

GROW Coaching as a Strategy to Enhance Personal Commitment in Professional Development a Literature Study

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Abstract

Professional development requires not only technical competence and increased knowledge, but also a strong personal commitment to achieving long-term goals. In various professional contexts, individuals often experience difficulties in maintaining consistency, motivation, and responsibility for their self-development and career. Therefore, an effective coaching approach is needed to strengthen individual commitment on an ongoing basis. This study aims to analyze the role of the GROW coaching model as a strategy in increasing personal commitment to professional development through a literature study approach. The study used a qualitative descriptive method with a narrative literature review approach through a review of various scientific journals, books, and academic publications related to GROW coaching, personal commitment, self-awareness, and professional development. The results of the study indicate that the GROW model, consisting of Goal, Reality, Options, and Will, contributes significantly to the formation of self-awareness, intrinsic motivation, a sense of responsibility, and ownership of personal goals. The "Will" stage in particular plays a crucial role in encouraging individuals to transform intentions into concrete actions and ongoing commitment. Furthermore, the literature shows that commitment tends to be stronger when solutions and action plans emerge from an individual's own awareness rather than from external direction. This study concludes that the GROW coaching model is not only a communication framework for coaching practice, but also a strategic development approach capable of strengthening personal commitment in professional and organizational contexts. This research also provides theoretical and practical implications for leadership, human resource development, education, and professional coaching practice.

Keywords:

GROW Coaching, Personal Commitment, Professional Development

INTRODUCTION

Professional development is a crucial pillar that determines not only the periodic escalation of individual competencies but also the sustainability of organizational performance in an era of dynamic global competition. Amidst the changing landscape of the modern industrial landscape, human resources are required to adapt beyond merely mastering technical (hard skills) and purely academic skills. Furthermore, the long-term effectiveness of this development process requires a solid psychological foundation in the form of a strong personal commitment to ensure the sustainable realization of each capacity-building target. Without this internal commitment, various organizationally initiated training programs tend to be merely formalities without a substantial transformative impact on individual performance.

However, the reality in various professional contexts demonstrates a contradictory phenomenon, where many individuals experience significant obstacles in maintaining consistency in their actions. Fluctuating motivation, loss of focus, and a low sense of personal responsibility for an independent career roadmap are common obstacles frequently encountered in organizational dynamics. Many practitioners identify that the failure to absorb new competencies is not caused by cognitive limitations, but rather by the fragility of individual persistence when faced with work obstacles. This stagnant state reinforces the thesis that true professional success is not a purely capability-based mechanism, but rather strongly correlates with the degree of personal commitment instilled in employees.

Theoretically, personal commitment reflects the depth of sincerity, integrity, and willingness of individuals to consistently actualize predetermined goals. Individuals who internalize a high level of commitment have been shown to possess more stable intrinsic motivational anchors, strong self-discipline, and excellent psychological resilience in mitigating stress and challenges during professional transitions. Conversely, a massive deviation or reduction in this aspect of commitment can lead to a decline in work enthusiasm, a degradation of performance consistency, and ultimately, a low achievement of strategic targets at both the personal and institutional levels. Therefore, the need for an intervention instrument capable of constructing and cementing individual commitment in a sustainable manner is a non-negotiable urgency.

In the discourse of human resource management and industrial psychology, the coaching approach is slowly shifting the traditional instructional paradigm and is being widely adopted as a strategic methodology for leadership acceleration, educational restructuring, and professional development (**Grant, 2006**). One coaching formulation that enjoys high popularity and has been tested for its application is the GROW model, designed by John Whitmore (**Whitmore, 2010**). The GROW framework integrates four logical and circular stages: goal setting (Goal), factual reality mapping (Reality), articulation of alternative solutions (Options), and confirmation of follow-up intentions (Will). This model works by stimulating increased self-awareness, inducing independent problem-solving exploration, and triggering the crystallization of bottom-up commitment.

