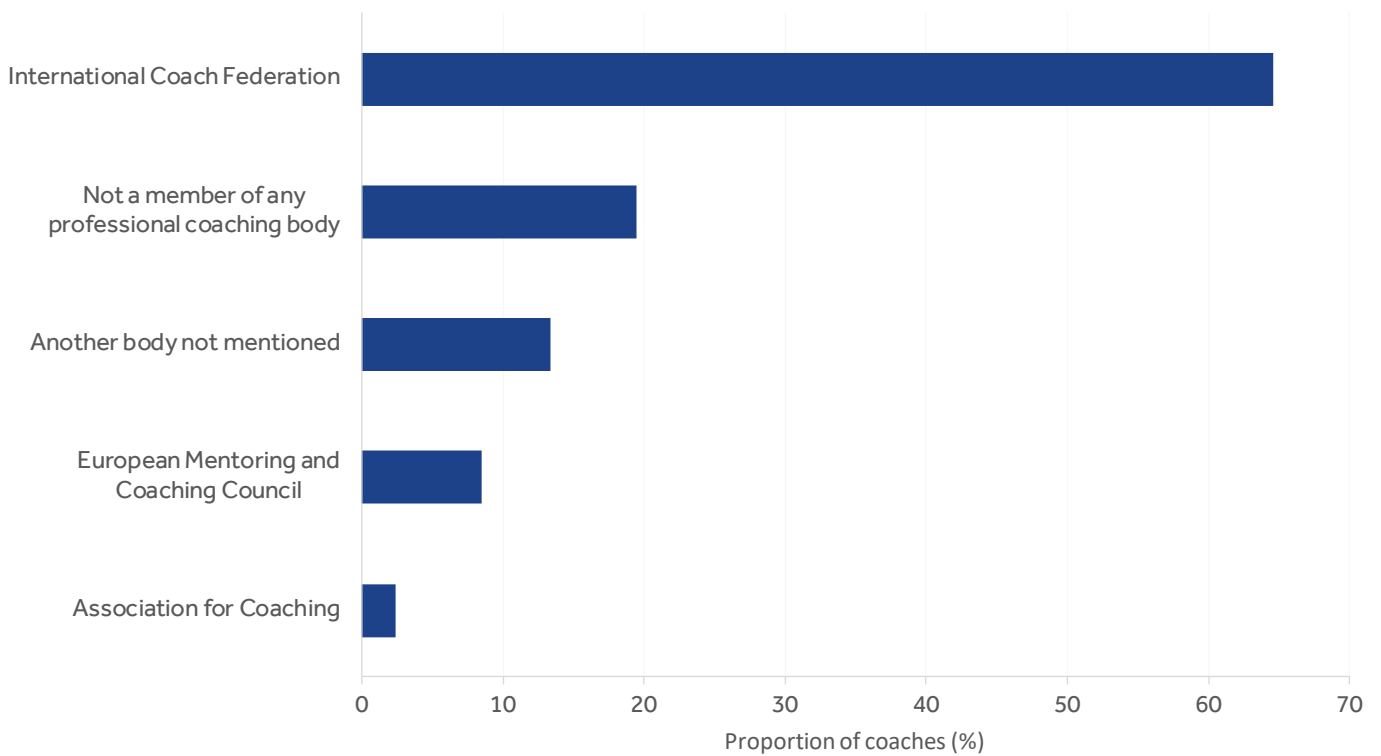
Qualifications completed at 16	0.0%
Qualifications completed at 18	6.0%
Undergraduate degree	34.9%
Postgraduate degree	49.4%
Doctorate/PhD	9.6%

Table D: Country of residence

Bahrain	3.7%
Egypt	11.1%
Jordan	16.0%
Kuwait	1.2%
Lebanon	9.9%
Iran	0.0%
Iraq	0.0%
Oman	7.4%
Qatar	7.4%
Saudi Arabia	16%
Syria	0.0%
UAE	23.5%
Yemen	0.0%
Other	3.7%

Diagram 1: Membership of professional coaching associations

(coaches only)

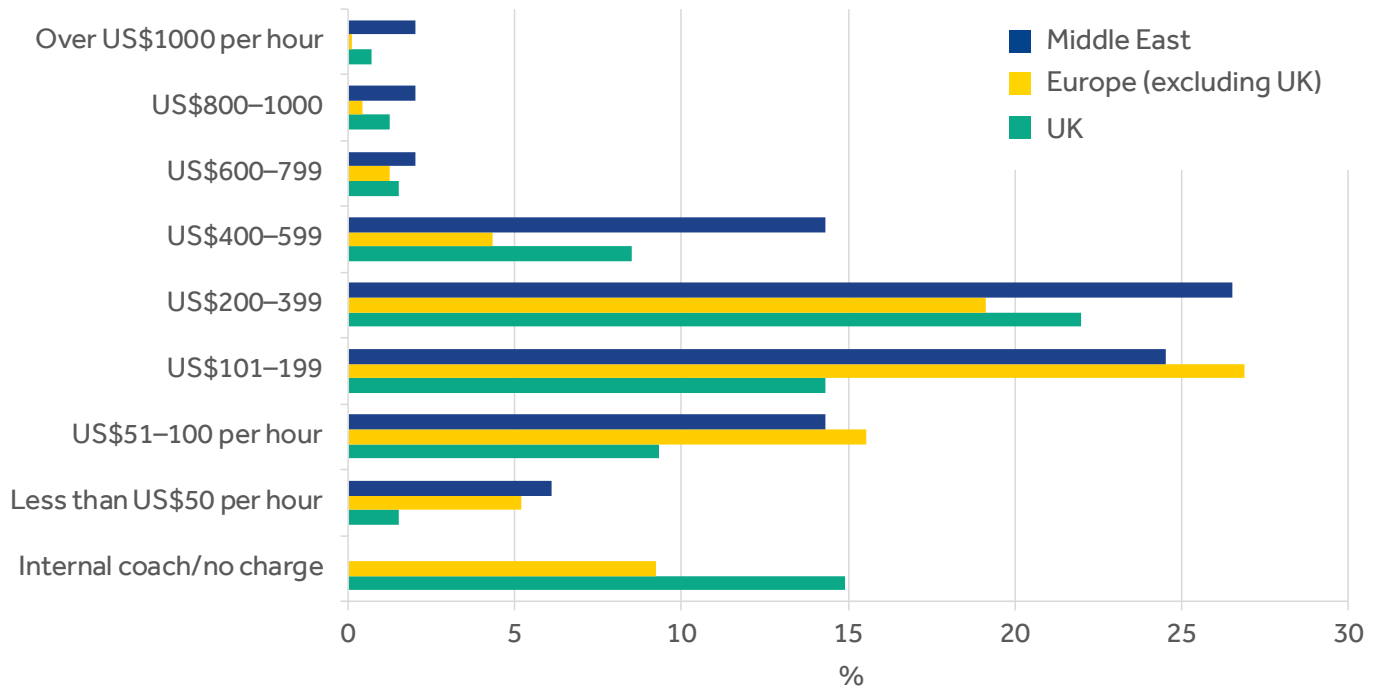


Two thirds of coaches who participated in this survey were members of ICF, with one fifth not being a member of a professional body. Based on qualitative responses, the survey may underrepresent the proportion of non-members

operating in the region, although such coaches may see coaching as only one small element of their wider portfolio of activities. In comparison, professional body membership was more diverse in Europe, reflecting different historical traditions.



Diagram 2: Hourly coaching fee rates



Hourly fee rates in the region vary widely but are broadly comparable to European rates – with the exception of the use of internal coaches (that is, coaches who work as employees of the organisation, either full time or, more often, as managers who occasionally undertake coaching).

The region may follow Europe in this regard in the coming five years as the market expands.

The most commonly charged rate, US\$200–399, matches UK rates.



What is coaching?

Coaching's development in the Middle East has followed its growth in North America and Europe, but it has taken a different pathway reflecting the cultural and national diversity. We see this as a strength: coaching does not need to be a rigid global framework, but needs to adapt to the cultural context, as much as to the individual and to the presenting issue (topic). A variety of definitions of coaching have been offered, including the following by ICF:

Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.

(ICF, 2015)¹

An alternative, more process-oriented definition is:

a Socratic-based, future-focused dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (client), where the facilitator uses open questions, active listening, summaries and reflections which are aimed at stimulating the self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant

(Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011)²

Reflective practice

Reflection is widely acknowledged to be an important part of a coach's professional development. Coaches need to be able to understand both themselves and others. Reflection supports this, as well as providing the opportunity to consider ways to improve and develop. In this section we explore how coaches reflect on their practice.

Most of our graphs and tables include comparative data collected from research studies carried out in the UK and Europe (excluding the UK) in 2017, which used the same questions.

Coaches in the Middle East actively use self-reflection as a tool, along with peer networking. Levels of engagement with supervisors are lower than in the UK and Europe, with almost 50% not engaged in supervision.

This may reflect higher levels of ICF membership and that supervision is not a requirement for an ICF credential, compared to other bodies such as the Association for Coaching (AC) and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). The latter requires members to engage in supervision, while ICF encourages supervision as a personal development activity, with supervision hours applied to credentialing requirements. In terms of keeping up to date with changing and developing practice, webinars and books are favoured (see overleaf).

¹ ICF (2015) Code of Ethics. Part One: Definitions. [Accessed 13 September 2019] <https://coachfederation.org/code-of-ethics>

² Passmore, J & Fillery-Travis, A (2011) A critical review of executive coaching research: A decade of progress and what's to come. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Practice & Research*, 4 (2), 70–88

Diagram 3: Methods of reflection

Which methods do you use to reflect on your practice? (Participants could select more than one)

