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Perceived impact of organisation coaching on coachees in South Africa

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Perceived impact of organisation coaching on coachees in South Africa

Brett Wallace

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management, University of the Witwatersrand, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration

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ABSTRACT

Coaching in business, and the many variations it has, is certainly not a new topic to either business or research. Organisations have been using coaching as a supportive and developmental tool since the 1930's, with research pre-dating that (Grant 2003). Research is however limited when it comes to the actual impact of organisational coaching on coachees. What impact is experienced during, and more significantly, retained post intervention? Does this impact have any contribution toward organisational performance and are there any additional influencing factors at play? This research report is intended to highlight the perceived impact of organisational coaching on coachees in South Africa.

Through a constructivism-interpretivism paradigm, the research focussed on an idiographic perspective of thematic analysis, for theme identification. This was done through a formal, yet semi-structured interview process, with select research participants. The themes identified through the analysis of participant feedback, created a deeper understanding of factors affecting or contributing toward perceived impact on coachees.

The analysis revealed that besides existing themes identified through the interviewing process, when given the opportunity to respond openly, new themes started to emerge. The final open probe question highlighted additional themes that influenced the degree of impact of the organisational coaching intervention on the coachees.

The primary message and key objective of this research study, is to extract data valuable for professional coaches and organisational CEO's to use and reflect on, when facilitating or authorising an organisational coaching intervention. Through being cognisant of and gearing interventions toward addressing these factors, coaches and CEO's alike will be ensuring maximum impact and value for coachees and organisations alike.

DECLARATION

I, Brett Wallace, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. With the exception of version 1 (submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand, June 2012), It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

(Brett Carlyle Wallace)

Signed at: The University of the Witwatersrand

On the 30th day of October 2012

DEDICATION

To my loving wife and boys: Tracy, Travis and Jared. May our efforts continue to open new doors and create greater possibilities.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to establish the perceived impact of organisational coaching on coachees.

1.2 Context of the study

Organisational leaders are continually striving to differentiate their companies from their competitors. In so doing they may find ways of creating new opportunities that are not only profitable but have the potential to provide sustainable growth through innovation, creativity and resource optimisation. Combined with the ever increasing demands on organisations to lead in a fast paced, continually changing and diversified work environment, CEO's are always looking for new means and ways to achieve this. Constantly searching for that four-leafed clover, the rabbit's foot or the magical ace-up-the-sleeve.

Coaching is often seen more as a developmental and supportive function of management and leadership. Kutilek and Earnest (2001) suggest that coaching focuses on the improvement of three key, organisational functions, namely skills, performance and development. Focussing on, and improving these functions, ultimately contributes to increased job satisfaction, personal productivity, and employment stability within organisations. Although coaching is still sometimes considered to be part of the performance management process, Nel, Werner, Haasbroek, Poisat, Sono and Schultz (2008) support these suggestions, saying that coaching has and is becoming, more and more recognised as something far more important and valuable to organisations to simply be considered a part of performance management.

However, the desired benefit achievable from successful coaching is limited by the associated cost and scarcity of competent professional coaches. In an

attempt to overcome these inhibitors, many organisations are developing senior employees or managers, into the position of manager as coach. This is typically done through various training and development programs. Although more prevalent today, this is certainly not a new approach and literature has recorded the appointment of manager as coach, dating back to the 1930's (Grant, 2003).

Whilst there is a dearth of information regarding coaching as a whole, there is limited research covering the sustained impact on organisations. More specifically the long term perceived personal impact of organisational coaching from a coachee's perspective. Multiple studies state the effects of organisational coaching; however these studies exclude the actual research question (Wild 2001; Hall 2008; Rock and Donde, 2008 & Wenson 2010).

Assuming stable management and a relatively constant dynamic within an organisation, most organisational performance fluctuates. Some seasonally, some cyclically, whilst others respond to larger, more discreet forces like global economic performance, exchange rates and even political influences. Given long enough periods therefore, performance and results of individuals within the organisational performance many vary and/or fluctuate.

Organisations typically introduce and implement a coaching program in times of development, change and growth requirements, with the aim to either enhance current performance or leverage new opportunities (Feldman, 2001). Whilst there is no doubt of the short term benefits directly associated to coaching (Miller 2000), over a more medium period of time and analysis (1-2 years post intervention) it is unclear how and to what extent the coaching process actually impacts on an increased performance scenario. If a coachee is not prompted would he /she attribute his / her performance success to the organisational coaching intervention, or to other factors? Is the success of an organisation a result of the investment in coaching, or merely a result of cyclical (or other) performance opportunities like being in the right place at the right time, or identifying and taking advantage of an opportunity when it comes along?

1.3 Problem statement

1.3.1 *Main problem*

The research problem is to establish what the impact of organisational coaching is on South African coachees' from their own perspective.

1.4 Significance of the study

The study fills a gap in that, there is currently limited significant research highlighting the long term significance of organisational coaching and the contributory impact, if any, it may have on individuals and organisational performance from a coachee's perspective.

Managers and organisational coaches, typically attribute organisational performance to a successfully implemented coaching intervention, one that they have either facilitated or authorised. These are largely the interpretations of findings from a single perspective and do not necessarily focus on the causes that contributed to increased performance. Bueno (2010) is of the opinion that there is an increase in the demand for organisational coaching. It would, therefore, be valuable to obtain insight into and understanding of the perspectives, experiences of (and impact on) recipients of organisational coaching. These insights could ultimately be utilised when selecting and/or designing development interventions to align with the strategic intent of organisations.

There are numerous studies (Results Coaching Systems 2005; Travis and Lane 2006 & Joyella 2010) that assess and review whether or not organisational coaching works. However, a large majority of these studies have time frames and focus largely on the organisational results, rather than on the factor, or factors that contribute toward improved results and success within the organisation. Research including the coachees' perspectives is limited.

The study will provide guidance to professional coaches and CEO's who aim to implement organisational coaching interventions. It will also include what coachees perceived to be performance contributing factors. Additionally this study will look at how value can be added by optimising advantages of workplace coaching interventions and that working towards creating and sustaining a coaching culture within an organisation has great value.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

- During the interviews participants were not specifically prompted or asked to comment on organisational coaching as a developmental intervention. The primary aim of the interview process was to ascertain what participants' experiences were during the coaching process. Additionally, what impact (if any) the process had on them. It also aimed to establish possible factors that may have influenced participants' performance during the period they took part in the organisational coaching intervention.

- Any reference to the success or failure of the coaching intervention during the interview process was that of employee / coachee, and not that of the organisation, line manager or coach. References to any impact the coaching intervention had on increased effectiveness and greater performance and achievement are from the coachees' perspective. Therefore, the results should not be considered to be conclusive regarding outcomes of all such interventions.

- This research was limited to an engineering consulting and supply environment. Thus all research participants were from the same organisation

1.6 Definition of terms

- *Culture* - The values and behaviours that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organisation. Organisational culture is the sum total of an organisation's past and current assumptions, experiences, philosophy, and values that hold it together, and is expressed in its self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world, and future expectations. It is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, expressed or implied contracts, as well as written and unwritten rules that the organisation develops over time and that have worked well enough to be considered valid.
  (http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/mentoring.html)

- *Four leafed clover* - A clover leaf having four leaflets instead of the normal three, considered to be an omen of good luck. (http://www.answers.com/topic/four-leaf-clover)

- *Rabbits' foot* - the foot of a rabbit carried as a good luck charm. (http://www.answers.com/topic/rabbit-s-foot)

- *Ace-up-the-sleeve* - A hidden or secret advantage or resource, as in before we make a decision, let's see if management has another card up its sleeve, or you can count on John to have an ace up his sleeve. (http://www.answers.com/topic/card-up-one-s-sleeve)

- *Universal plug and play* – "Universal Plug and Play (UPnP) is a standard that uses Internet and Web protocols to enable devices such as PCs, peripherals, intelligent appliances, and wireless devices to be plugged into a network and automatically know about each other." (techtarget.com). Used in the context of the research report, the term 'universal plug and play', refers to the connectivity of the various elements within the organisation. Contextually speaking, these refer specifically to the individual

characteristics of the coachee and the dynamics of the organisational coaching intervention.

- *Standalone* – “A standalone device is able to function independently of other hardware. This means it is not integrated into another device.” (TechTerms.com). Used in context of the research report, the term suggests a non-reliant independent intervention. An intervention existing completely on its own, without interaction or association with any other organisational elements.

- *Intervention*- “the action or process of intervening” (Oxforddictionaries.com). “The act or fact or a method of interfering with the outcome or course especially of a condition or process (as to prevent harm or improve functioning)” (Miriam-webster.com). In the context of the research, the term ‘intervention’ is used to explain the interactive process of coaching, the actual activity taking place between the coach and the coachee.

1.7 Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made regarding the study:

a. Considering the employment duration, responsibilities and specific roles of the respondents, it is assumed that the total number of respondents interviewed was sufficient to gain adequate research data.
b. It is assumed that performance achievement as well as any possible feedback given regarding the impact of coaching, was conveyed honestly and truthfully by the respondents interviewed. Understandably, false data will have a detrimental effect on the interpretation of the interviews, identification of themes and the overall research results.
c. Based on the nature of the research methodology, it is assumed that the sample size is sufficient to reflect the general experiences of the intervention within the organisation.

d. It is assumed that the research results reflect common themes emerging through individual differences and experiences toward the impact of the coaching intervention within the organisation.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter contains the literature review covering the primary themes of relevance to the study.

The first section will cover various types of coaching with some basic definitions, explain actions on how coaching, whilst different from other developmental, supportive and psychological interventions, maintains an association through its similarities.

The second section will view certain elements from a holistic perspective, from the process of organisational coaching through to the challenges organisations face when undertaking such interventions.