Academic debate regarding the effectiveness of coaching generally centers on the extent to which external interventions can change internal human behavior. Conventional literature claims that coaching is effective in boosting self-awareness, increasing job satisfaction, and significantly boosting daily productivity (Theeboom et al., 2014). However, other academics criticize coaching, which is often perceived as overly focused on achieving short-term, mechanistic

performance while neglecting the reconstruction of deeper psychological aspects, such as long-term affective commitment. This differing perspective has sparked a broad discussion about how structured communication models like GROW can penetrate the realm of strengthening individual psychological character.

Through a thorough review of previous research, a significant research gap has been identified on this topic. The first gap stems from the fact that the majority of coaching research remains heavily biased toward aggregate organizational performance and the achievement of macro business targets (**Grant, 2011**). while in-depth exploration of the formation of personal commitment structures at the micro-individual level remains neglected. Interventions are often measured solely by quantitative productivity metrics, without examining how a sense of task ownership is rooted in employee cognition.

The second research gap lies in the focus of the GROW model itself. Most literature examining Whitmore's framework tends to treat it as merely a tactical communication technique, a managerial instrument, or a normative supervisory leadership style (McCarthy & Milner, 2011). Consequently, comprehensive and integrative analyses of the psychological adaptation process and internal motivational metamorphosis that underlie the formation of personal commitment through the GROW stages are rarely explored. Third, there is a dearth of studies that specifically connect the implementation of GROW coaching with professional development, viewed directly from the perspective of increasing personal commitment.

The novelty of this research lies in its theoretical reconstruction, which positions the GROW model not simply as a communication tool or practical problem-solving tool, but as a strategic psychological intervention system capable of transforming extrinsic motivation into autonomous personal commitment within the professional development ecosystem. This research offers a new conceptual synthesis that links each mechanical phase of GROW—from vision formulation to plan execution—with indicators of individual psychological empowerment such as ownership, intrinsic motivation, and personal accountability.

Based on the background and identification of the academic gaps mentioned above, this research was specifically designed with a clear objective. The objective is to conduct an in-depth and comprehensive analysis of the strategic role of the GROW coaching model as an effective methodology for escalating individual personal commitment in the realm of professional development through a critical literature review approach.

By achieving this objective, this research is expected to bridge the existing theoretical fragmentation and provide a valid, applicable framework for stakeholders in the corporate sector, education, and human resource development practitioners.

METHODS

This research adopted a qualitative approach through a literature study, specifically known as a narrative literature review. The choice of a qualitative approach was based on theoretical considerations, as the primary focus of this research involves the exploration of abstract concepts, in-depth interpretations of organizational psychology theories, and the synthesis of various academic perspectives examining the interaction between coaching and the formation of personal commitment. By utilizing this method, the researcher aims to gain a more substantial, multi-perspective, and fundamental understanding of how the internal mechanisms of the GROW coaching model directly contribute to increasing personal commitment in subjects across various professional clusters.

The narrative literature review methodology is considered the most representative because the research's orientation goes beyond merely compiling or inventorying data from previous research. Furthermore, this method demands a critical, incisive, and integrative conceptual analysis of the patterns of relationships between the variables being studied. This narrative approach provides researchers with theoretical flexibility to integrate a variety of relevant macro theories, meso concepts, and micro findings, enabling them to formulate new, more complete, robust, and comprehensive conclusions and theoretical foundations regarding the phenomena studied, particularly for topics requiring conceptual strengthening.

The primary data set for this research was collected secondary from various reputable academic publications, including national and international scientific journals, authoritative reference books, scientific seminar proceedings, analytical articles, and other official academic documents examining the themes of coaching, personal commitment, and professional development. To ensure academic quality and minimize the risk of information bias, a rigorous literature search process was conducted through exploration of several credible and well-indexed global academic databases, such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and ScienceDirect. This database selection step served as a quality control instrument to ensure that all data and references cited had a reliable degree of theoretical validity.

The document search strategy in this research employed a series of specific keywords designed to align with the study's focus. The keywords applied included: GROW coaching, personal commitment, professional development, coaching effectiveness, intrinsic motivation, self-awareness, and coaching models. Rather than relying solely on single terminology, the researchers also formulated specific keyword combinations using Boolean operators to achieve more precise and narrow search results, including: "GROW coaching and commitment," "coaching for professional development," and "personal commitment in coaching."