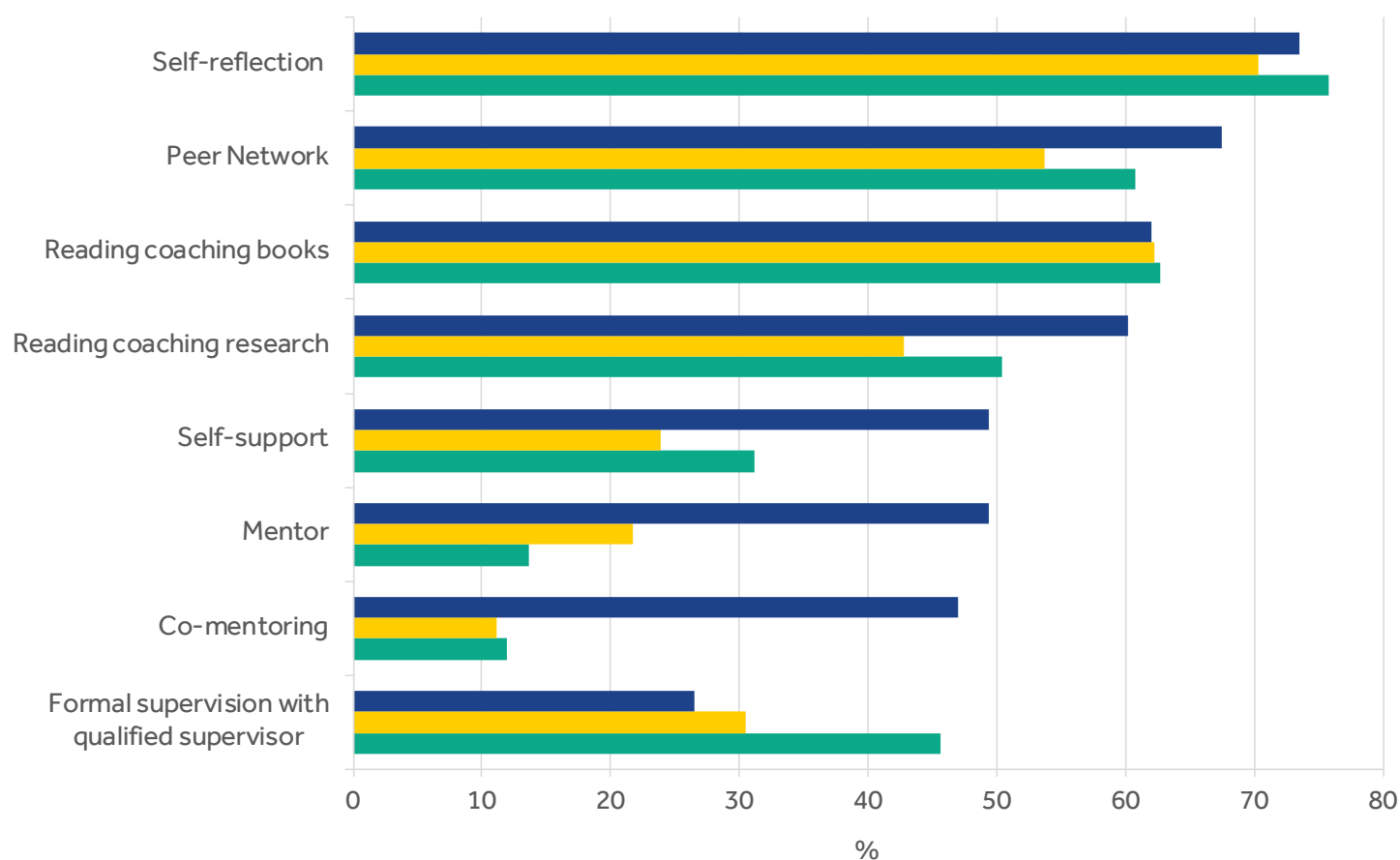


Table 3: Methods of reflection

Options (Participants could select more than one)	%		
	Middle East	Europe (excluding UK)	UK
Self-reflection	73.5	70.3	75.8
Peer Network	67.5	53.7	60.8
Reading coaching books	62.0	62.2	62.7
Reading coaching research	60.2	42.8	50.4
Self-support	49.4	23.9	31.2
Mentor	49.4	21.7	13.6
Co-mentoring	47.0	11.1	11.9
Formal supervision with qualified supervisor	26.5	30.5	45.6

Diagram 4: Frequency of supervision

How often do you receive formal supervision? (Based on ratio of 1 hour per X hours of supervision)

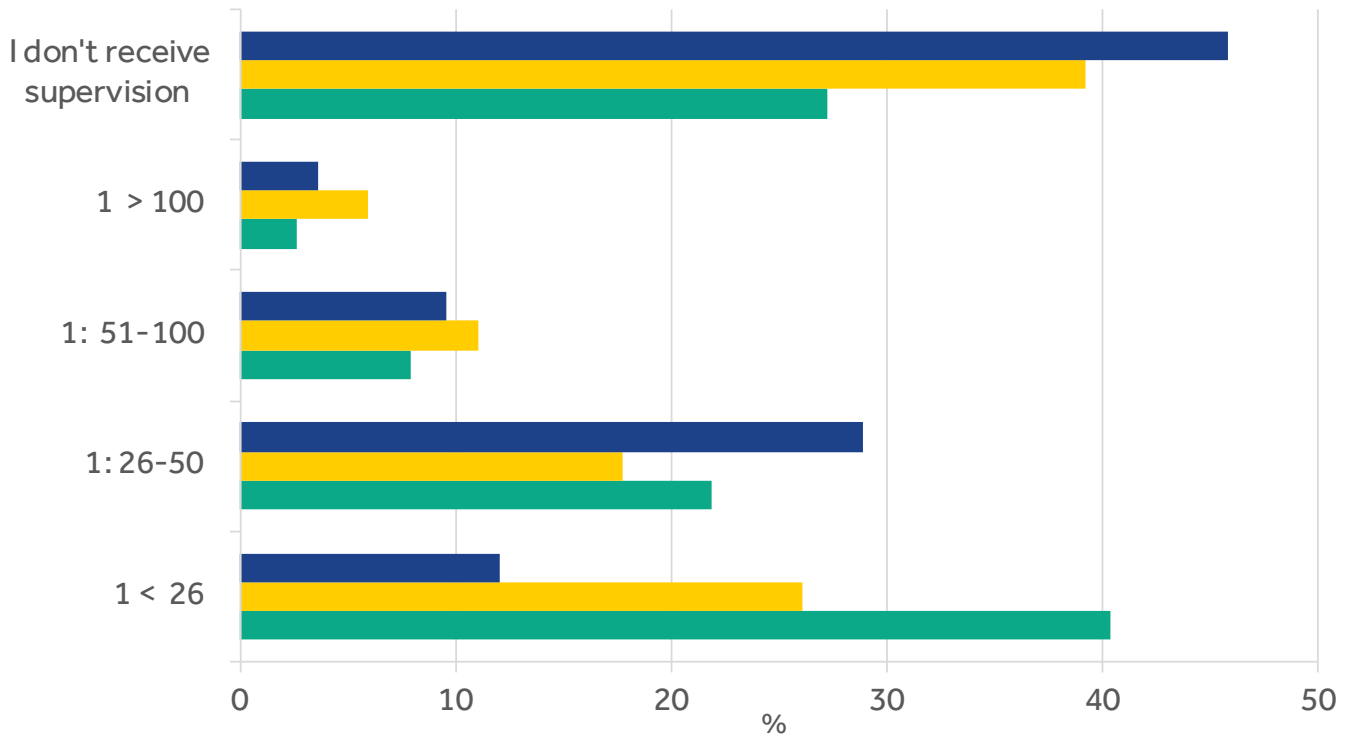


Table 4: Frequency of supervision

Options (Participants could select more than one)	%		
	Middle East	Europe (excluding UK)	UK
I don't receive supervision	45.8	39.2	27.2
1 > 100	3.6	5.9	2.6
1: 51-100	9.6	11.0	7.9
1: 26-50	28.9	17.8	21.9
1 < 26	12.0	26.1	40.4

Diagram 5: Time invested in continuing professional development (CPD)

How much time do coaches invest in CPD per year?

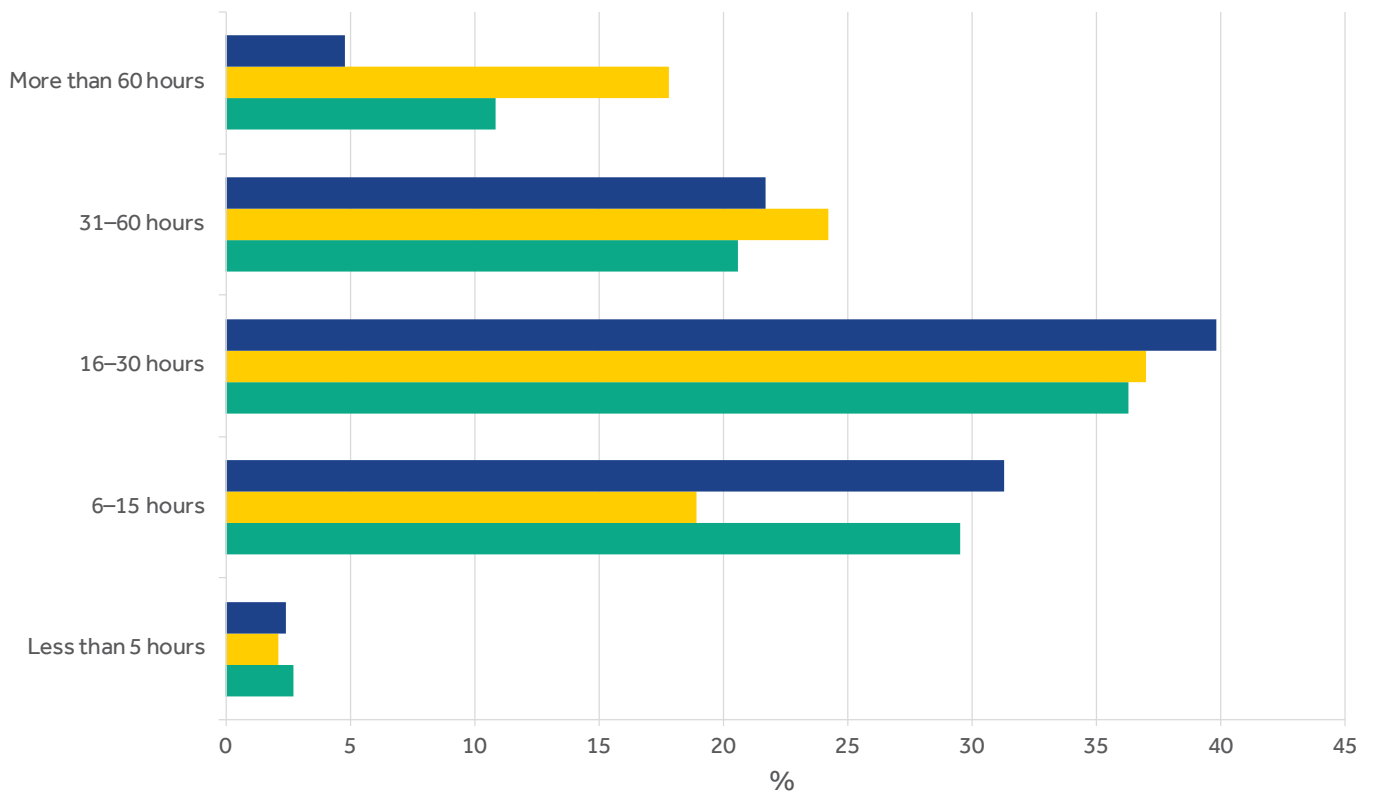


Table 5: Time invested in CPD

Options	%		
	Middle East	Europe (excluding UK)	UK
More than 60 hours	4.8	17.8	10.9
31–60 hours	21.7	24.2	20.6
16–30 hours	39.8	37.0	36.3
6–15 hours	31.3	18.9	29.5
Less than 5 hours	2.4	2.1	2.7



Diagram 6: Keeping up to date

How do you keep up to date in your coaching practice? (Participants could select more than one)