Finally the section will conclude with a brief summary of primary learnings.

2.2. Coaching distinctions and definitions

Businesses continue to grow and compete in a dynamically evolving arena. Global pressures, along with exposure to multi-national process efficiencies, places cost and performance optimisation at the forefront of every CEO's and shareholder's agenda.

Organisational managers continue to face increasing pressures. The challenge lies in being caught between business objectives and employee requirements and expectations. Often, having limited knowledge and experience on how to manage and competently deal with these forces, organisations turn toward development and skills upliftment through various coaching interventions. There is a realisation that the old paradigm of 'command and control' has become obsolete. If managers are able to self-reflect and question their own opinions and beliefs, with a focus on future potential as opposed to past performance, they will have the ability to influence and change the attitude, motivation and the

levels of input of their teams. This change will ultimately lead to a positive transformation and increased organisation performance (Paisley 2007).

From the Hungarian village of Kocs, came a covered wheeled wagon or carriage ‘Koczi’ designed to comfortably carry its passengers over uneven harsh terrain, it is believed that this was the origin of the term ‘coaching’ (Hendrickson 1987).

Much has developed and changed since then, with both the term and its meaning being used in a multitude of ways.

Broadly characterised, besides sports coaching, the term is used (and the process of coaching is practised) in three main areas; in business and organisations, at executive levels and as a life skills tool (Zeus & Skiffington 2000). The authors continue to explain that whilst there are similarities in the process and certainly a level of cross effectiveness, life skills coaching is usually seen as a separate intervention. Bresser (2011) later defines the three main forms of coaching to consist of “*People Coaching, Organisational Coaching and Technology and Tools Coaching*” Bresser (2011:45).

The primary focus of this research report will be that of business coaching, more specifically organisational coaching, which covers a broad spectrum of business processes and functions within the organisation.

There are many similarities to other supportive and developmental interventions to be found when defining the term and the process of coaching. This could cause uncertainty and confusion. The Business Dictionary defines a coach as, *“... A coach (unlike traditional supervisors) leads more through collaborating than through directing. Also called coordinator, facilitator, or mentor”* (Business dictionary.com).

This perplexity is further substantiated by general interpretation and association as the Merriam Webster dictionary reveals in their *“Synonyms Related to Coach: Guide, council, lead, mentor, pilot, shepherd, show, tutor”* (Merriamwebster.com).

Therapy, counselling and mentoring are the other remedial interventions most commonly associated with, and misinterpreted as, being the same as, or similar to, coaching.

Clutterbuck points out that although mentoring shares many similarities with coaching, the overlap between the two is only of partial significance (Clutterbuck 2004). The author goes on to explain that coaching has a far more specific role, as opposed to the more holistic approach typically associated with mentoring.

Coaching is not, and should not, be considered as psychological therapy. Although supportive of this principle, Turner highlights that many coaches themselves sometimes battle with the differentiation and boundaries between coaching, therapy and counselling. His research findings go on to highlight that for optimal effectiveness, psychological awareness would not only be beneficial, but rather a crucial skill contributing to the overall body of knowledge required by coaches, as depicted in figure 1 (Turner 2009). Experience and qualifications in psychology can and will undoubtedly add value to the coaching process and the all-round capabilities or range of expertise and confidence of the coach (Stern 2009).

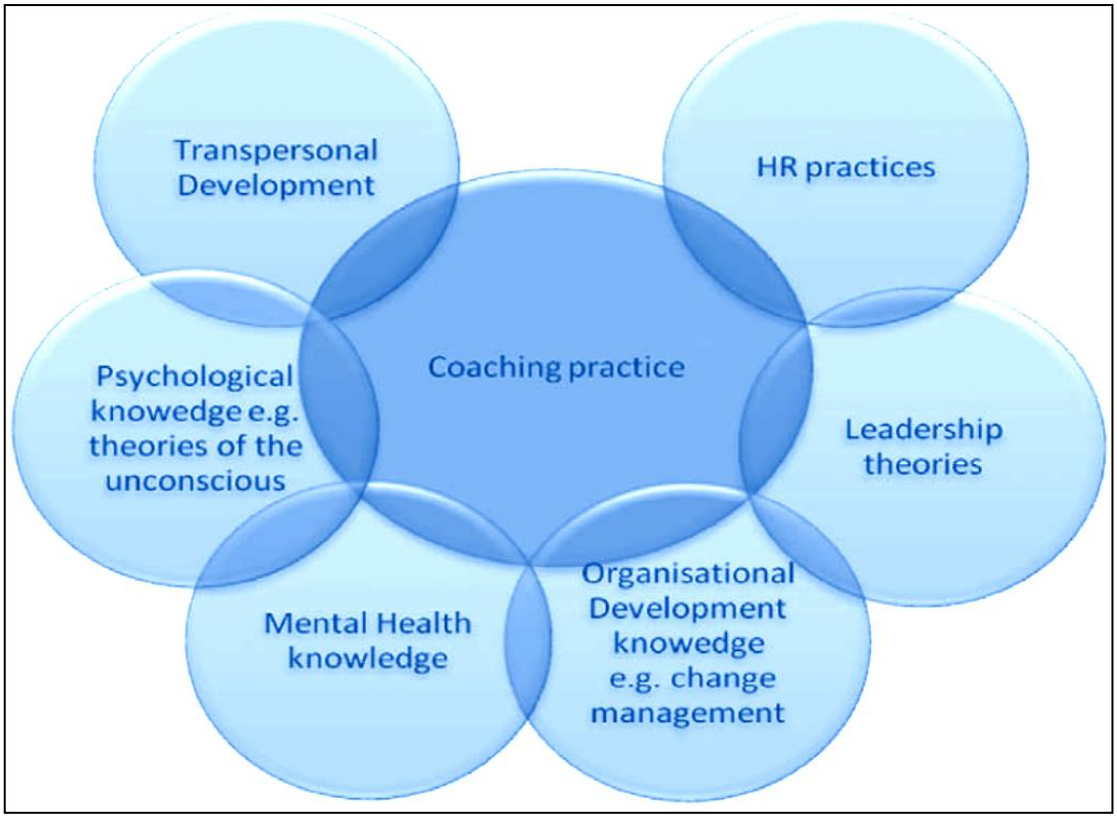

Figure 1: Coaching drawing on many knowledge bases (Turner 2009)

The author goes on to differentiate between coaching and therapy; stating that coaching focuses on the here and now, with specific intent to, develop future performance competencies. This is done through collaboration and reflection during the coaching process. On the other hand, therapy tends to delve into the past in an attempt to unravel stumbling blocks preventing optimal performance for current and future purposes. Like coaching therefore, therapy also has a measure of focus on improving a future state of being. Although very similar and often referred to as the same thing, it appears that there is very little formal differentiation between therapy and counselling, as such the coaching differentiation would apply.

Definitions and interpretations of the term ‘coaching’ vary greatly. Having a more common association and understanding, from that of a sporting perspective, the synergies and basic elements are easily related to that of business management in a leadership environment.

"Extending traditional training methods to include focus on (1) an individual's needs and accomplishments, (2) close observation, and (3) impartial and non-judgemental feedback on performance" (Businessdictionary.com)

"The process of training somebody to play a sport, to do a job better or to improve a skill" (Oxfordadvancedlearnersdictionary.com).

Zeus et al... (2000), proposes that coaching is about conversation, learning and asking the right questions so as to empower the coachee to discover their own answers. They go on to explain that with its roots in psychology, coaching focuses on needs and values to develop personal and professional competence.

Considering the definitions and research, coaching can be defined as: A guided process of development through reflection, self-realisation and empowerment, in a challenging, yet safe and supportive environment, with clearly defined goals and objectives. Organisational coaching, and various permutations thereof, will be defined in greater detail below.

2.3. Organisational Coaching

In an attempt to keep up with the fast pace of the world of work today, organisations and managers need to learn to adapt quickly. It is through this need that a shift in focus has arisen whereby organisations and the management style of these organisations is changing from a *direct control perspective* to one of *collaboration and facilitated support* (Buys 2007). Organisational coaching leverages this requirement through aligning personal development and effectiveness, to organisational goals and objectives.

There is a variety of different types of organisational coaching with strong similarities to business coaching. These similarities are found among the principals of executive, group, team and one-on-one coaching. The underlying common factor is that employee development is an important part of driving

organisational profit. The use therefore of internal coaches, independent external coaches or even a combination thereof, is used to align employee requirements, development and needs with those of the organisation. O'Neill (2007) further suggests that for companies the value of organisational coaching is threefold; the individual employee is developed, organisational goals are achieved and the team is strengthened through the process.

Crabb (2011: 27) identifies certain factors known to contribute to peak performance within the organisation, these are, "Focusing Strengths, Managing Emotions and Aligning Purpose", all of which are enhanced through coaching interventions.

Bresser (2011) suggests that organisational coaching refers to applying a coaching focus to the whole system, with special emphasis on specifically targeted areas. He explains that whilst there is a distinction between people and organisational coaching, there is a definite overlap and interconnectivity between them.

The coachee achieves a sense of accomplishment and personal growth when organisational targets and objectives are met. It is this fulfilling and empowering association between personal gain and organisational performance that creates the sustainability and a transformational business culture when implemented on a large scale. It is thus grounded in belief that the success of an organisation is directly attributed to successfully functioning employees, working together in departments, teams and across functions, ultimately as an organisational entity (Hurd 2003).

Typically the primary reason for the implementation of organisational coaching is associated directly to change, either through divergent strategies, management restructuring, or heightened competitor / target activities. Studies have shown that organisational coaching vastly improves an individual's ability to cope with and manage change. As such an organisation's ability to deal with and manage the stress associated with such change is also vastly improved (Grant, Curtayne & Burton 2009).