Regarding the temporal limitations of the data, the literature that made it to the final curation stage was dominated by publications published within the last ten to fifteen years. This timeline limitation was deliberately implemented as a strategic effort to ensure that all arguments, findings, and analyses presented in this article maintain high contextual relevance to the dynamics of modern coaching models and the real challenges of contemporary professional development. However, the researcher still made logical exceptions by retaining several classic works categorized as grounded theory as the main theoretical foundation, particularly those directly related to the genealogy of Whitmore's (Whitmore, 2010) GROW coaching model and Meyer and Allen's organizational commitment theory (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

To maintain the objectivity of the selection, the researcher established strict parameters by applying inclusion and exclusion criteria to each document collected. On the one hand, the inclusion criteria, which required articles to be reviewed further, included: (1) literature that explicitly dissects coaching models, particularly variants of the GROW model; (2) literature that thoroughly examines the variable of personal commitment or aspects of intrinsic motivation; (3) literature that places its object of study within the corridors of professional development, leadership, and HR management; and (4) scholarly articles or books that offer strong theoretical relevance to the main topic. On the other hand, exclusion criteria were applied to eliminate: (1) literature that deviates from the main topic of coaching or commitment; (2) articles that lack a

traceable and clear identity and track record of academic sources; and (3) populist publications that merely contain subjective opinions without adequate theoretical support.

The data analysis process in this study was carried out systematically through four main stages. The first stage was literature identification, an initial screening phase in which researchers collected material and carefully read the titles, abstracts, and keywords of each document to ensure thematic alignment with the research direction. The second stage, thematic classification, saw all literature that passed the selection process structured into more specific sub-themes, such as the GROW coaching concept cluster, personal commitment cluster, self-awareness cluster, intrinsic motivation cluster, and professional development cluster, to simplify the mapping of correlations between concepts.

The third stage involved in-depth concept interpretation and content analysis. In this crucial phase, researchers critically examined various theoretical postulates, author arguments, and compared previous research findings to uncover the underlying principles of how the GROW coaching model can influence the psychological aspects of commitment formation. Researchers conducted in-depth reading to link the transactional functions of the Goal, Reality, Options, and Will stages with indicators of internal human commitment, such as growing responsibility, maintaining consistency, driving motivation, and strengthening the subject's self-awareness.

The final stage of this analysis cycle was synthesis and conclusion drawing. Researchers wove and summarized all the fragmented content analysis results into a coherent, integrated, and systematic discussion draft, resulting in a new, comprehensive conceptual model of the function of GROW coaching in escalating personal commitment to professional development. This synthesis process was carried out by cross-comparing various theoretical perspectives to detect consistent patterns of relationships, areas of common ground, and anomalies in perspective differences across the reviewed literature.

To strengthen the credibility, validity, and academic reliability of this study's findings, the researchers ensured that the majority of the data sourced was from reputable international journals and widely recognized academic textbooks. Furthermore, they tested the validity of the data through the application of source triangulation techniques. This step was achieved by comparing, confronting, and aligning several independent references that examine similar concepts, ensuring that the conceptualization and final conclusions derived from this research are truly based on objective, balanced, non-profit, and comprehensive analysis.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The main findings of this literature review indicate that the GROW coaching model, consisting of the stages of Goal, Reality, Options, and Will, provides a highly significant and directly proportional contribution to the development of self-awareness, the stimulation of intrinsic motivation, an increased sense of responsibility, and the strengthening of ownership of personal goals. These findings confirm that the GROW model is not merely a mechanical communication tool or managerial formality in work coaching practice, but rather a strategic development approach capable of reconstructing an individual's psychological landscape. This theoretical construct demonstrates that strengthening personal commitment within professional and organizational contexts can be systematically structured through participatory coaching interventions.