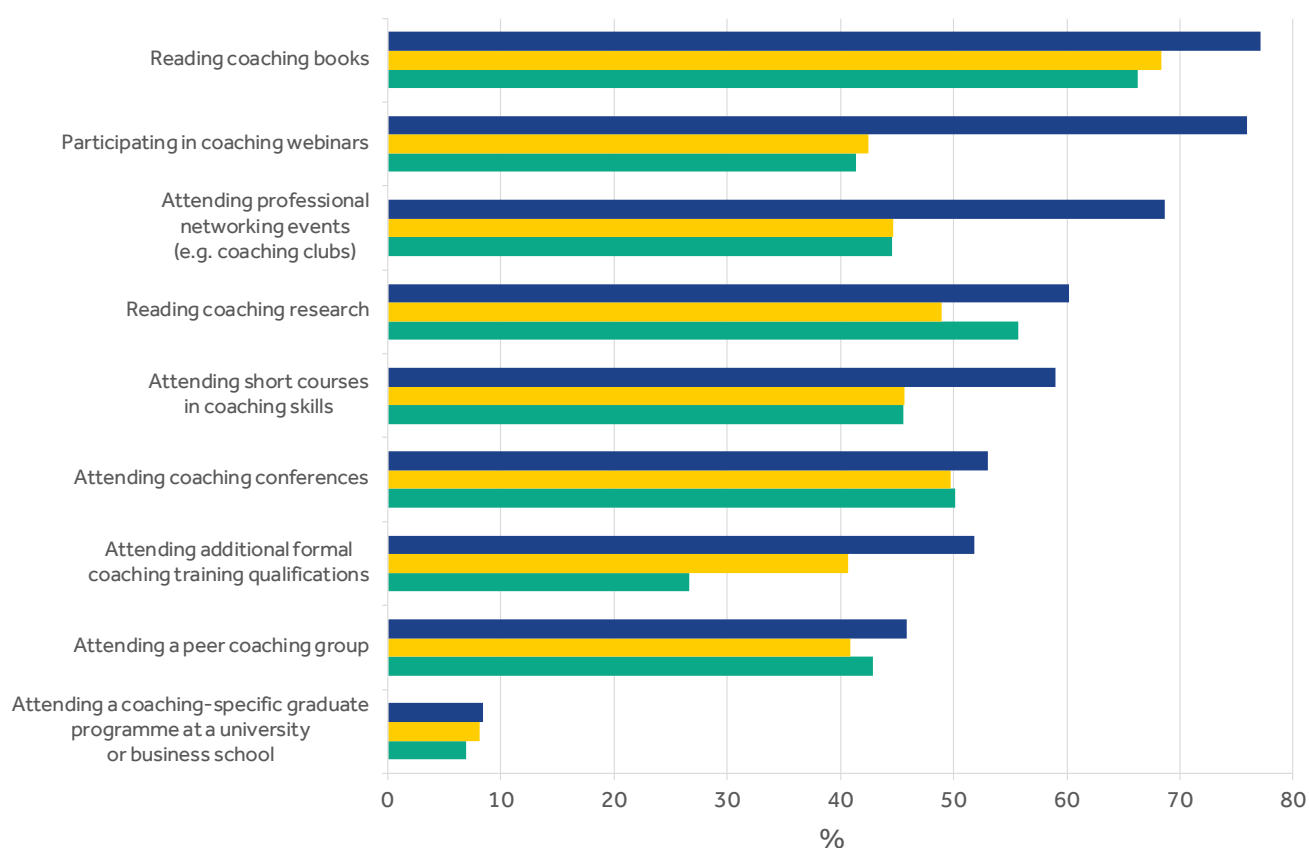


Table 6: Keeping up to date

Options (Participants could select more than one)	%		
	Middle East	Europe (excluding UK)	UK
Reading coaching books	77.1	68.4	66.2
Participating in coaching webinars	75.9	42.5	41.3
Attending professional networking events (e.g. coaching clubs)	68.7	44.7	44.6
Reading coaching research	60.2	48.9	55.7
Attending short courses in coaching skills	59.0	45.6	45.5
Attending coaching conferences	53.0	49.7	50.2
Attending additional formal coaching training qualifications	51.8	40.7	26.6
Attending a peer coaching group	45.8	40.9	42.9
Attending a coaching-specific graduate programme at a university or business school	8.4	8.1	6.9



Coaching practice

The models used by Middle East coaches are similar to those in Europe, but with notable exceptions – specifically in the use of emotional coaching, integrative and systems coaching. Some approaches, such as NLP and transpersonal, are noticeably less popular than in Europe. Evaluation is a feature of coaching, with the most popular methods being a combination of informal review at the end of each session and a more formal review at the end of the assignment. As in Europe, feedback is mostly gathered from clients, with lower engagement

with the commissioning manager. This matches qualitative data where coaches report a lack of consideration as to how coaching can be used to benefit both the individual and the organisation. We expect this to change over the coming five years as commissioning managers follow trends in other countries that have seen a greater focus placed on organisational benefits and the emergence of tripartite contracting (an agreement between the coach, client and the sponsoring organisation representative).



Diagram 7: Conceptual models

Which models do you use in your coaching practice? (Participants could select more than one)

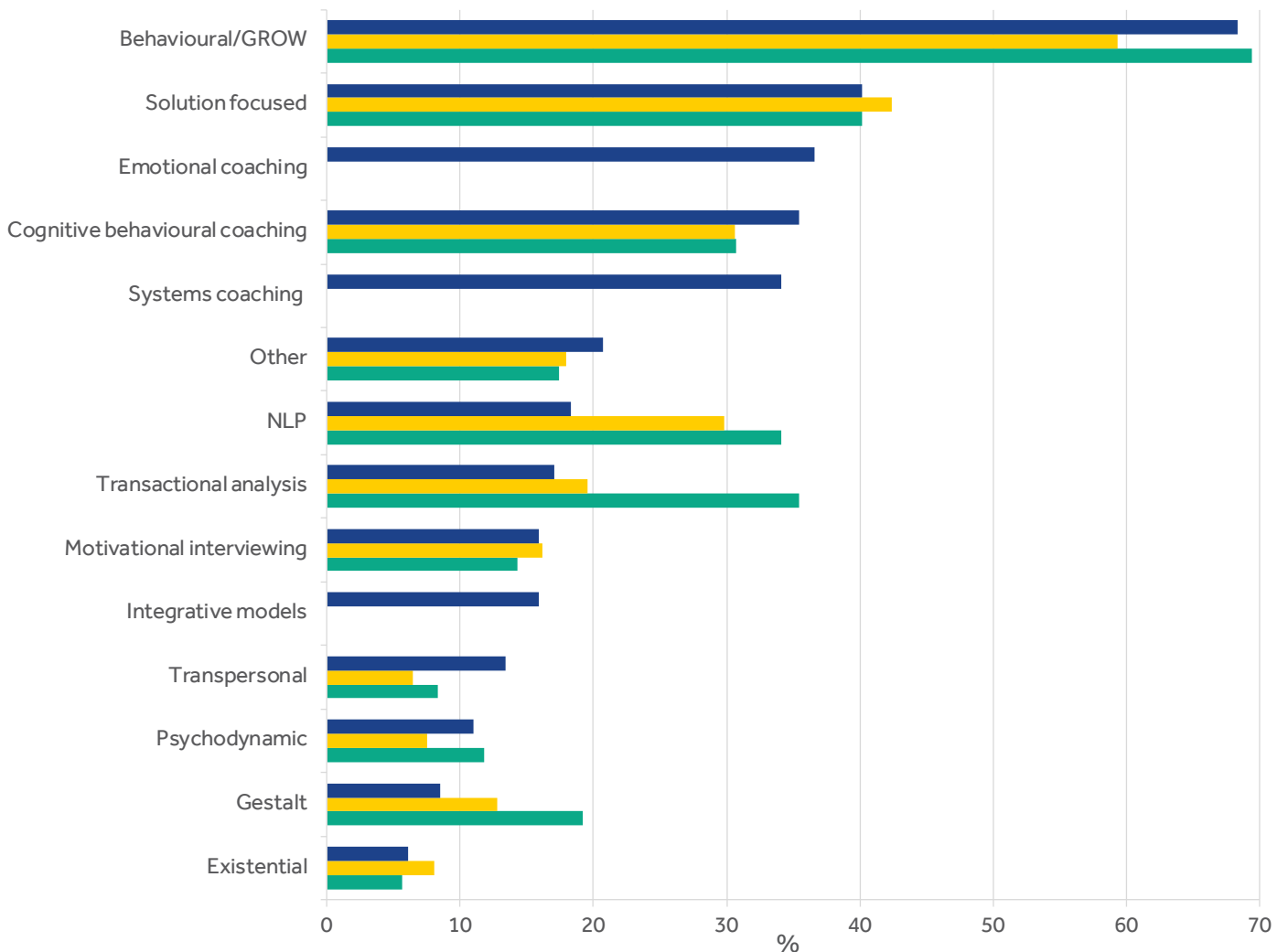




Table 7: Conceptual models

Options (Participants could select more than one)	%		
	Middle East	Europe (excluding UK)	UK
Behavioural/GROW	68.3	59.3	69.4
Solution focused	40.2	42.4	40.2
Emotional coaching	36.6	--	--
Cognitive behavioural coaching	35.4	30.6	30.7
Systems coaching	34.1	--	--
Other	20.7	18.0	17.4
NLP	18.3	29.8	34.1
Transactional analysis	17.1	19.6	35.4
Motivational interviewing	15.9	16.2	14.3
Integrative models	15.9	--	--
Transpersonal	13.4	6.5	8.3
Psychodynamic	11.0	7.5	11.8
Gestalt	8.5	12.8	19.2
Existential	6.1	8.1	5.7

Diagram 8: Evaluating impact

How do you evaluate the impact of your coaching?

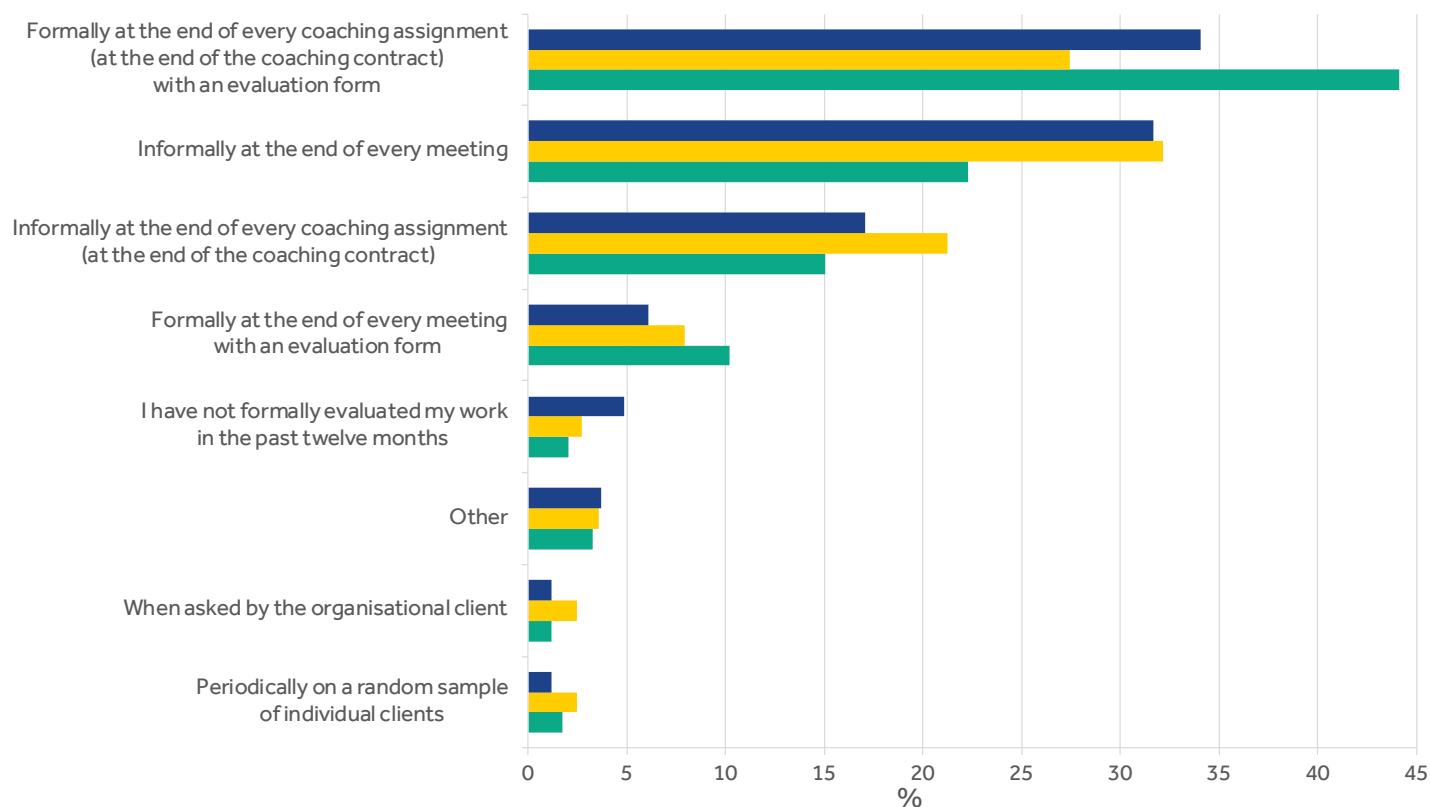


Table 8: Evaluating impact

Options	%		
	Middle East	Europe (excluding UK)	UK
Formally at the end of every coaching assignment (at the end of the coaching contract) with an evaluation form	34.1	27.4	44.2
Informally at the end of every meeting	31.7	32.2	22.3
Informally at the end of every coaching assignment (at the end of the coaching contract)	17.1	21.2	15.1
Formally at the end of every meeting with an evaluation form	6.1	7.9	10.2
I have not formally evaluated my work in the past twelve months	4.9	2.7	2.0
Other	3.7	3.6	3.3
When asked by the organisational client	1.2	2.5	1.2
Periodically on a random sample of individual clients	1.2	2.5	1.8

Diagram 9: Gathering feedback

Who do you gather evaluation feedback from as part of your practice?