Secondary to change is performance enhancement and development aiding in objective achievement and growth opportunities. It is a wide spread belief (Hurd 2003; Stober 2005 and Mosca, Fazzari and Buzza 2010) that coaching greatly heightens the significance and sustainability of an employee's long term learning and development program. Other more holistic contributing factors for organisations opting to implement coaching is the scarcity of critical skills in a specific industry, sector or even region, existing high levels of employee development and training and finally, the simple fact that long term potential exceeds short term performance (Feldman 2001).

In terms of the research therefore, organisational coaching can be defined as: The simultaneous development of a specifically identified, high potential group of employees, within a specific organisation. Thereby creating increased group efficiency with enhanced organisational competitiveness and improved overall results. This is achieved by ensuring the personal development, through coaching, is aligned with organisational goals and objectives (executive, face-to-face or group coaching).

As explained in the definition of terms, an organisational coaching intervention is therefore the interacting, participating and taking part in the coaching process. This includes one-on-one telephonic and face-to-face interaction.

The specific type of organisational coaching, used by the company chosen for this research, was individual one-on-one coaching by a professional external coach. Specific organisational focus areas were stipulated prior to the coaching intervention and a select group of senior managers, each having direct reports was selected to take part in the coaching intervention.

2.3.1. Models

Coaching interventions, in their various forms, are typically started through the identification of a problem area, an area of focus or a developmental requirement or need. If not immediately identified through reaction, areas of improvement can often be sought through a more proactive approach of self-

audit in an attempt to identify learning and development opportunities. One popular method of conducting this is the 360-degree feedback process (Grant et al. 2003).

Once an area of improvement has been identified the organisational coaching intervention can begin. Considering almost all types of coaching, there are a multitude of different coaching models that can be applied. Although different, most coaching approaches share some basic commonalities. Understanding how these work helps coaches develop their own particular style of customisation, modification and implementation. Commonalities include: Establishing a trusting and confidential relationship, forming coachee-based agreed upon goals and objectives and finally a reflective learning dynamic in relation to goal achievement (Cortes 2012).

Representing many fields of knowledge, coaching should be flexible and adaptive. The professional organisational coach should be responsive to situations, even adapting or changing between models at times. It is also believed that to engender genuine trust and enhance the overall results, both the coach and the client require a clear understanding of the process and the general method being used (Dembkowski & Eldridge 2006).

One of the more popular, yet generic coaching models is the GROW / RE-GROW / I-GROW model which focuses on the following four key elements as illustrated in figure 2:

- Goal;
- Reality;
- Options and
- Wrap-up (Buys 2007).

Expanding on these key elements is the introduction of ‘Review and Evaluate’ (RE-GROW) as two extra elements or the inclusion of ‘Identify’ (I-GROW) as an additional element. Both are popular derivatives or expansions to the original model.

Other popular models include ACHIEVE, allowing flexibility and individuality (Dembkowski and Eldridge 2006), SUCCESS, STEPPA and WHAT, all focussing on solutions and goal attainment (Cortes 2012).

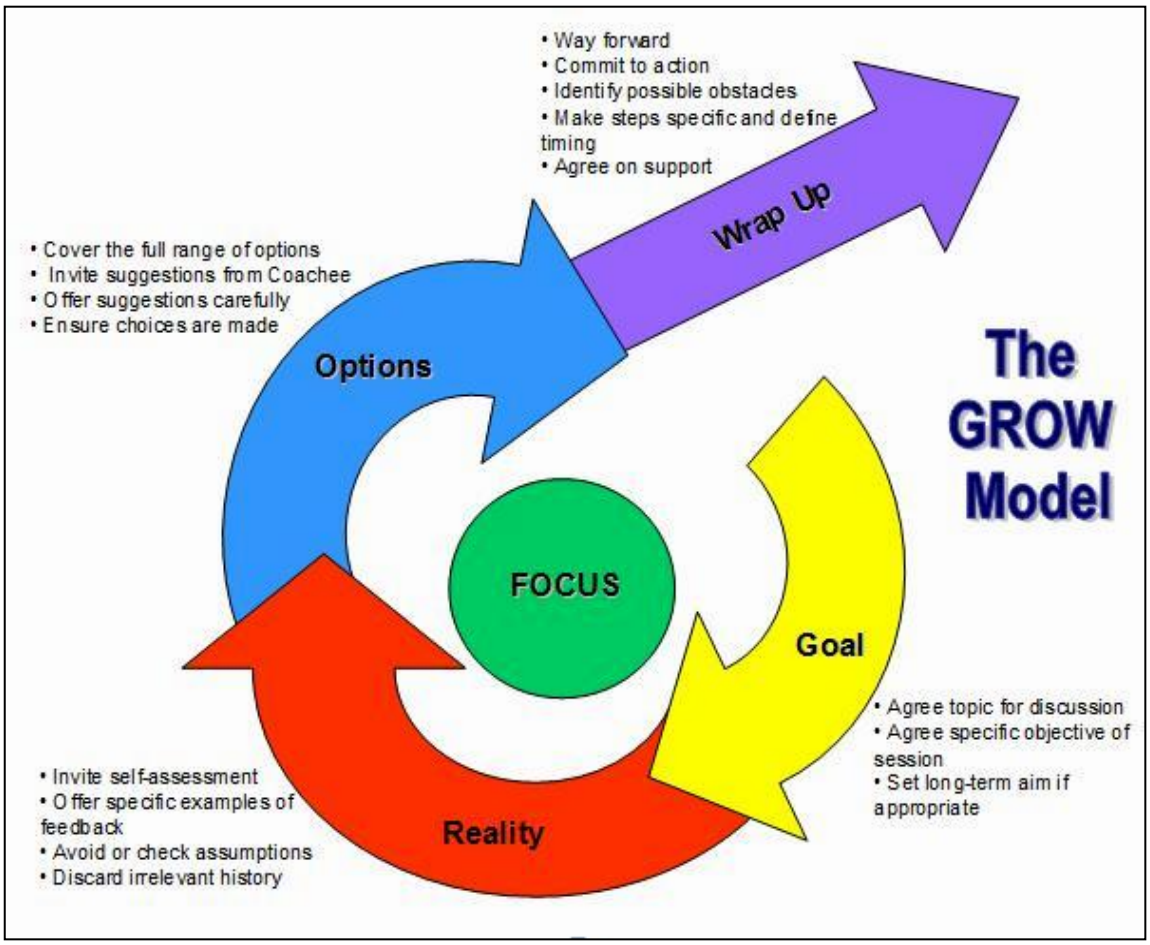

Figure 2: GROW coaching model (Centre for management and organisational effectiveness)

2.3.2. Process

Because the primary focus is on organisational coaching, the process naturally gravitates towards those requirements prescribing organisational efficacy. Most organisations compliment the intervention process with additional developmental programs. Certain of these programmes work independently yet in parallel, whilst others are directly associated with or connected to the organisational coaching intervention. When targeted toward specific

requirements, such programmes tend to not only heighten organisational efficacy, but improve overall organisational performance as well (Hewes & Patterson 2012)

As with all these coaching models, the processes (defined as a series of actions to achieve a particular end (Oxforddictionary.com) also vary greatly.

The specific coaching process (referred to in this research) used to facilitate the organisational coaching intervention took the form of pre-scheduled one-on-one, telephonic and face-to-face interactive sessions with coachees. The numbers of sessions were predetermined and set with an average frequency of one session every week and a half, with a total number of 21 sessions per coachee. Sessions lasted for, on average, ninety minutes each. More specifics regarding the actual process will be provided in chapter three.

2.3.3. Trends

Coaching in itself is becoming more popular seeing significant growth in recent years (Bueno 2010). It has become one of the primary human resource and consulting interventions of choice and is being viewed as not only an individual development tool, but as a requirement where organisational transformation is required (Feldman 2001). Feldman (2001) continues to highlight the shift in organisations adopting a combination of both out-placement and in-sourcing of coaches. The author expands explaining ‘out-placement’ as the use of an external professional organisational or business coach, with ‘in-sourcing’ being the use of organisational managers as employee coaches. In such instances internal managers are developed as coaches and work with external coaches in an attempt to not only be more effective in transforming their organisational culture, but sustaining the impact within cost parameters.

With the evolution of, and increase in, demand for coaching, there has been a significant increase in the number of so called professional coaches. Many training bodies include coaching in their offering and many organisational development consultants are marketing themselves as coaching professionals.

Needless to say, within such an industry ‘boom’ (Sugars 2010), quality levels vary quite substantially. As a result of this more and more organisations are starting to question their return on investment (ROI) with regards to coaching and are becoming a lot more selective, with a strong focus on outcomes and sustainability (Wilkins 2006).

With this new perspective on results and unwavering demand, coaching is evolving into both a discipline and a profession. Further with the essence of coaching being the focus of sustainability through reflection and empowerment, thereby creating emphasis on action, accountability and personal responsibility, (Bennett and Bush 2009) coaching is fast becoming a requirement for most organisations.

2.3.4. Development Opportunities

An increasing awareness of the different roles and role players, that have an impact on organisational coaching, has highlighted the significance for a more holistic approach. The primary role players remain the coach and coachee, however greater significance is now being given to the secondary elements, namely that of the organisation and society (Evered & Selman 1989).

It is important to note that placing the intervention within a theoretical framework aids in the explanation and understanding of what occurs, and the different roles of the coach and coachee respectively (Wallis 2011).

Complimentary to this is the increase in diversity between the different role players from a cultural perspective, as well as age, level of education, gender and disability point of view. This diversity is further heightened buy a generational change. Contrary to previous generations spending their entire career life working for, on average, two to a maximum of three organisations, modern generations are now a lot more flexible, typically changing career or organisation much more regularly. These matters, along with heightened awareness of the importance and impact coaching can have, continues to create an increase in demand for coaching (Bennett & Bush 2009).