Empirically and conceptually, the GROW model facilitates a measurable and sustainable individual development process because its logical structure can shift the subject's mindset from

passive to active-reflective. In stark contrast to traditional instructive approaches or conventional top-down supervision patterns, which often position employees as passive executors of orders and are prone to demotivation, the GROW model positions the coach purely as a facilitator. Through a series of structured and in-depth questions, individuals (coachees) are guided to explore their deepest potential, engage in critical reflection, and independently formulate solution maps to their work problems. This participatory, two-way interaction pattern has been empirically proven to trigger a significantly higher level of cognitive and emotional involvement in decision-making, thus fostering a sense of absolute responsibility for the effectiveness of the individual's chosen actions.

The functional relationship between the stages of the GROW model and the formation of commitment can be outlined sequentially and causally in the following table:

GROW Stages	Activity Description	Psychological Impact & Commitment Formation
Goal	Determine specific goals to be achieved in career development.	Building initial commitment through clarity of direction and fostering a sense of ownership of the professional future.
Reality	Understand the real conditions, strengths, weaknesses, and external obstacles being faced.	Increase self-awareness, form a realistic attitude, and build mental readiness and personal accountability.
Options	Explore various alternative solutions and action scenarios without direct intervention.	Escalates self-confidence (self-efficacy) and strengthens the grip of ownership because decisions are born from independent thinking.
Will	Determine concrete action plans, execution schedules, and completion commitments.	Turning abstract intentions into concrete actions; locking in intrinsic motivation to maintain long-term consistency.

When these findings are compared with previous theory and research, a clear alignment emerges that strengthens the conceptual validity of the GROW model. The finding that commitment grows more stable when solutions emerge from the individual's own cognition aligns with the *Self-Determination Theory* which states that individual autonomy in action is an absolute prerequisite for the emergence of lasting intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Furthermore, the emphasis on the Goal stage correlates positively with the Goal-Setting Theory of Locke and Latham, which empirically demonstrates that clear, challenging yet specific goals generate a much stronger work determination than vague goals (Locke & Latham, 2002). This psychological relationship also reinforces Meyer and Allen's commitment theory, which states that employees' affective commitment to their goals is formed due to value alignment and internal awareness, rather than normative coercion or mere transactional calculation (Meyer & Allen, 1991).

The GROW model's applicability is proven to be broad, encompassing various sectors within the professional development framework. In modern corporate environments, managers' implementation of the GROW model has been shown to create a positive work climate, minimize resistance to change, and boost employee retention because they feel valued as strategic partners, not just mechanical cogs. In the higher education sector, this approach is highly relevant for lecturers and academic advisors as an assistance tool to guide students who often lose their academic direction; GROW helps them formulate learning targets independently and maintain discipline in their studies. Meanwhile, in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, the use of the GROW framework provides systematic thinking guidance for business actors to stay focused on identifying business opportunities, managing risks, and maintaining mental resilience in the face of extreme market volatility.

CONCLUSION

This literature review successfully answered its objectives by concluding that the GROW coaching model plays a crucial and transformative role as an intervention strategy to enhance personal commitment across the professional development spectrum. The structured integration of its four phases Goal, Reality, Options, and Will has been empirically proven to stimulate self-awareness, ignite intrinsic motivation, and instill a deep sense of responsibility and ownership in individuals toward their stated career goals. This research confirms the important postulate that a professional's personal commitment reaches its peak when action plans and problem-solving solutions emerge from self-aware reflection, with the "Will" stage acting as the primary anchor that locks and converts these abstract intentions into consistent and sustainable concrete actions.

Based on these theoretical conclusions, several practical policy recommendations are formulated for decision-makers in organizations and educational institutions. First, organizational management in the corporate sector is advised to transform conventional, instructive-authoritarian leadership styles into coaching-based leadership styles by integrating the GROW model into mandatory training curricula for managerial staff. Second, for higher education institutions, campus authorities need to redesign the academic guidance system by inserting the GROW coaching approach as a standard method for supervisors in guiding their students, so that they are able to construct learning independence and academic accountability from an early age. Third, for HR practitioners and professional coaches, it is recommended not to simply treat the GROW model as a technical question-and-answer procedure, but rather emphasize emotional exploration at the Options and Will stages to ensure the creation of a strong psychological bond (psychological engagement) before the individual moves on to the execution stage.

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