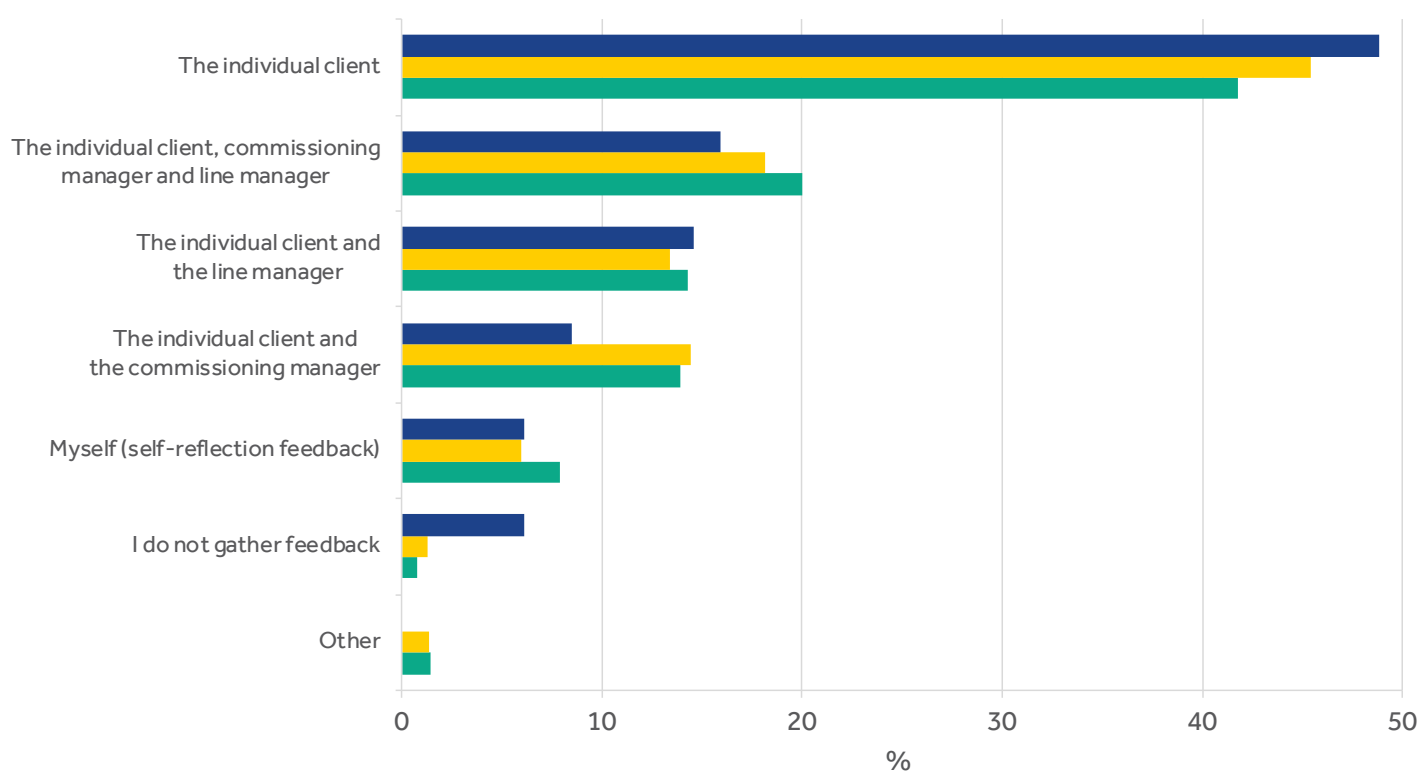


Table 9: Gathering feedback

Options	%		
	Middle East	Europe (excluding UK)	UK
The individual client	48.8	45.4	41.8
The individual client, commissioning manager and line manager	15.9	18.1	20.0
The individual client and the line manager	14.6	13.4	14.3
The individual client and the commissioning manager	8.5	14.4	13.9
Myself (self-reflection feedback)	6.1	6.0	7.9
I do not gather feedback	6.1	1.3	0.8
Other	0.0	1.3	1.4

Diagram 10: The primary client

Who do you believe is the primary client when you are delivering corporate/organisational coaching?

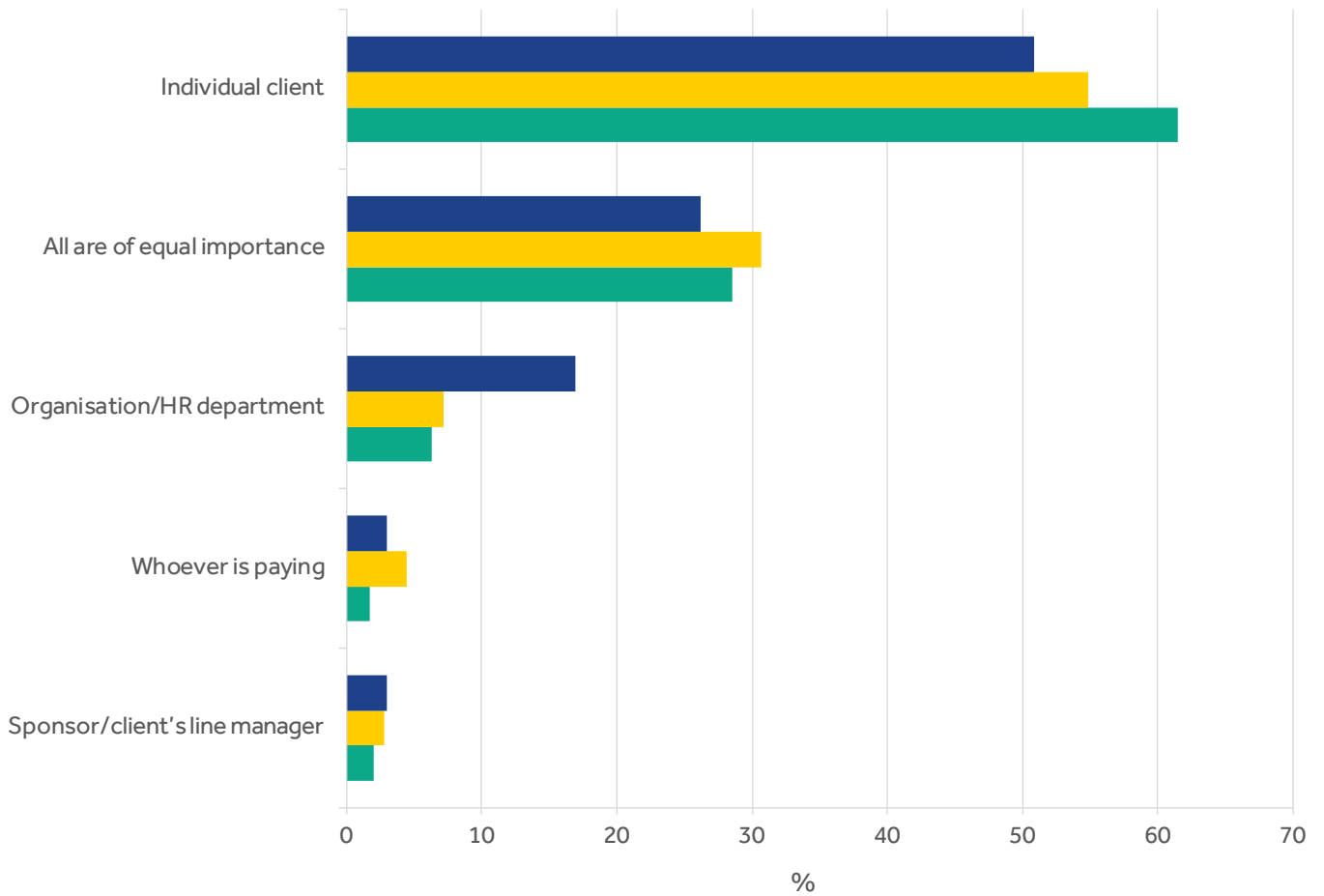


Table 10: The primary client

Options	%		
	Middle East	Europe (excluding UK)	UK
Individual client	50.9	54.9	61.5
All are of equal importance	26.2	30.6	28.5
Organisation/HR department	16.9	7.2	6.3
Whoever is paying	3.0	4.5	1.7
Sponsor/client's line manager	3.0	2.8	2.0

Contracting and ethical practice

Contracting and ethical practice are important but often underresearched parts of coaching practice. The data suggests that most coaches view the individual as the most important client, although the HR department was seen as more important in the Middle East compared with the UK and Europe. Contractual terms were similar to UK and European responses, as seen in Diagrams 11 and 12. The stronger focus on ethical practice is interesting, with over 80% of respondents reporting they shared the ethical code and one in four of coaches giving clients a copy at the start of the coaching conversation.

Based on additional qualitative interviews with coaches in the Middle East, the findings on ethical practice were supported. All participants agreed that ethical conduct is very important. For the coaches, being ethical means being professional, honest, clear, upfront and 'walking the talk'. In our follow-up interviews, many coaches discussed how they had lost clients due to an ethical issue, such as when a coach encountered a conflict of interest with a client. In these cases, the coach prioritised the code of ethics over the client.

Diagram 11: Contract clauses – Individual client agreements

What aspects are explicitly included in your contract with the individual?

(Participants could select more than one)