Finally, as with all things in life, Bennett and Bush (2009) go on to explain that it all comes down to differentiation and the role that an innovative spirit and technology can play in changing both the process and method of coaching. Development opportunities include, but are not limited to:

- Telephonic coaching;
- E-mail coaching;
- Virtual on-line coaching;
- Coaching chat rooms through social media, text and SMS coaching and
- Blends of all of the above.

All of the aforementioned types and/or blends of coaching interventions, used in conjunction with, and complimentary to, the more traditional face-to-face coaching, internal coaching, external coaching, self-coaching kits, and group coaching within organisations continue to create new opportunities (Bennett & Bush 2009).

2.3.5. Challenges

The mere cross disciplinary requirement of an organisational coach having multiple theoretical and practical perspectives creates a significant challenge. This is increasing as international trade barriers are reduced and inter-culturalism is thrown into the mix within multi-national organisations. Additional challenges then come to the fore with accountability, qualifications and training of new coaches. With limited current legislative and governing body control in many countries, intervention differentiation and practitioner effectiveness, along with organisational ROI, are constant challenges organisations need to be cautious and aware off (Bennett & Bush 2009).

Failure to measure the impact and benefit of organisational coaching undermines the potential value of the intervention and brings into question the authenticity behind the entire process. Measurement possesses challenges, which need to be set out and agreed upon prior to the intervention commencing (Gaskell 2008).

Although differentiated from, there is still an overlap between counselling, therapy and coaching. Considering this overlap, coaches would certainly benefit from psychological training. Coaching is however not psychotherapy and whilst some similarities may be present, there remains a clear distinction between them. The challenge in coaching is that sometimes in order to be able to progress and move forward, barriers from the past need to be addressed and dealt with. Therein lays the challenge of knowing when to proceed with the intervention and at what stage of the process, if the coachee requires it, to suggest referral, simultaneous intervention participation or termination of the coaching intervention (Price 2009).

One of the elements coaching is not, is that of command and control. For organisational coaching to be effective however, the entire process needs to be driven from the very top of the organisation if it is to be successful. This is a challenge business leaders need to address if they seek to successfully transform their organisations through the implementation of an organisational coaching intervention (Addleson; Brumburgh & Chawla 2005).

2.4. Conclusion of Literature Review

Although fast growing and widely used, there is still some scepticism regarding the effectiveness of the coaching programme and the expected ROI, when considering organisational coaching as a performance enhancing intervention. Further to this is the uncertainty related to the possible stigma associated with a sick organisation, leadership or individual requiring remedial attention in order to achieve the required performance. In some instances there is still "*shame associated with owning up to needing help*" Rogers (2008:6).

On the other hand, there are multiple organisations acting as ambassadors of organisational coaching where the drive is developmental, focussing on new possibilities and future goals as opposed to areas of attention and remedial training. In its true form, organisational coaching is neither a universal plug and

play nor a standalone intervention, but rather a journey of mutual growth and development (Jules 2009).

The majority of literature focuses on coaching from a coach, an organisational and to a limited extent a coachee's perspective with little, if any, focus on actual performance contributing elements. There is however, a clear association between higher levels of performance and organisational coaching (Hurd 2003) where the organisational coach plays the role of providing objective perspectives through collaborative reflection. Not being affected by organisational politics, the coach is able to highlight possibilities and explore scenarios that may previously have been limited through corporate association and cloning (Zeus & Skiffington 2000).

None the less, from the coach's perspective there is an ethos that surrounds coaching as being an honourable privilege to be able to walk with coachees down the path of their discovery and development, sharing in their triumphs and supporting and strengthening them through their disappointments.

2.4.1 Research Question:

What is the perceived impact of organisational coaching on coachees within a South African context?

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is completed from a qualitative stance and this chapter covers the significance of this particular research approach and the paradigm selected for the current research.

Secondly, the research design and population sample is presented, followed by the research instrument used in the research, i.e. a semi-structured, in-depth interviewing process.

The procedure for data collection, analysis and interpretation will then be explored, followed by study limitations, closing off with research validity and reliability.

3.1 Research methodology / paradigm

This study was based on a qualitative research methodology. The objective was to interpret experiences, and contributing factors, which may have caused any possible impact, as perceived by the individual participants. Therefore, the particular paradigm this research used was that of constructivism-interpretivism. The constructivism-interpretivism paradigm has the approach that there can be multiple equally important and valid realities according to various individuals, as opposed to a single unifying fact (Ponterotto 2005).

The specific research focus was one of theme identification through post interview thematic analysis, as opposed to a quantitative approach of theory and hypothesis testing through variable analysis (Ponterotto 2002). The specific process and benefits of thematic analysis will be discussed under data analysis and interpretation in section 3.6.

Thus, the stance taken in the current research is that of an idiographic perspective in that the research participant is a complex and unique individual with his own understanding and perspective and an emic distinction that focuses on individuals non-generalisable behaviour.

This would imply that the ‘reality’ of a situation, or associated experience, is not only unique, but also constructed by research participants as they saw, interpreted or perceived it. This was of particular significance and importance to the purpose of the authenticity of the research and requires description of the role of the researcher. In this regard as the researcher, I have been more of a co-investigator than a topic field expert. Secondly, by expressing the experiences of the participants in their own words, error of interpretation is reduced ensuring that coding and subsequent theme identification is supported through relevant data (Ponterotto 2005).

With the aforementioned in mind, the data collection process was that of conducting in-depth interviews with each participant. The interview format was semi-structured with the use of open probe type questioning to encourage maximum free communication and expression by participants. It is through participants’ opportunity of free expression that rich data was analysed and themes identified, benefiting this particular methodology and research paradigm.

3.2 Research Design

Considering the qualitative methodology of constructivism-interpretivism, the optimal way for the extraction of the research data was through in-depth semi-structured interviews with selected participants. Through this non leading process, participants were given the opportunity to explain, using their own words, their experiences, and any associated factors contributing to the overall impact experienced, if any.

This design method allowed individual perspectives and different opinions to be presented in an environment where there were multiple correct possibilities and themes. It is in such an environment that the reader can judge the rigor of the research, based on its interpretation through thematic analysis and final theme identification (Braun & Clarke 2006).

Listed below are specific advantages and disadvantages of the use of semi-structured interviews as they pertain to the research (Barriball & While 1994).

Advantages:

- The exploratory nature of the research was enhanced through the semi-structured interview approach;
- Open probe type questions allowed participants to add or introduce new possible dimensions and thoughts that may not have been previously considered; and
- Participants and research results were not subject to pre-determined outcomes.

Disadvantages:

- The possibility that bias is introduced into the research result due to personal experience, training and assumptions pertaining to executive, business and organisation coaching experiences.
- Significant time and preparation was required to ensure that relevant data pertinent to the research was extracted. The semi-structured interview processes required research in order to gain insight into the methodology required (Barriball and While 1994; Deavall 2005; Wulffers 2008; Fezi 2008 & Littlejohn 2011).

3.3 Population and sample

The population and purposive sample selection will each be explained in points 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 respectively. For a clearer understanding however, it is valuable to be aware of the contributing factors and background information within the organisation leading to this specific selection.

An organisational coaching intervention was commissioned within Festo South Africa, in an attempt to elevate the overall level of performance, create greater accountability and to contribute toward the attainment of specific strategic goals.

Prior to, and even at the start of the previous global crisis, the organisation was achieving successful results and growing business at an acceptable rate. According to the managing director however, it was believed that a performance plateau was reached and that although results were satisfactory, he believed more could be done.

With a nationally combined focus towards results orientated performance, personal as well as managerial development, greater results could be achieved. The organisation's executive believed that an organisational coaching intervention would be the catalyst to this process, ensuring maximum impact and sustained output at a higher level

A suitable organisational coach was commissioned and key business unit managers, having multiple direct reports, were identified as prime candidates to take part in the organisational coaching intervention. A national meeting was held with potential participants, where the process and benefits of organisational coaching were presented by the coach and the organisation's managing director. This was followed by a limited number (not more than three) of individual telephonic one-on-one discussions to answer any coaching related questions, set the stage and create the environment for the organisational coaching to proceed.

It was clearly explained that if participants were uncertain or chose not to participate, they were welcome to withdraw from the process at any time without any consequences. Once committed, a three way discussion was structured between the business unit manager and his department head, facilitated by the coach, to establish and agree on specific deliverables that were going to be focussed on during the coaching process. Once finalised, the organisational coaching intervention began.

Given the geographic challenges, the coaching intervention was telephonic in nature. However, one specific individual selected for the research did not receive telephonic coaching, but instead received face-to-face coaching as a result of his location proximity to the coach.

Individual one-on-one coaching sessions took place, on average, every one and a half weeks; each lasting (on average) ninety minutes. Participants all received a minimum of twenty one sessions, with one or two participants receiving an agreed additional five, where deemed valuable. Mid-way through the process another three way discussion between the coachee and department head was facilitated by the coach to review performance, challenges and breakthroughs. Topics discussed and information revealed was with the consent of the coachee. After completion of the predetermined coaching sessions, a final wrap-up session between the coachee and his line manager was facilitated by the coach. The focus of this final wrap-up meeting, was the interventions overall agreed deliverables, and any possible further developmental requirements. No further intervention evaluation was conducted after this point.

In support of, but independent to the organisational coaching intervention that was commissioned, and in line with initial growth strategy, additional personal and managerial development programs were initiated. These were seen as supportive of the organisational coaching intervention and vice versa. These could be categorised into three primary groupings, namely: Festo South Africa Potential Development Programme (F-ZA PDP), Festo Leadership Initiative (FLI) and Leader as Coach Initiative (LCI).