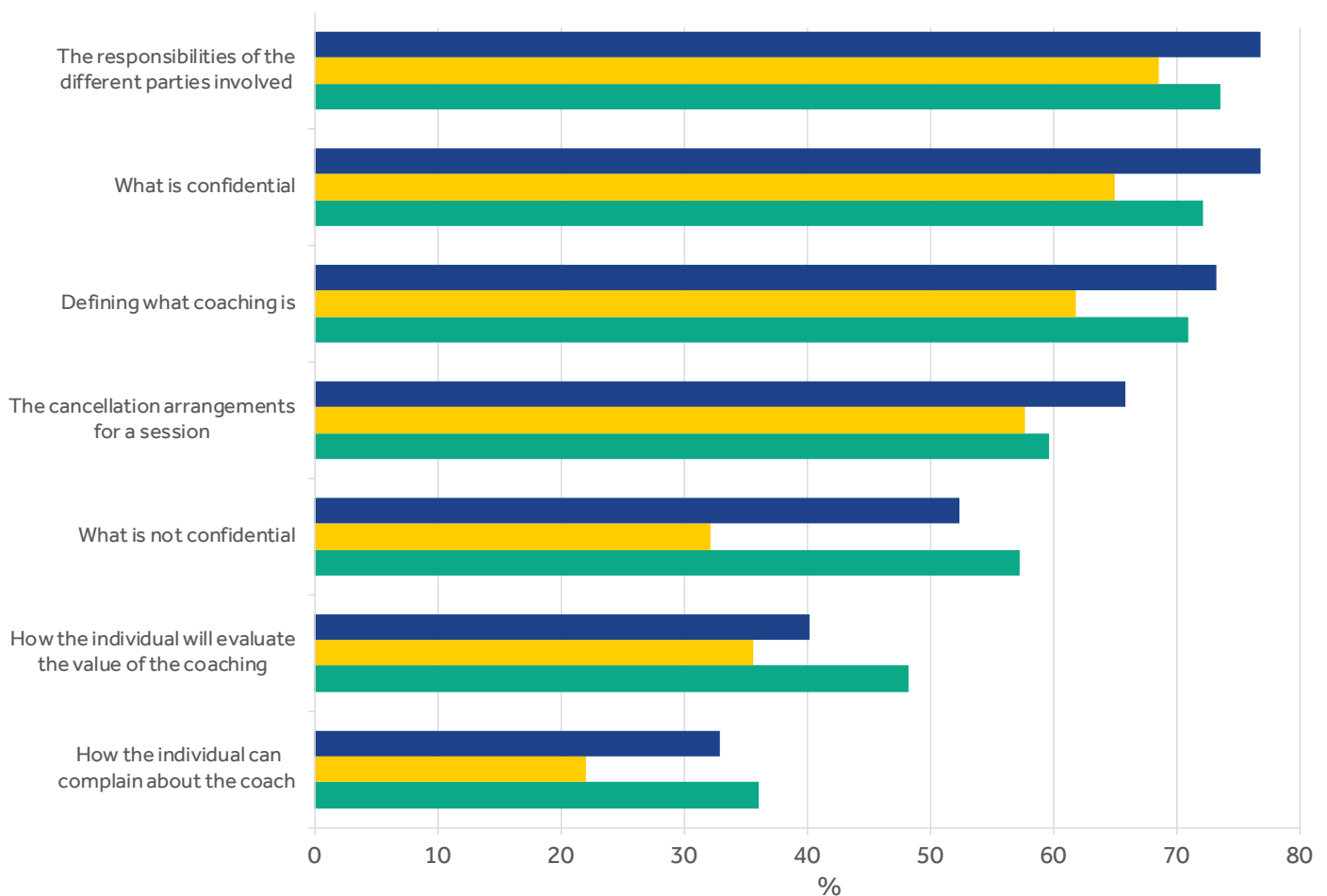


Table 11: Contract clauses – Individual client agreements

Options (Participants could select more than one)	%		
	Middle East	Europe (excluding UK)	UK
The responsibilities of the different parties involved	76.8	68.6	73.6
What is confidential	76.8	65.0	72.1
Defining what coaching is	73.2	61.8	71.0
The cancellation arrangements for a session	65.9	57.7	59.6
What is not confidential	52.4	32.2	57.3
How the individual will evaluate the value of the coaching	40.2	35.6	48.3
How the individual can complain about the coach	32.9	22.1	36.1



Diagram 12: Contract clauses – Organisational client agreements

What aspects are explicitly included in your contract with the organisation?

(Participants could select more than one)

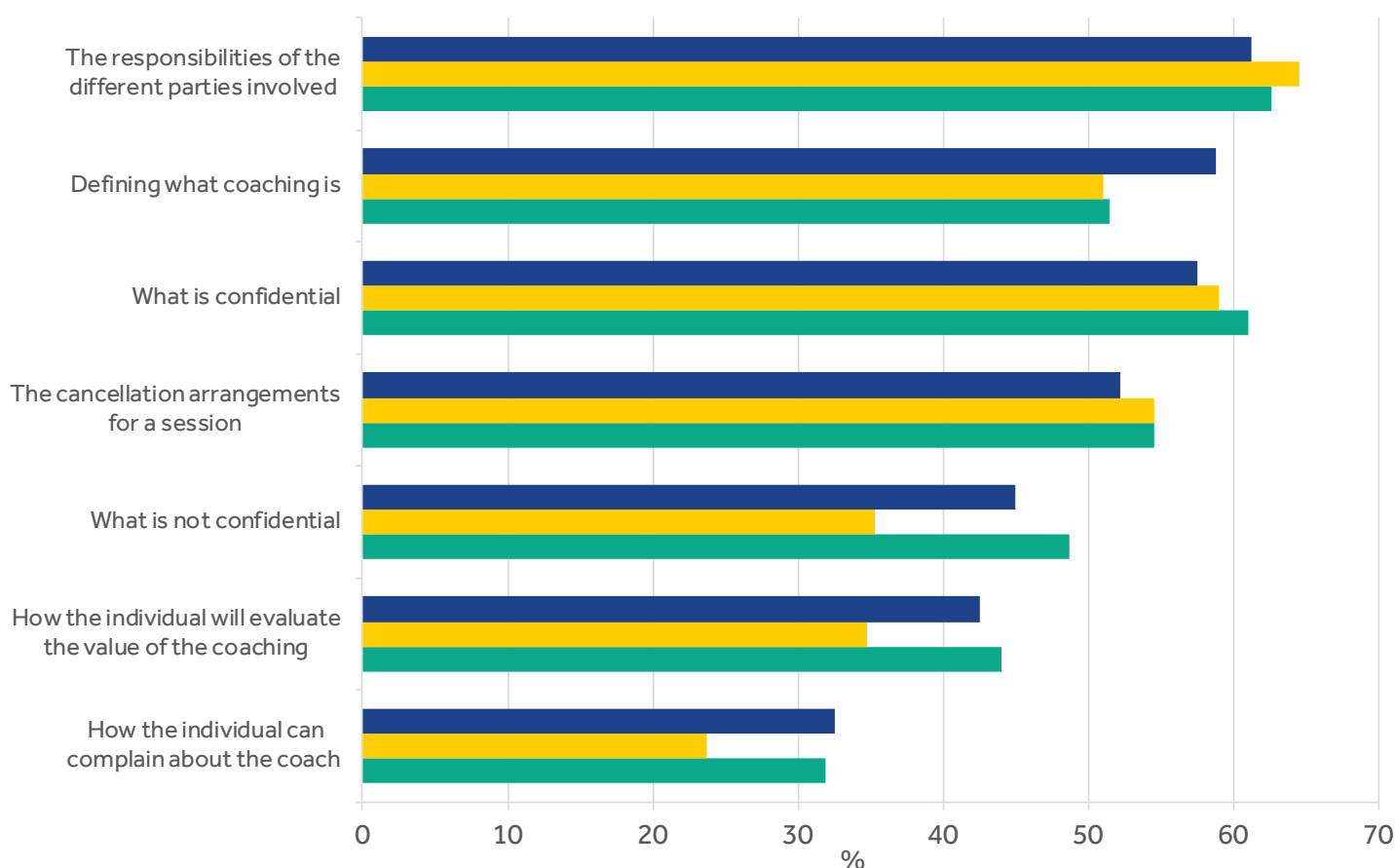


Table 12: Contract clauses – Organisational client agreements

Options (Participants could select more than one)	%		
	Middle East	Europe (excluding UK)	UK
The responsibilities of the different parties involved	61.3	64.6	62.7
Defining what coaching is	58.8	51.0	51.4
What is confidential	57.5	59.0	61.1
The cancellation arrangements for a session	52.2	54.6	54.6
What is not confidential	45.0	35.3	48.7
How the individual will evaluate the value of the coaching	42.5	34.8	44.1
How the individual can complain about the coach	32.5	23.7	31.9

Diagram 13: Sharing ethical codes – 1

Do you share your ethical codes with individual clients?

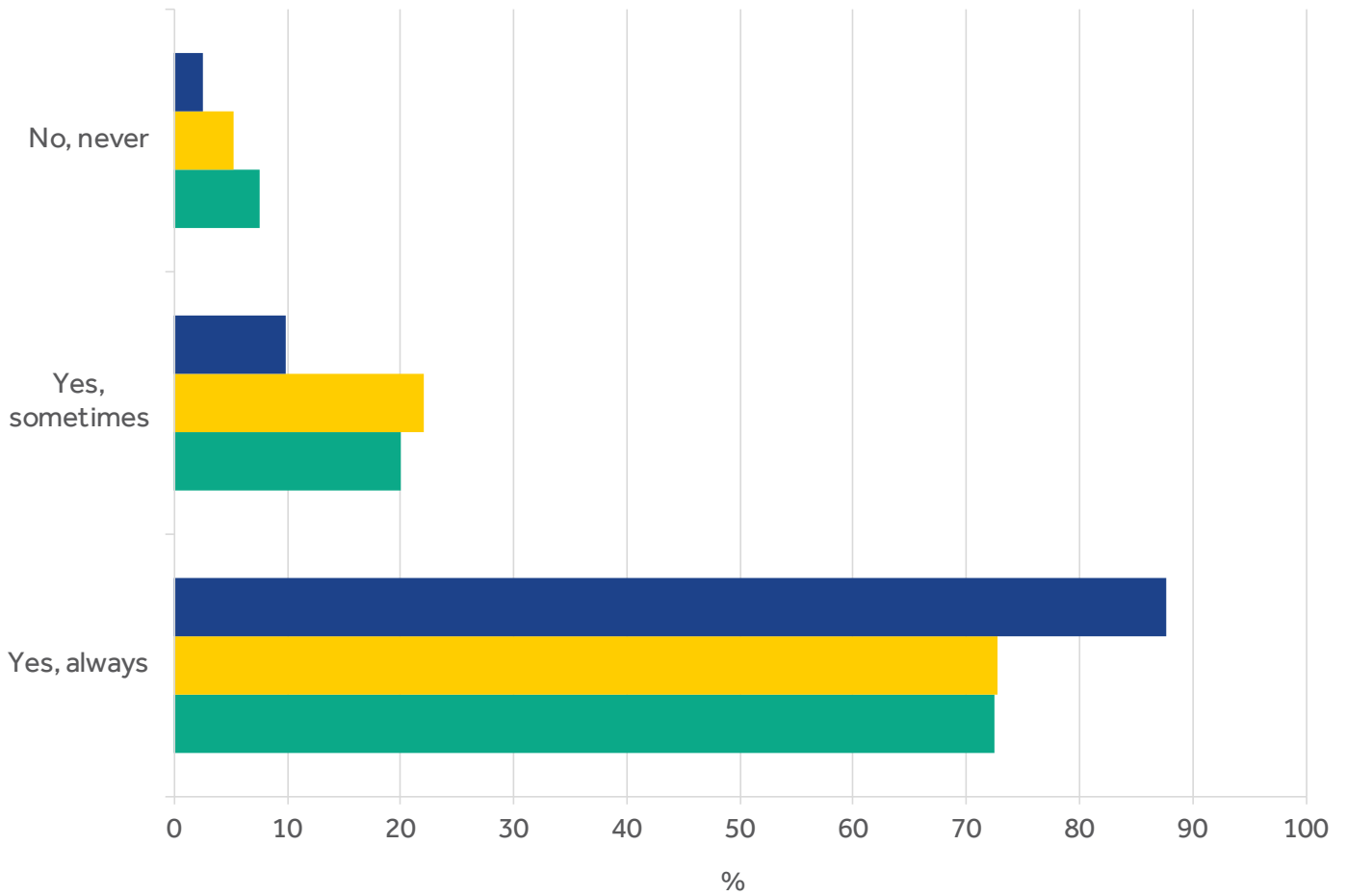


Table 13: Sharing ethical codes – 1

Options	%		
	Middle East	Europe (excluding UK)	UK
No, never	2.5	5.3	7.5
Yes, sometimes	9.9	22.0	20.1
Yes, always	87.7	72.7	72.4

Diagram 14: Sharing ethical codes – 2

How do you share your ethical codes with individual clients?