The F-ZA PDP was an eighteen month, multi-faceted general management development program, focussing on basic business fundamentals which were conducted through an external (to the organisation) facilitation company.

The FLI programme was a twelve month companywide development initiative focussing more on a mixture of hard as well as soft leadership and managerial skills. This was jointly facilitated from professionals both internal and external to the organisation.

The LCI was specifically conducted to aid business unit managers in their leadership roles. As previously explained, it was seen as independent to, but supportive of, the organisational coaching intervention that was currently taking place within the company. The LCI received facilitation from both internal and

external professionals, both of whom were professionally registered and qualified to facilitate the initiative in a subjective manner. This specific programme was a three day, off site intervention for those business unit managers with multiple direct reports participating in the organisational coaching intervention.

Based on the specific factors and back ground information, along with the current lack of specific research within this sector, the understanding of the perceived impact of organisational coaching was deemed to be valuable research.

3.3.1 Population

The population of this research was business unit managers, working for a multi-national engineering consulting and supply firm, within South Africa. They had all previously taken part in and completed an organisational coaching intervention within a twenty four month period from the time of conducting the research.

3.3.2 Sample and sampling method

The sample used within the research, was a purposive sample with a specific focus on two of the multiple sampling techniques available within purposive sampling methodology.

Besides having multiple techniques, purposive sampling is sometimes considered as selective, specific or subjective. This is because the purposive method of sampling relies on the researcher's judgement in selecting both the technique and the sample to be researched (Lund 2010)

In the research, the primary goal of purposive sampling was the identification and targeted selection of individuals whose specific characteristics contributed toward answering the research question, as opposed to that of a random selection from the population group. As such, in line with the research

methodology, the sample that was selected did not represent the population. The sample selected was in accordance to the specific sampling technique required to best achieve the research objective.

One of the primary benefits of purposive sampling is the flexibility in the number of techniques available. With each having its own specific goal, being able to build on top of or move from one to another, it adds value in selecting and matching those best suited to the specific research design. However, it is this same value adding selection flexibility that, if not focussed on clear selection criteria, can fall prey to researcher bias.

During the process of selection, more than one type of sampling technique was used in finalising potential and selecting research participants.

The first technique used was that of homogeneous sampling. In terms of the research this can be defined as: A purposive sampling technique used to group participants who share similar characteristics, namely that of a senior leadership role and participation in the organisational coaching intervention.

The second; developing and supporting of the first technique, was extreme or deviant case sampling. In terms of the research this can be defined as: A purposive sampling technique focussing on special cases highlighting success, namely that of significantly improved performance associated with individual or team success.

It is believed that this second and final selection technique often aids in identifying key learning's into specific phenomenon, providing value to existing knowledge and current (Lund 2010)

Considering the objectives of the research, understanding who a person was and the role he played within a group was very important. Participants were strategically selected and considered for their uniqueness, not being interchangeable, as is sometimes the case with other sampling methods (Given 2008).

Ponterotto (2005) points out, that in contrast to other research methodologies and paradigms, the constructivism-interpretivism methodology limits researchers to a small group of participants, but adds value through the in-depth interviewing process.

Based on this approach the sample size selected was limited to eight participants. Each participant received an interview invitation followed by a personalised telephone call confirming suitability of date, time and location for the interview. To support the successful transfer of information and the creation of an environment that was stress free and conducive to reflection, all interviews were conducted in a neutral location of each specific participant's choice. The initial intervention therefore required substantial travelling, with follow-up communication conducted telephonically and via Internet resources.

All participants were male and varied from forty one to sixty four years of age. They were all business unit managers and had recently experienced significant success or accomplishments within their departments or divisions. Service period within the organisation varied between five and thirty years.

The coach was female, had personally conducted the organisational coaching intervention for all business unit managers concerned and was practicing as a professional business and organisational coach for twelve years. Table 2 shows a basic profile of the research participants.

Table 1: Profile of participants

Business Field Designation of Participant	Coaching Intervention	Participant Location
EXCO Member, Head of Order Fulfilment	Organisational Coaching 2010 Coachee	Gauteng Johannesburg
EXCO Member, Head of Finance and Administration	Organisational Coaching 2010 Coachee	Gauteng Johannesburg
Head of Integrated Business platform and Contact Centre Manage	Organisational Coaching 2010 Coachee	Gauteng Johannesburg
Regional Branch and Sales Manager	Organisational Coaching 2010 Coachee	Gauteng Johannesburg
Regional Branch and Sales Manager	Organisational Coaching 2010 Coachee	Gauteng Pretoria
Regional, Branch and Sales Manager, Bus. Development Manager	Organisational Coaching 2010 Coachee	Eastern Cape, Port Elizabeth
Regional Branch and Sales Manager. Bus. Process expert.	Organisational Coaching 2010 Coachee	Western Cape, Cape Town
Regional, Branch and Sales Manager.	Organisational Coaching 2010 Coachee	KwaZulu Natal, Durban

3.4 The research instrument

The research instrument was a semi-structured interview process. All participants received an electronic invitation requesting their support and participation in the research thesis via an interview procedure refer Appendix: A (Adapted from methodology template).

The actual semi-structured interview questions and positioning for the participating coachees can be viewed in Appendix B. In this structure there are eight open probe questions for which ninety minutes was allocated.

The first question related directly to the perceived personal impact of the organisational coaching intervention from a business or professional perspective. Question two was a generalist type of question and focused on possible contributors, other than the coaching intervention, that may have impacted on leadership or managerial style. Question three served more as a validity test for question one and asked essentially the same question, but from a different paradigm.

Focusing on possible coaching models, question four was designed to create informative, yet generally more relaxed reflection of the intervention. Question five once again focused on the perceived impact of the intervention but this time from a personal or non-business related perspective.

Both questions six and seven, explored the current and longer term sustainability and longevity of perceived impact that was gained, if any, through the organisational coaching intervention. Question eight probed in a non-threatening way and tested any holistic impact coachees perceived, or the lack thereof, from either a personal or professional perspective, as a result of the intervention.

Finally question nine allowed participants an opportunity to freely reflect or express possible areas of impact and certain opinions that may not have been previously extracted through the interview process.

Participants were selected for the research as a result of their recent accomplishments and their participation in the organisational coaching intervention. The focus of the research was that of any possible impact associated to the intervention and not of their individual accomplishments, which were varied and unique to each individual. Specific questions regarding their accomplishments were therefore not asked as this might have limited participant's holistic consideration of the impact on the organisational performance. All questions were designed to explore the personal perceived impact, directly or indirectly, associated with an organisational coaching intervention, without leading participants in any way.

3.5 Procedure for data collection

Through re-confirmed appointments, again stating the purpose and selection criteria, participants were interviewed at a convenient time and location of their choice. Although most lasted approximately one hour, the semi-structured interviews were planned to last no more than ninety minutes. Whilst written notes were taken, all of the interviews were also recorded to ensure accurate transcription for analysis and interpretation purposes.

3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

Thematic analysis was used for analysing and identifying specific themes emerging from the data. Themes are considered to be patterned and something of significance within the data that relates to the research question (Braun & Clarke 2006).

As the first step in the analysis, interviews were transcribed and checked for accuracy against interview recordings. The transcription and subsequent verification and familiarisation process, aided in an in depth understanding and interpretation of participants' answers.

The interpretivism element of the data analysis then took place in the form of coding and theme development (Boyatzis 1998). Coding was used in excel to identify specific recurring topics across individual questions as well as the total data set. With the coding in place, a broader level of analysis was required to collate the coded data and identify potential themes accordingly.

Themes varied in their prevalence across answers and subsequent coded data sets; as such researcher judgment was used in the identification and selection of primary themes. These were identified in an inductive or 'bottom up' way (Carlile & Christensen 2004) allowing the coding to form naturally and not be slotted into preconceived existing frameworks (Braun & Clarke 2006). Themes were identified on a latent or interpretative level, which Braun and Clarke (2006), explain as going beyond semantic content, involving the interpretation of underlying ideas and assumptions, thus further supporting the constructivism paradigm.

Themes were then re-analysed and refined with supporting data. This required reviewing the data at two levels; codes and themes emerging from individual questions, as well as those common to the entire data set. Braun and Clarke (2006), recommend the naming of themes; however it was believed that greater value could be drawn if the themes were reviewed against each question and the overall research objective, without specific naming.

In summary, the transcribed data was analysed allowing common threads within the data to be differentiated through coding. Further thematic content analysis resulted in theme identification which supported the literature review. The conclusion and final theme verification contributed to the research question.

Benefits associated with thematic analysis include, but are not limited to: Flexibility, participants are collaborators within a participatory research paradigm and its usefulness in producing qualitative analysis aiding in policy development (Braun & Clarke 2006).

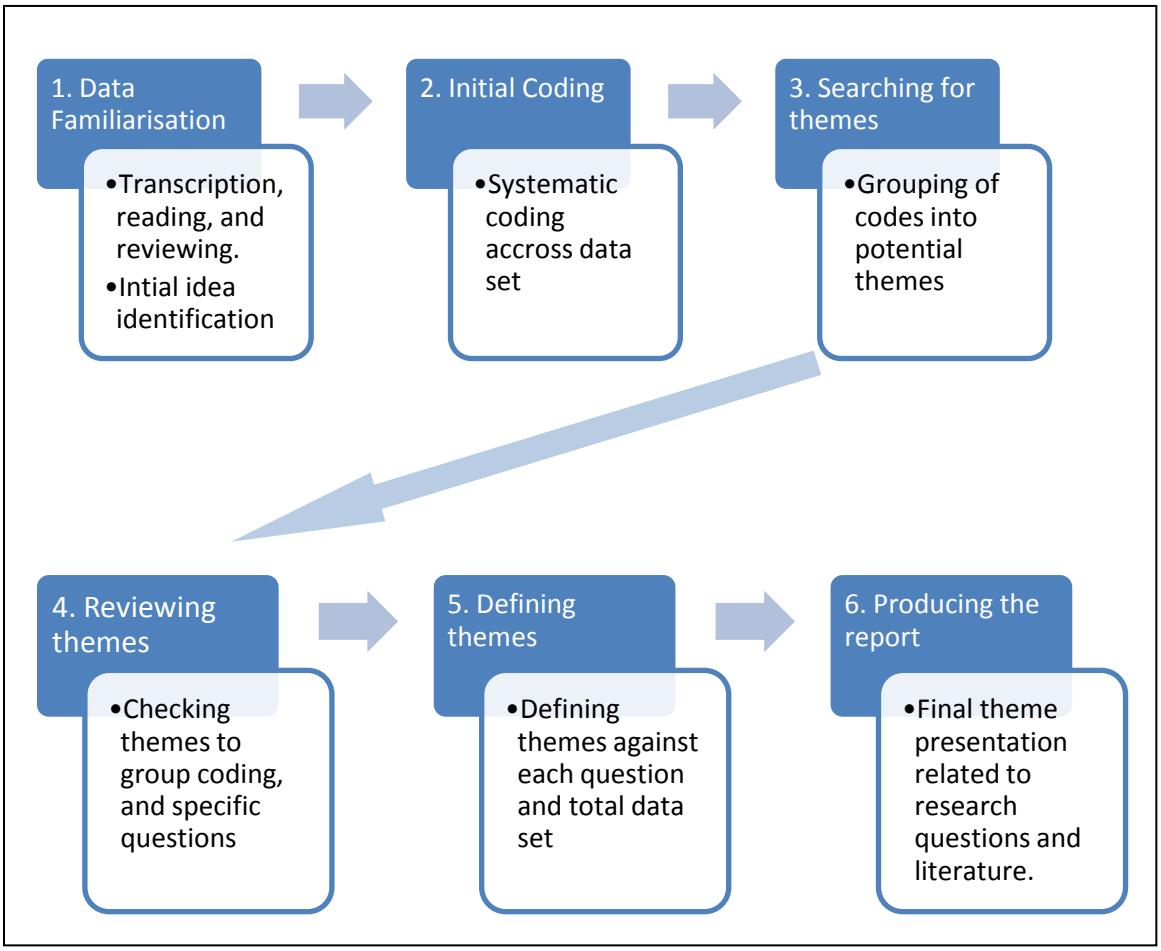

Figure 3: Process of thematic analysis in schematic format for summation purposes (Braun & Clarck 2006)

3.7 Limitations of the study

The pure nature of qualitative research poses certain limitations through the subjective nature of the research and interpretation of data extracted. Whilst all efforts were made to remain neutral and objective in the analysis, subjectivity might have emerged as a result of the researcher's personal association with the organisation, and the organisation's personal and executive coaching interventions and training.

The study was reliant on a small group of participants from within the same organisation but with different qualifications, managerial and organisational responsibilities and experience.

The study focussed on organisational coaching participants that achieved significant accomplishments. There could be a variation in the results pertaining to intervention impact, if the focus was on participants that did not experience any significant accomplishments, or a mixed selection of participants.

For consistency and reliability perspectives, the interview process remained semi-structured and adhered to the prescribed questioning as revealed in Appendix B. The format was not deviated from even when participants were non-descriptive or limited in their response. The only additional probing that was utilised was expansionary/explanatory type open probing; e.g. “Could you please expand / explain what you mean by that.”

3.8 Validity and reliability

In this section the relationship between the validity and reliability of the research report will be discussed.

One of the main concerns regarding management theory is, understanding where it applies and whether or not the theory can be trusted (Carlile & Christensen 2004). For this purpose, both external and internal validity need to be better understood in their relation to the specific research methodology and paradigm before reliability can be ascertained.

3.8.1 External validity

External validity is considered as the extent or degree to which specifically observed phenomena or situation outcomes, can be expected to be repeated or to which they will apply in a different context. This is usually established through ‘testing’ in different circumstance or with different data sets (Carlile & Christensen 2004). Ponterotto explains that the constructivism-interpretivism

researcher typically chooses more intense in-depth interviews with a very limited number of people and does not pursue co-researcher consensus of identified theory or hypotheses generated through the themes identified in the data analysis (Ponterotto 2005). It was therefore difficult to establish external validity given the specific research paradigm.

3.8.2 Internal validity

According to Yin (1984), there are two primary determinants of internal validity:

- Conclusions are logically drawn through interpretation; and
- Researchers have ruled out any possible alternative explanations.

Carlile and Christensen (2004) explain that if examined from different perspectives, interpretation of explanations and causality could be found.

The pure nature of qualitative constructivist – interpretivist research is the realisation that, for multiple people exposed to a specific experience, each will have different understandings and interpretations in accordance with their unique individualism. As a result of these “multiple realities” Ponterotto (2005:130), external verification and the unearthing of a single validity or truth is not pursued by the researcher (Ponterotto 2005).

Therefore for the purpose of this research, the only internal validity was drawn through the logical interpretation of the data analysed.

3.8.3 Reliability

Reliability is generally defined as the extent to which results are consistent, and an accurate representation of the total population, and should the study be repeated, using the same or similar methodology, the same results will be reproduced (Joppe 2000).

Whilst reliability may not be able to be proven through repeatability of results, it will however, be established through the repeatability and rigour of the data extraction and data analysis process.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the results of the research interview will be presented through the identification of key themes, trends, or patterns that commonly emerged from research participants' answers and feedback to the interview questions.

For each research question, the themes identified will be explained and then backed up, or presented through specific quotes, in the research participants' actual words, as used during the interviewing process. The quotes have been referenced generically as 'Research Participant' in order to protect the identity of the coachees and respect the agreed upon anonymity of the research. Each research question will be concluded with a statement pertaining to its specific results.

For the reader's convenience and a clearer association with the results, the research question was stated at the beginning of each section.

The chapter will conclude with the summary of the research results.

4.2 Demographic profile of participants

Coachee research participants were all male, worked for the same company and as such, took part in the same organisational coaching intervention. Formal qualifications, age, years of tenure, experience and areas of responsibility varied among participants. All participants were in middle and senior managerial positions, with primary leadership responsibility and multiple direct reports. Participants worked and were interviewed in various regions including: Western Cape, Eastern Cape, KwaZulu Natal and Central and Southern as well as Northern Gauteng. A demographic profile overview of the research participants is displayed in table 4.

Table 2: Demographic profile of partici[ants

Participant	Age	Tenure	Management Level	Qualification	Direct report	Location
1	53	25	Senior	Artisan	5	JHB
2	43	6	Senior	Accountant	4	JHB
3	53	19 – 3 Broken	Middle	Dip. Eng; MBA	11	JHB
4	48	19	Middle	Artisan	8	JHB
5	64	29	Middle	Engineer	11	PTA
6	39	14	Senior	Technician	8	PE
7	42	17	Middle	Eng.	9	CT
8	45	15	Middle	Technician	9	KZN

4.3 Results pertaining to Interview Question 1

Interview Question 1: Considering the organisational coaching intervention you took part in during 2010. Do you think this intervention had any significance or impact on you from a business perspective, and if so, could you please explain?

All participants commented positively regarding their perceived impact of organisational coaching. There were however varied levels of perceived impact, and significance. This was as a result of specific environmental inhibitors preventing the application of key learnings. These were explained as a result of either work load being too high, or their team members' (direct reports) lack of competence regarding specific tasks, which often resulted in coachees having to be too operational.

> *"It certainly had an impact, a significant one, I realised there's a hell of a lot more to managing than just being the boss."* (Research Participant)

A theme of personal realisation and acknowledgement of the differences between actual and desired results emerged from responses from multiple participants.

> *"Yes and no. The biggest realisation was that I was doing too much myself, it was due to time constraints and the lack of certain skills or abilities of employees, that was preventing me from delegating. Whether or not the situation is now fully resolved, the answer is no, but I certainly know more and let's just say, I am a lot more aware now than previously."* (Research Participant)

The perceived value or level of significance varied from heightened personal analysis and reflection, to indirect value obtained through the actual process of coaching and the physical tools used during the intervention.

> *"Personally believing I should be ok, I didn't need any intervention. But in retrospect, the introspection that came from opening some ideas of thought, which previously I didn't actually have, I found that it certainly opened a lot of doors. Primarily though, I took a lot of tools from it, that's just the kind of person I am, this added value and set a foundation, I believe to move positively forward."* (Research Participant)

Creating value through the maturity and newly gained ability to reflect inwardly was the predominant theme.

> *"Definitely, I would say it had a big impact. For me it was the right time, as a new manager I had someone to speak to and someone to kind of umm, discuss the issues with which then brought out certain solutions, or options, or ideas which I wasn't previously aware of. This was of significant value for me."* (Research Participant)

In conclusion, it is significant to note that the specifics of the impact of the coaching intervention were not expressed by participants' responses to this question. Participants responded in more generalised terms by referring to an overall perceived value and the contributory impact of the organisational coaching intervention.

4.4 Results pertaining to Interview Question 2

Interview question 2: Considering your accomplishments, is there anything else internally – within the organisation, or externally, that may have impacted your leadership and managerial style over the past 24 months?

Participants highlighted a variety of additional internal influences that had a positive impact on their performance and individual leadership styles. The most common internal contributor was a specific development and training intervention attended by all participants, which focussed on the development of the leader into a coach. This company initiative was independent to the organisational coaching intervention, yet complimentary in many aspects. Subsequently, it is significant to mention that they perceived themselves to have developed on a personal level and had greater effectiveness as leaders as a result of this intervention.