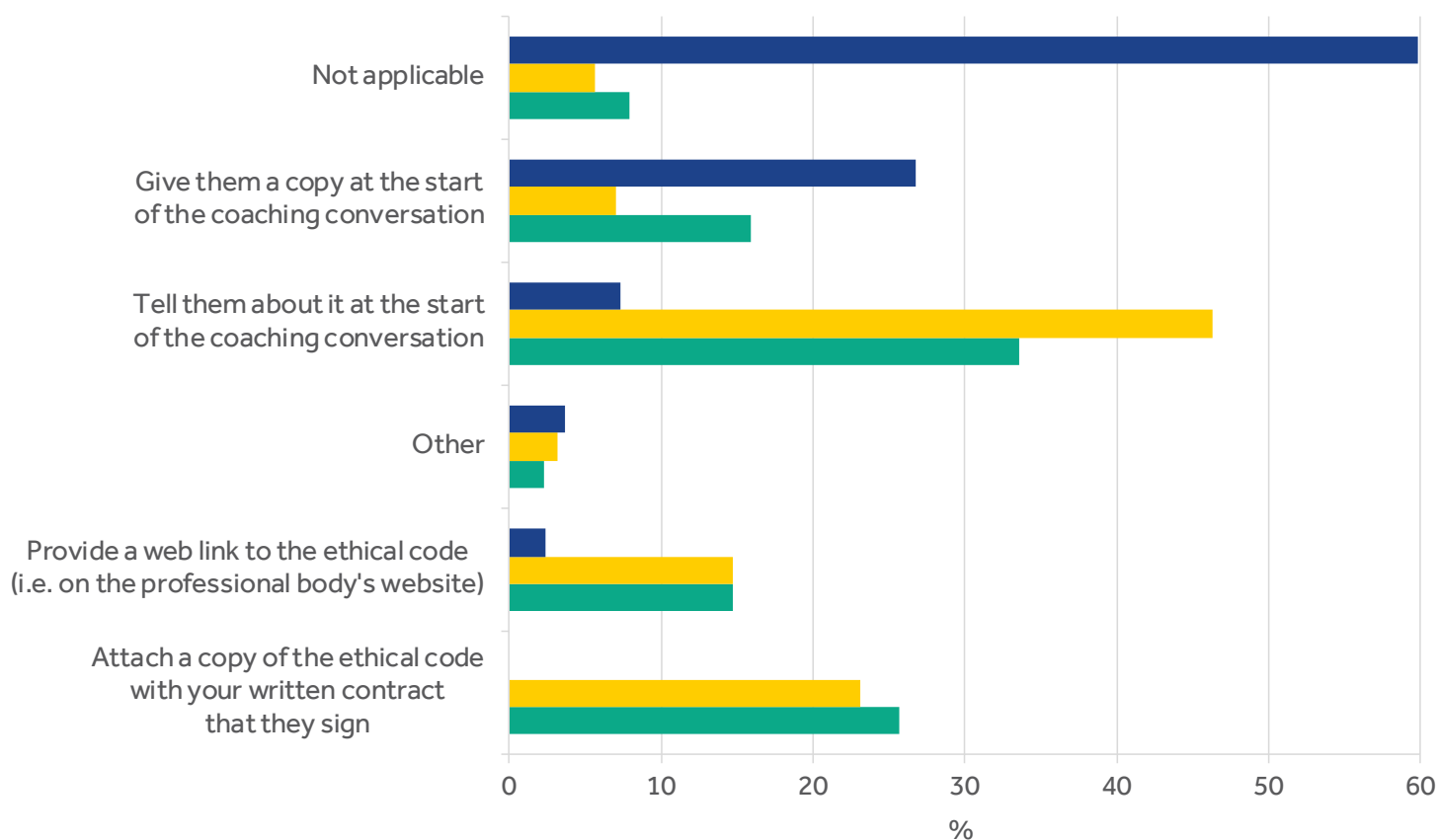


Table 14: Sharing ethical codes – 2

Options	%		
	Middle East	Europe (excluding UK)	UK
Not applicable	59.8	5.7	7.9
Give them a copy at the start of the coaching conversation	26.8	7.1	15.9
Tell them about it at the start of the coaching conversation	7.3	46.3	33.6
Other	3.7	3.1	2.3
Provide a web link to the ethical code (i.e. on the professional body's website)	2.4	14.7	14.7
Attach a copy of the ethical code with your written contract that they sign	0.0	23.1	25.7

Commissioning coaching

Coach commissioners

Coach commissioners are individuals within organisations who are charged with the responsibility for commissioning coaching. The voice of this group is less well researched than others, with a low response rate. Caution should thus be used when reviewing these figures.

When selecting a coach, commissioning managers placed the highest priority on coach qualifications of the individual coach, closely followed by membership

of a professional body. These factors suggest a growing professionalisation, although qualitative data suggests this process is slow and more needs to be done to educate commissioners on the nature and purpose of coaching.

Respondents noted the three most significant factors for using coaching within their organisations were: to add self-awareness, to help drive business performance and to improve measurable business outcomes.

Diagram 15: Criteria in coach selection

When commissioning coaching, what are the most important factors?

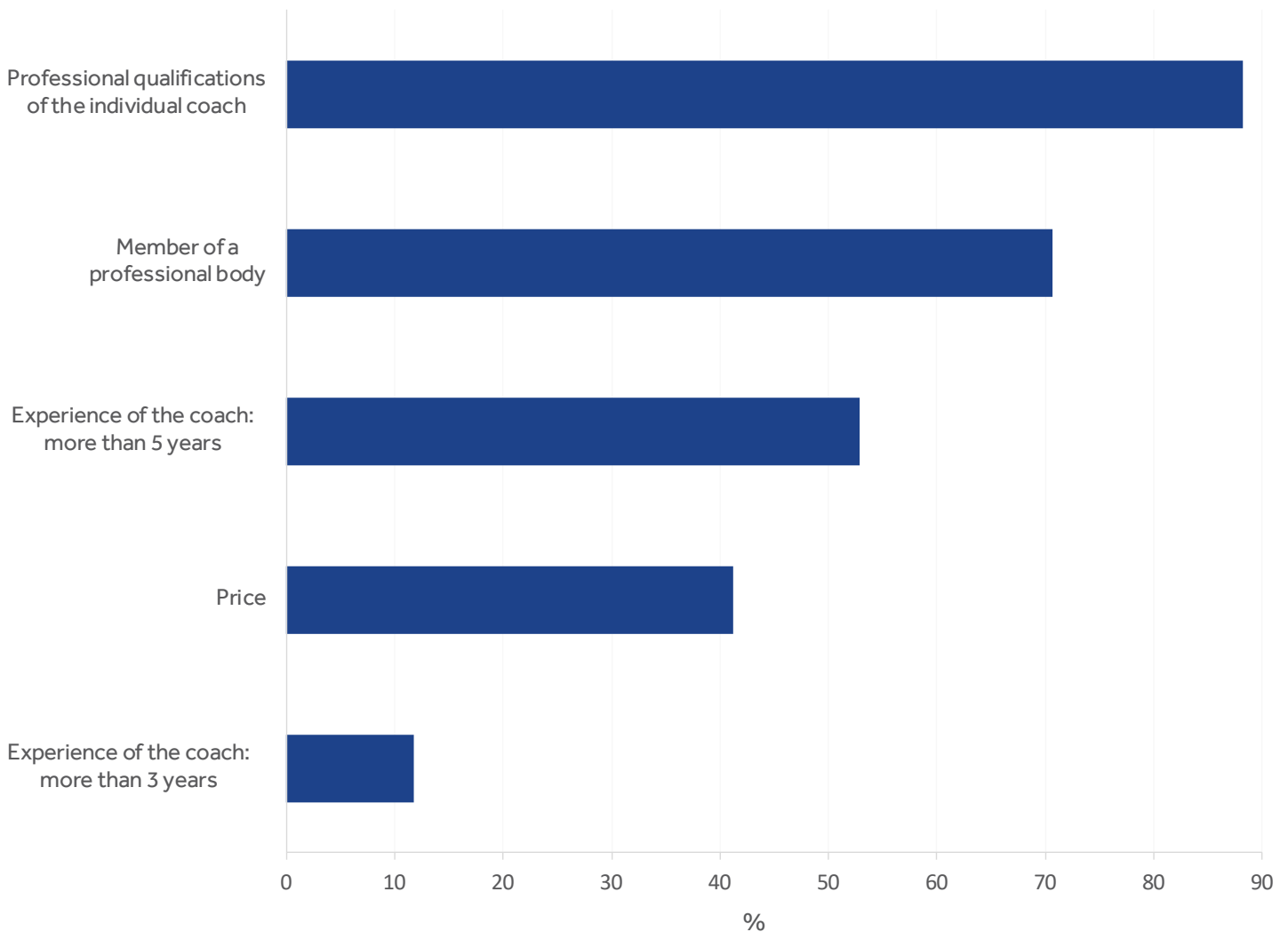
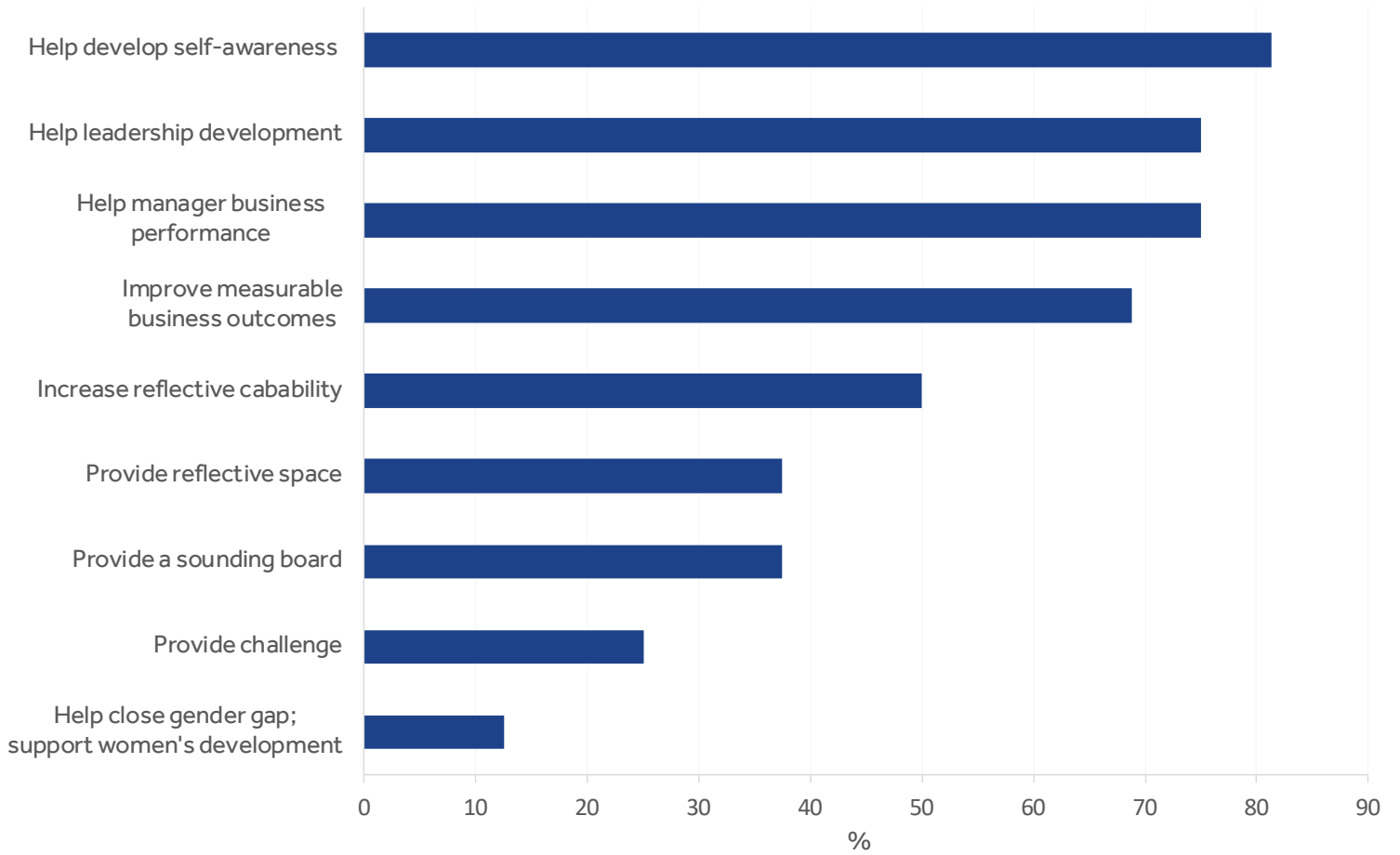


Diagram 16: Organisational benefits of coaching

Why do you use coaching in your organisation?





Team coaching

Team coaching has grown in popularity in Europe in the past five years. In this research of the Middle East, respondents believe team coaching can be a useful contribution to helping teams deal with change, improve collective working and improve team alignment with business strategy. Around a quarter of respondents believed there would be a large increase in expenditure on team coaching during the coming year, reflecting similar growth in Europe.

Diagram 17: The benefits of team coaching

What benefit does team coaching offer?

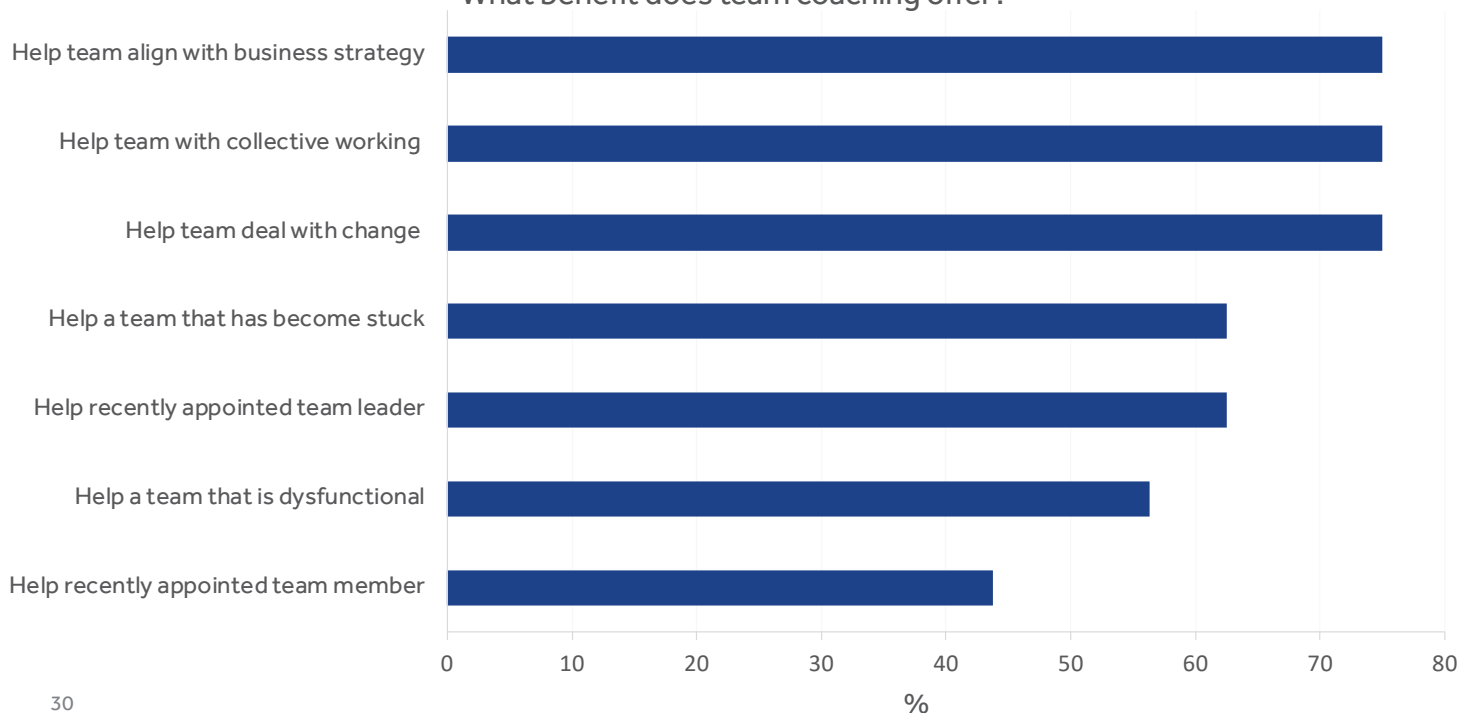




Diagram 18: The growing use of team coaching

What role do you see for team coaching in the coming year?

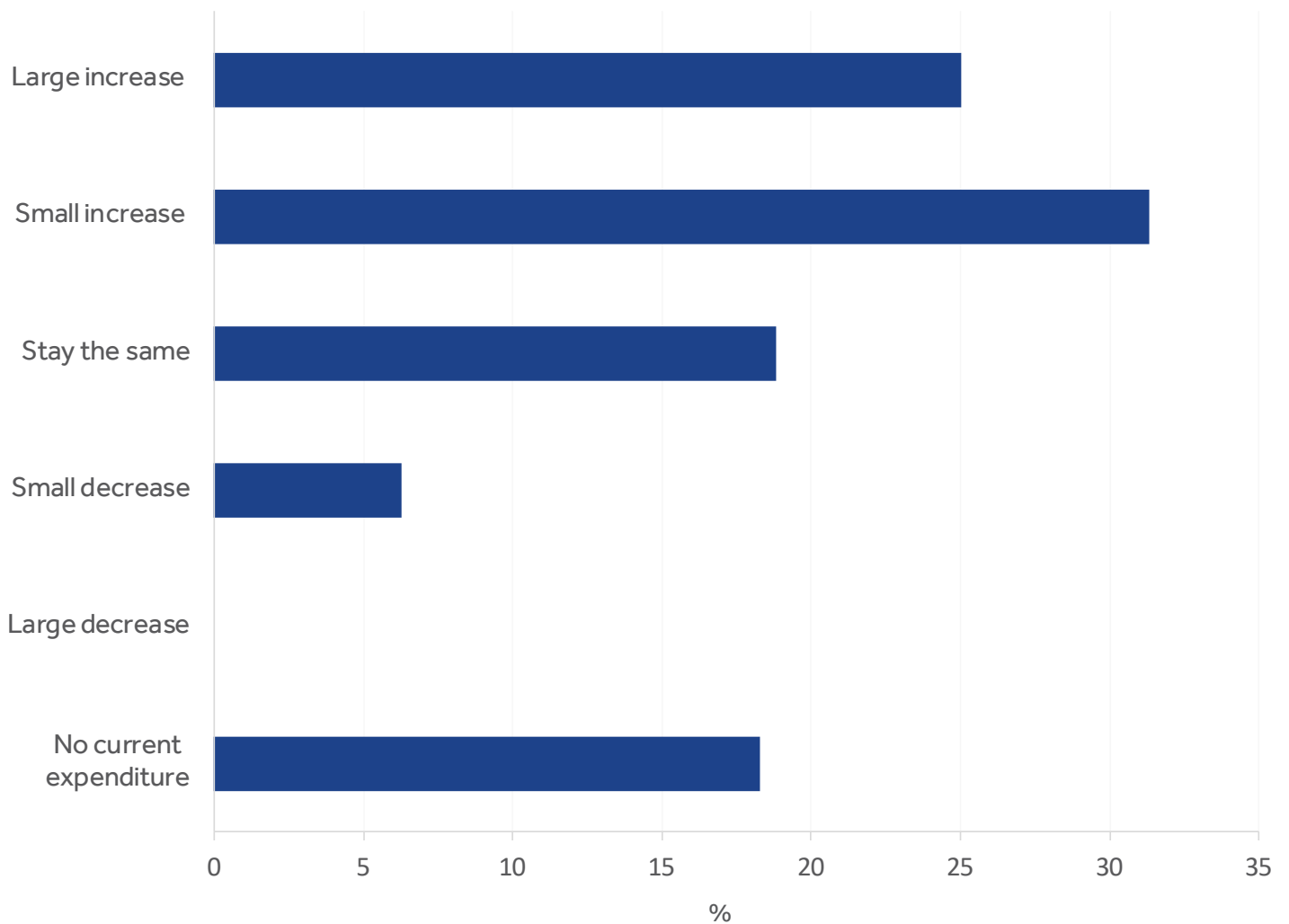




Diagram 19: Coaching rates

What rates do you pay for different coaching assignments?