> *"Yes. The development of the management team has both directly and indirectly impacted and influenced me. Through either peer pressure or personal development the standard has been raised. I feed off, and learn from the different management styles as well. We did an additional coaching course that was also very stimulating and personally I took a lot out of that."* (Research participant)

Being able to apply their newly developed skills gained through participation in the leader as coach initiative, whilst at the same time receiving one-on-one coaching, added a valuable perspective to participants' learning experience.

> *"Yes. In particular I would say the implementation of the coaching workshop and subsequently thereafter, spending time with my staff in a coaching role. This has taught me a lot"* (Research Participant)

Limited response was elicited regarding external contributing factors or elements impacting on leadership and managerial performance. It is worth

mentioning one of the participant's experiences in an external mentoring environment. The positive impact or influence this transferred to his professional working environment, was as a result of the self-reflection and resulted in a 'practice what you preach' mentality.

> *"I would say externally the one thing that influenced me was chatting to the youth and mentoring them. What I was doing there externally is pretty much, I think, actually helping me out here as well. You know, practice what you preach, so what I was telling the kids, I had to bring back to the work place."* (Research participant)

Additionally a common theme that emerged from this interview question was the negative impact workload and business pressures place on participants. This reduced the impact of both internal and external contributory factors and impeded their implementation of new coaching and leadership abilities.

> *"We receive a lot of development and training, both internally and externally, it all helps, but the high pace business requirements and workload responsibilities dilute the possible impact."* (Research Participant)

The most common theme that emerged from participants' responses to the second question was the 'Leader as Coach' development program as a primary internal contributory factor to leadership and managerial performance. Limited feedback was provided with regards to any external contributory factors.

4.5 Results pertaining to Interview Question 3

Interview Question 3: Considering your success and accomplishments of the recent period, do you believe that organisational coaching contributed in any manner, to this success? If so could you please expand?

All respondents commented on the positive impact and/ or contribution the organisational coaching intervention had on their own or departmental accomplishments.

> *"Yes, the coaching certainly did contribute. I obviously have not really changed my complete management or leadership style per say, but rather moulded it, bettered it and improved on it in places and different situations, like when handling my managers for example."* (Research participant)

One participant had a more holistic perspective and saw the value of the impact from an organisational perspective, not just limited to that of his own area of responsibility.

> *"Yes, there was a definite contribution, but not just on me, rather nationally throughout the organisation. It impacted on our ability to handle the growth we received from the market."* (Research participant)

The value of the leadership and coaching tools participants learnt about through the intervention had a direct impact on the results achieved, as well as the leadership contribution, over the reviewed period. This was a common theme that emerged from participants' responses for this question.

> *"Yes, what I specifically benefited from were the tools and stuff that I managed to use and roll out to the team. This proved motivational and contributed in working towards the achievement of agreed targets"* (Research Participant)

Participants specifically mentioned those tools directly related to performance management and employee accountability.

> *"Monitoring performance and holding employees accountable is just as integral a part of leadership as coaching. The tools helped in this regard, all be they slightly modified. I can tell, teach, train and trust, that's what I call it. The four T's, she had some other thing, I modified it to suit myself though."* (Research participant)

In conclusion, participants' responses to the third interview question indicate that both hard and soft skills that they gained through the organisational coaching intervention, contributed to their recent successes and accomplishments.

4.6 Results pertaining to Interview Question 4

Interview Question 4: Are you aware of any specific model that was being followed or adhered to by your coach? If so was this as a result of your intuitive interpretation, or was this structure explained to you by your coach during the coaching process?

All participants were aware of the use of a kind of semi-formal or semi-structured approach to achieve pre-determined objectives of the intervention. However it was clear that no explanation regarding the actual coaching programme was formally or informally provided. Most participants commented that the only structure that was explained pertained to the format, timing, duration and proposed intervals between sessions. These were discussed during the first initial stages of the intervention.

> *"No formal structure was ever explained, but the format was clearly explained in the very beginning, the time and schedule and periods between sessions. There was obviously a set guideline or plan*

though with some repetitiveness of specific subject matter..." (Research participant)

At times certain participants felt frustrated and would have appreciated more of a mentoring approach.

"The ball was continually put in my court, which at times when I was out of options, so to say, was frustrating; I would have liked some direct answers from her." (Research participant)

Both the customised flexibility and the disciplined rigidity of the program were enjoyed.

"There was definitely a structure there, sometimes more flexible than others, but I liked her structure, even though sometimes it got on my nerves because she just didn't accept excuses." (Research participant)

The coach confirmed that somewhat adapted and customised RE / I / Grow processes were followed. None of the respondents elaborated on any specifics. Mention was made of the strong emphasis that was placed on accountability and results. However the processes were not explained in specific detailed terms. If probed, a generalist response was provided.

"Consider it as a challenging but collaborative and supportive journey of reflection, discovery and development, toward attaining new and as is often the case, enhancing of existing skills that are required to improve managerial and leadership efficiency with heightened levels of performance." (Coach)

It was clear from the responses participants provided for the fourth interview question, that only the basic structure and format of the recurring sessions was

communicated for operational purposes. The model used by the coach was not formally explained to participants. They were only aware of a semi-formal half-structured, yet flexible approach which everyone appreciated and felt comfortable with.

4.7 Results pertaining to Interview Question 5

Interview Question 5: Do you believe the organisational coaching intervention had any personal or non-business related impact on you as an individual?

All barring one of the participants responded positively. Overall there was a perceived benefit associated to the organisational coaching intervention adding value on a personal level.

> *“Ya, some of the learnings, you can apply to anything in life.”* (Research participant)

The varying degree of this perceived value ranged from a simple value statement to a high level of appreciation and awareness toward reflection and the capacity to change personally.

> *“Yeah, a big impact. Because the topics were people related and about dealing with people. It wasn't limited to people in the office, it was about family, friends and many other people. Being aware of this, consciously reflecting on specific situations or occurrences started some sort of change; I suppose it had to have an impact… My close friends and family have pointed out a noticed change in me, an improvement. It kind of makes you feel a little bad about before.”* (Research participant)

Only one of the participants did not find that there was any personal impact, or benefit from the organisational coaching intervention.

> *"From a personal perspective I would say no. Um, we pretty much um, no it was all created."* (Research participant)

Responses to the fifth interview question lead to a conclusion that the level of personal impact the coaching intervention had, varied. Most participants indicated that they perceived a direct or indirect benefit. Participants’ general perception was that personal development occurred through participation in an organisational coaching intervention.

.8 Results pertaining to Interview Question 6

Interview Question 6: If you had to reflect back on the scale of impact of the coaching intervention, has there been any variance to this level of impact, since the time of taking part in the intervention to now? If so could you please explain this impact and any possible reason behind it?

Participants' responses ranged across the scale. There did not appear to be any theme emerging from their responses with regards to sustainability of perceived impact.

> *"I believe it is greater now than it was during the coaching. During the coaching the significant impact was learning and trying new concepts. Through continual awareness, reflectional and application, I believe my skills are now better than they were, so I would say the impact is greater."* (Research participant)

Responses varied considerably from an improvement of impact, to indifference.

> *"Very little change if any, for me. Some challenges I was facing then when I was being coached, I'm still trying to apply myself toward now, still thinking about solutions, still challenging myself. So the application of skills has been long term and on-going with continual reflection, so I don't know if there is any perceived difference in impact"* (Research participant)

Finally, reaching the other end of the spectrum, certain participants stated a significant reduction in perceived impact since taking part in the intervention

> *"… of course if you take a log out of the fire it does cool down and the intensity will reduce as you revert back to the old ways and the bad habits creep back."* (Research participant)

Responses to the sixth interview question varied widely and spanned extremes of the spectrum to such an extent that a definitive theme was unable to be identified.

4.9 Results pertaining to Interview Question 7

Interview Question 7: Considering present day, and any possible retained impact the organisational coaching intervention may have had, do you think this level of impact will alter at all over the next 12-18 month period?

Once again there were significant variances between participants' responses. The only partial theme that emerged was that of some level or type of retained higher knowledge.

> *"Certain things will stick with you, structures that you have decided to work with and which you wish to apply, others will recede in impact and importance as time goes on."* (Research participant)

A plateau of a greater competence based was reached. This was based on the use and implementation of key tools and principles selected as well as the specific skills which were practised.

> *"There are tools that are sustained from the process, but other more personal stuff is difficult to quantify. Without the continual reinforcement a sustained level will be reached based on personal preference and operational necessity."* (Research participant)

The level of retention varied according to demand and willingness to apply and maintain newly acquired skills. Those not focussed on will reduce in impact.

> *"I think if one continues to find value in and refer to the notes and lessons learnt then competencies would develop until a certain level of unconscious competence I suppose. But again saying that, there will be areas that are not regularly focussed on and as such a certain level of influence and impact would be lost in these. So I believe that some would be retained according to exposure and operational requirements, whilst others will slowly be forgotten - out of sight out of mind."* (Research participant)

Concluding the analysis of participants' responses to the seventh interview question, the marginal theme that emerged from participants was that there might be some level of higher impact in future. This was however not quantifiable.

4.10 Results pertaining to Interview Question 8

Interview Question 8: Looking forward if you were in the position to advise someone, why would you either recommend or alternately advise against such organisational coaching interventions?

The majority of the participants responded positively saying they would recommend organisational coaching as an impactful performance enhancing intervention.

> *"I would strongly recommend that all, and most certainly new future managers, receive coaching. It can only be beneficial to greater performance. Therefore I would certainly not advise against it, but rather for it"* (Research participant)

One respondent was indifferent, hedging toward a more personalised, less organisational response.

> *"I don't think I would be against it, but if I had to recommend anything it will probably not be a companywide coaching scheme, but maybe a small group within the organisation, preferably customised individual coaching. I certainly think there is merit on an individual receiving coaching."* (Research participant)

Another participant pointed out both benefits and potential hazards one needed to be conscious of when considering organisational coaching interventions and the selection of a suitable coach.