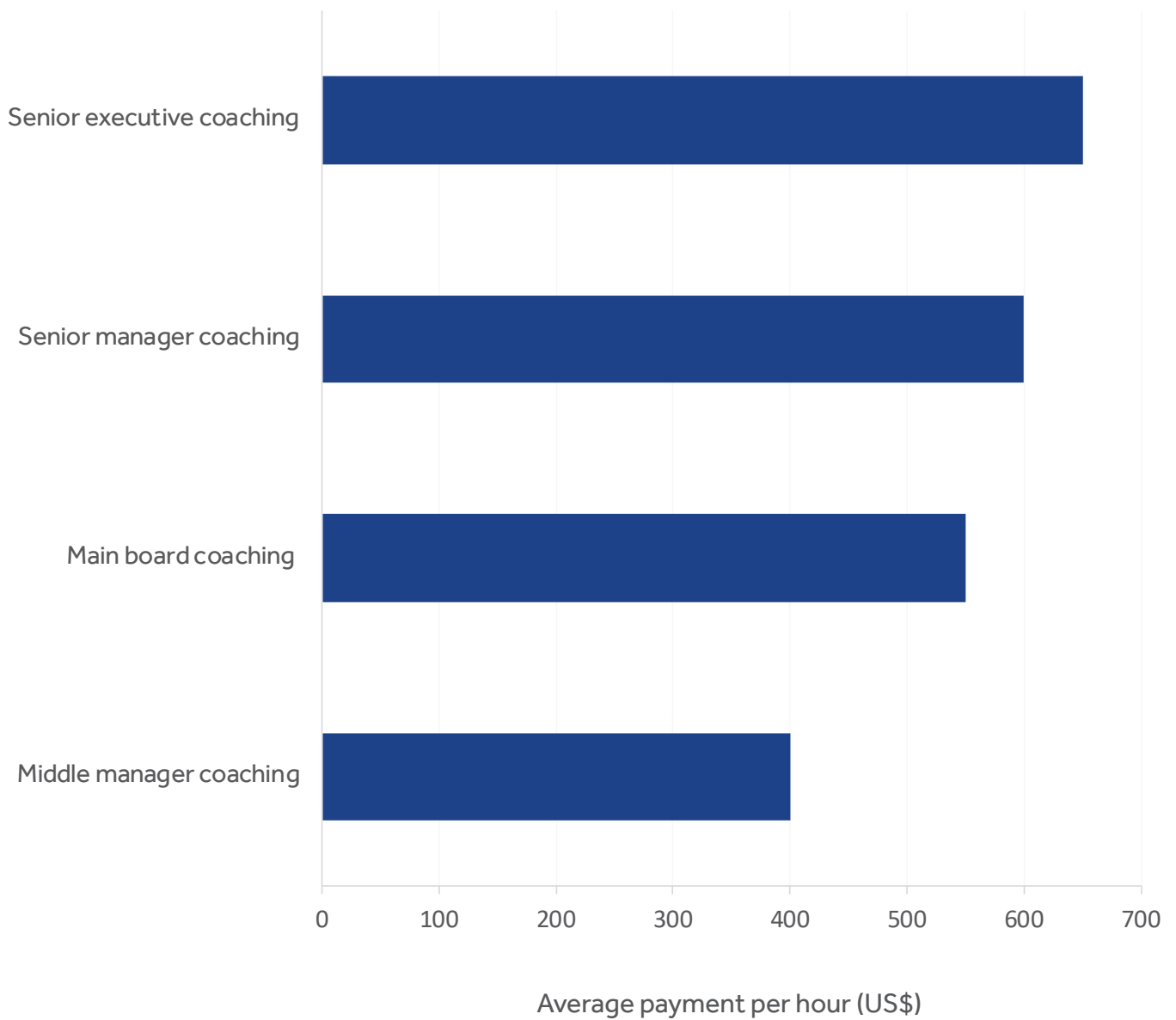
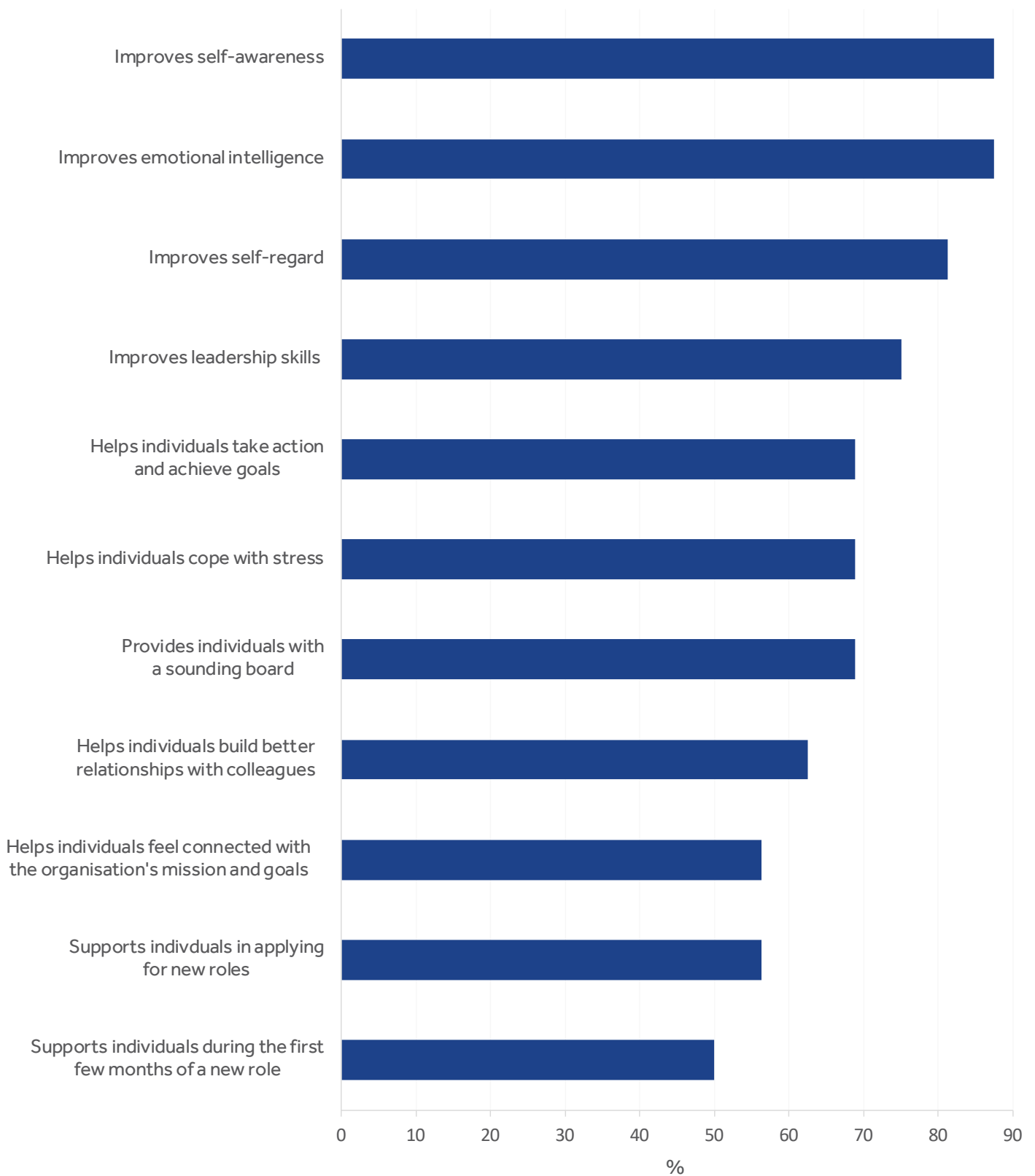


Diagram 20: Benefit to individual employees

In what ways do you believe coaching helps your individual employees?



Internal coaching

Internal coaching remains a very small portion of the Middle East coaching market. The development of internal coaching teams, however, is now a widely used practice in European and North American companies. We were interested to observe whether commissioning managers were also interested in its potential. The decline in the response rate for these questions suggests that interest levels are currently low.

Diagram 21: The benefits of internal coaches

What benefits does having internal coaches offer your organisation?

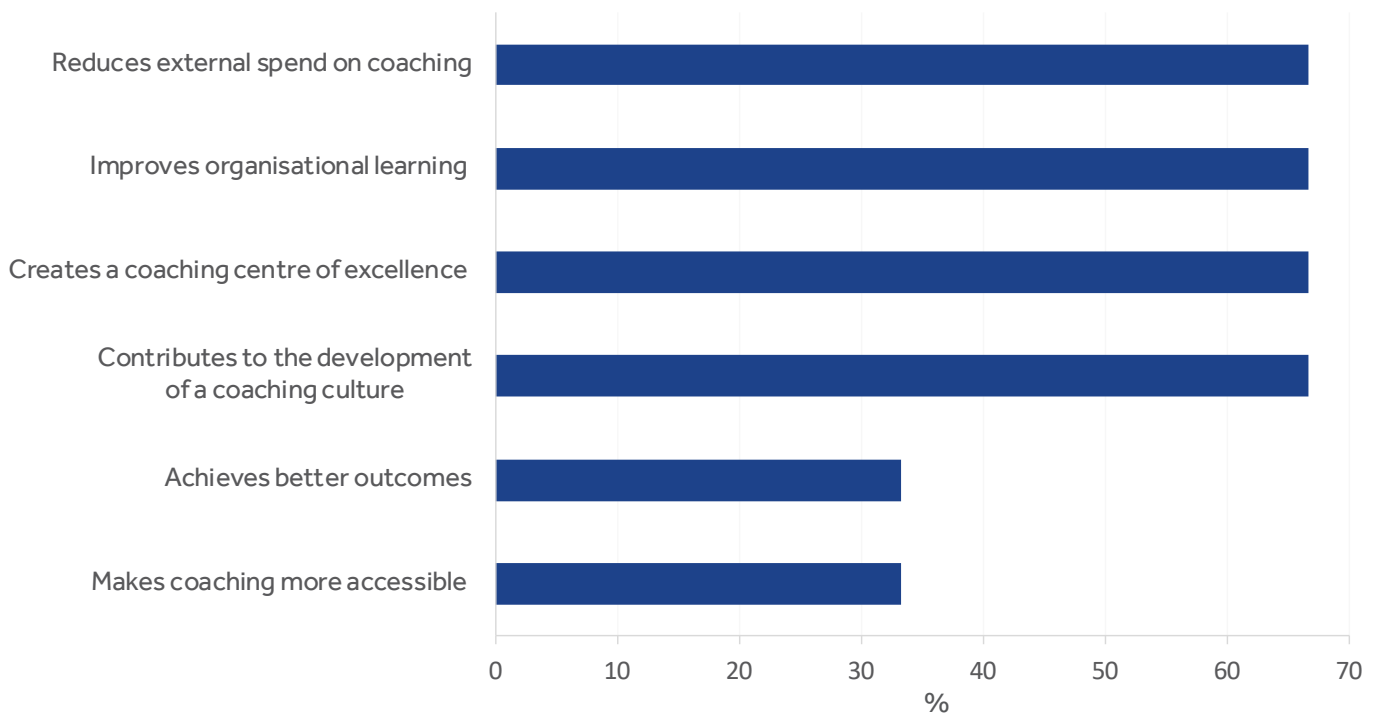
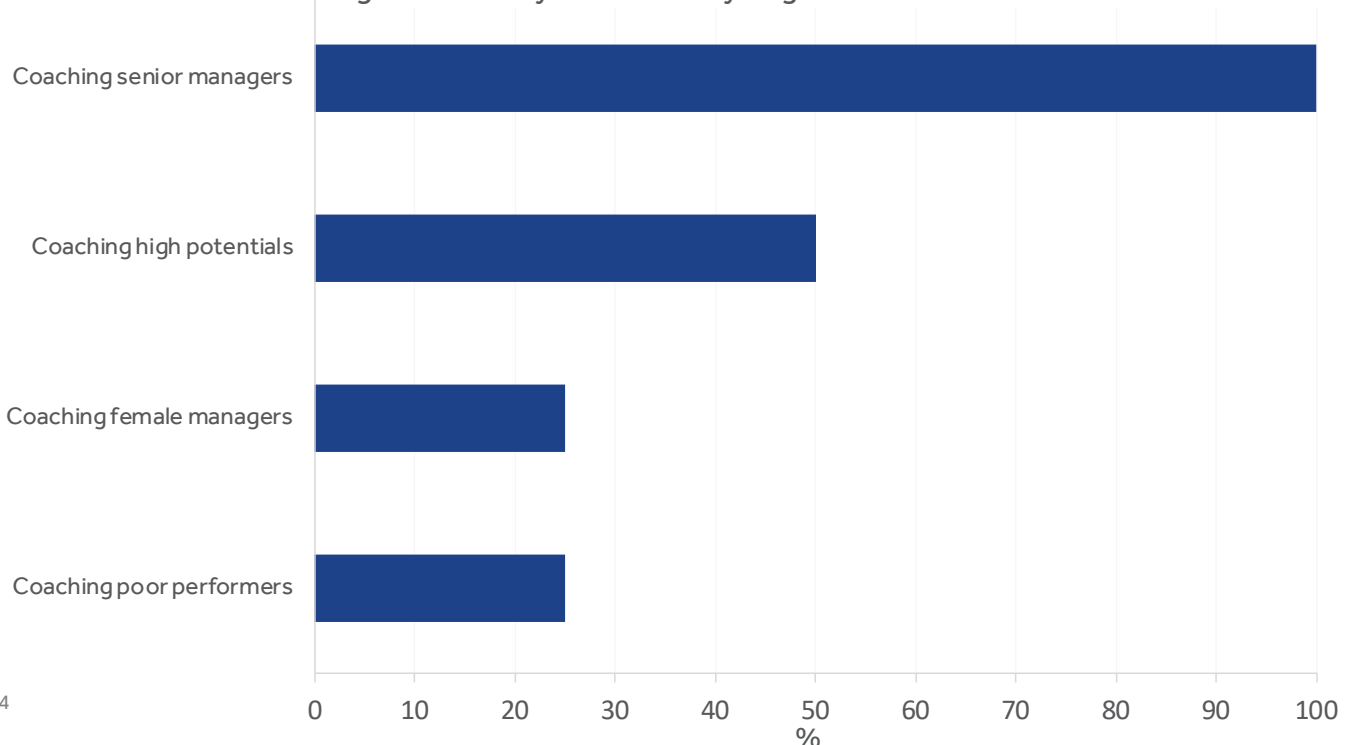


Diagram 22: Assignment allocation

What assignments are you more likely to give to internal coaches?



Conclusion

We hope this first research report examining the development of coaching and its practice in the Middle East will stimulate debate among national ICF chapters and the wider coaching community. We also hope it will enhance individual and organisational understanding of coaching and its potential as a tool to support the development of individual and economic growth across the region.

The evidence from this research suggests coaching is growing rapidly, with new coaching communities emerging across the region. Organisations and national bodies responsible for economic growth are waking up to the role coaching can play as a tool to support transformational change.

Thank you...

We would like to thank all those who participated in the research, and the ICF Chapters in the region who promoted the research to their coaching networks.

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