> *"There are two sides to this coin. First an incompetent coach can do damage, so be careful in your selection. Focussing all the time on weak points reduces confidence and self-esteem. I was confident and happy, the next thing I'm, realising oh,,,!*
>
> *On the other side, if you have a competent coach, it creates a nice neutral environment to open up the thought process and be exposed to a big educational opportunity."* (Research participant)

When concluding the analysis of the results from the responses for the eighth question it is worth mentioning that there were strong desires for greater levels of personalisation of organisational coaching interventions. Participants suggested more face-to-face interaction and greater customisation of coaching approaches to address specific individual developmental requirements. These were expanded on, in the ninth and final interview question.

4.11 Results pertaining to Interview Question 9

Interview Question 9: Is there anything in general regarding personal impact of the coaching intervention we have not covered that you would like to comment on?

Through the analysis of this open question four primary areas were identified that had the greatest influence on the perceived impact of coachees:

- Method of coaching;
- Style of coaching;
- Contributor to 'Leader as Coach'; and
- Motivational impact.

The following section will explain and expand upon each of these themes respectively.

4.11.1 Method of coaching

Multiple participants commented on the perceived reduced impact as a result of the telephonic method of coaching.

> *"I would make definite consideration regarding face-to-face coaching. I believe this would have ironed out any perceived negatives of the intervention."* (Research participant)

To add value and support this theme, the single participant that received face-to-face coaching, as opposed to telephonic coaching, commented that he believed he was at an advantage compared to his peers. He perceived that conducting the sessions face-to-face enabled him to receive greater value and as such receive overall greater impact from the total experience.

> *"I didn't really expect much from the coaching, I was perhaps sceptical to telephonic because I hadn't done it before. I like to see, I like face-to-face contact. There is an element of communication you*

might lose over the phone, but if I can see your reaction to my answer..., it does make a difference. I was able to look forward to my coaching because of its face-to-face format. I am sure this put me at an advantage compared to the rest and I am sure there was greater impact as a result." (Research participant)

4.11.2 Style of coaching

A theme that emerged as a significant inhibitor is that of the timing of the interventions and session scheduling. Participants commented that the time frame between sessions was too short.

"This is a real thorn in the side of this coaching thing. The impact would have been far greater had one in inverted commas not been so busy or had more time between sessions to review and let's say practice." (Research participant)

Additionally to this theme, participants were looking for less of a one size fits all (organisational approach) and would have retained greater impact through a more customised or individually personalised coaching program.

"I would suggest not just taking a blanket approach of one coach fits all, personalise it. Are you coaching for business reasons or are you coaching for personal development and then select the coach/s accordingly. What does the relevant participant or coachee actually need? Maybe this could be complementary or included into the organisational coaching." (Research participant)

4.11.3 Contributor to 'Leader as Coach'

Although not formally part of the organisational coaching intervention, almost all participants commented on the contributory value of the 'Leader as Coach' workshop.

> *"As a result of the learnings, it was exceptionally helpful to me in my role as coach."* (Research participant)

With an organisational requirement of direct report coaching being implemented, most participants drew value through the use or implementation of specific tools and structures gained from this workshop.

> *"I could use the same approach and some of the tools in my coaching sessions with my team, so it certainly added value there."* (Research participant)

4.11.4 Motivational impact

All participants, either directly or indirectly, responded to an element of appreciation or commented on the impact on motivation levels, as a result of the organisational coaching intervention.

> *"The significance from a personal point of view in that I had been considered and that the effort and the luxury of being afforded a coach was afforded to me. It was an honour, I was important and I was being considered for future growth."* (Research participant)

For some it was less about being considered to take part in, but rather the result of, the intervention that was motivational.

> *"I found it motivating. I would leave sessions feeling as the problems are not insurmountable and it's actually a challenge but an inspiring and uplifting one."* (Research participant)

To conclude the analysis of the ninth interview question, it was found that given the opportunity to openly respond (without being bound by a specific question) participants were able to do so freely and enthusiastically. Of the four primary themes identified, two could be considered as areas of improvement for heightened impact. The other two were more direct and experience related.

4.12 Summary of the results

In summary of the results, all participants perceived either a direct or indirect impact as a result of the organisational coaching intervention. This impact generally extended on both a professional and personal level, with only one participant not experiencing any personal impact.

External contributory factors were limited, however all participants commented positively to additional internal contributory factors that impacted on their leadership and managerial style.

The model used for the organisational coaching was not formally explained, however all participants were aware of some form of structure being followed.

The impact regarding short and medium term sustainability was not definitively identified. Participants expressed varied responses according to different experiences. The final theme that emerged was that of reaching a plateau of higher competence.

All participants valued the opportunity and developmental experience, and would recommend coaching as a beneficial contributor, both personally and organisationally. There was however much expressed regarding the style and format with suggestions and recommendations for greater impact. These included, but were not limited to: face-to-face coaching, greater individualisation and extended periods between sessions.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the discussion of the results of each interview question. For the reader's convenience and a clearer association with the discussion, the interview question is stated at the beginning of each section. Results are discussed and explained, particularly in relation, and where applicable, to the literature review.

In supportive of the discussions, certain research participants were directly quoted, using their own words. Participants quotes are referenced generically simply as 'Research Participant', in order to protect the identity of the coachees and to respect the agreed upon anonymity of the research.

This chapter is concluded with a summary of the discussions, highlighting themes and reaffirming the conclusions of the interview questions.

5.2 Discussion pertaining to Interview Question 1

Interview Question 1: Considering the organisational coaching intervention you took part in during 2010. Do you think this intervention had any significance or impact on you from a business perspective, and if so, could you please explain?

Participants responded that the intervention supported general management goals and seemed developmental in nature, thereby aiding overall performance improvement. This supports Kutilek and Earnest's (2001) suggestions that coaching improves key organisational functions.

> *"It kind of highlighted the shortfalls I never even knew I had or showed ways to enhance what I had already."* (Research participant)

Although all participants responded that the intervention had an impact, the degree or level of this perceived impact varied quite significantly and encompassed different elements, those being both hard and soft skills related. The hard skills set or element, is that of the actual processes and tools. The soft skills set or element refers to the psychological, attitudinal or character changing perspective. The reason for this varied result could be due to current or existing skill sets of participants and their willingness or flexibility to consider alternate solutions. This complements page ten of the literature review, where Zeus et al. (2000), suggests that with its roots in psychology, coaching focuses on needs and values to develop personal and professional competence. According to the varied needs and values of participants, the impact would therefore vary accordingly.

In conclusion of the discussion around the first interview question, although varied, all participants perceived either an indirect or direct impact as a result of the organisational coaching intervention.

5.3 Discussion pertaining to Interview Question 2

Interview question 2: Considering your accomplishments, is there anything else internally – within the organisation or externally, that may have impacted your leadership and managerial style over the past 24 months?

There appeared to be a strong sense of learning through action, like on-the-job training. This was displayed through many participants reflecting that, although multiple training and development programs were undertaken, the greatest contributor of influence or impact was through working with their employees in the role of leader as coach.

When 'playing' the coaching / mentoring role, participants had a greater level of self-reflection and authenticity, thereby naturally creating integrity. This was as a result of having to apply and behave in a manner that would be considered

congruent and conducive with that of the leader being a coach or mentor to their employees. The development of leaders into coaches was identified as a growing practice within organisations in chapter one, but certainly not a new trend as Grant (2003) proceeded to point out. Feldman (2001) supports this where in chapter two (p.14), where both the organisational, transformational and financial benefits of such a strategy were highlighted.

All research interview participants' responses included aspects of the value such interventions have on the overall impact, especially when combined with additional training and development programs. Although multiple initiatives ran concurrently, the strongest theme emerging in this regard was that of the value gained through the leader as coach initiative.

According to responses from participants there were also certain external factors that contributed to the impact of the program, albeit they were limited. Evered and Selman (1989) (Chapter 2, p.18), attributed this to a greater significance given to secondary elements like organisational and societal influencers alike.

Only one primary theme emerged from research participants' feedback for this question; internal influencers played a greater contributory and supportive role to the organisational coaching intervention than that of external influencers.

5.4 Discussion pertaining to Interview Question 3

Interview Question 3: Considering your success and accomplishments of the recent period, do you believe that organisational coaching contributed in any manner to this success? If so could you please expand?

Paisley (2007) highlighted the change from the old paradigm of command and control to that of self-reflection and questioning, with the positive impact this has on future potential (Chapter 2, p.8).

Through the analysis of the answers, the contributing impact participants experienced was largely as a result of this reflection and questioning. This was the primary contributor to the gain and development of the soft skills element.

> *"If you are set in your ways after many years you think everything is hunky dory, but then you realise, well maybe it's not quite that hunky dory and there is quite some improvement one can do. Through personal reflection I have embraced this mentality and this has had a big impact on me."* (Research participant)

Besides this impact, there was also great value drawn by participants from the hard skills elements, the more tangible skills and tools gained through the intervention. These, in support of Feldman (2001), were used to enhance both current performances as well as leverage new opportunities. According to a research participant (Chapter 4, p.40) the tools were both motivational and contributed toward achieving the set targets. This value gained through the tools learnt, and subsequently applied, could suggest that the coaching intervention contained, as is typical, not just a questioning and reflection element, but where necessary an element of mentoring or sharing, of specific tools or processes. This is supported through the multiple disciplines and knowledge bases of coaching as expressed by Turner (2009) (Chapter 2, p.10). Feedback and responses received through this question add value and show rigor to those captured in question one.

> *"Yes, yes, it did very much. It definitely helps you with the implementation of certain tools and principles that you require. It helps bring out success."* (Research participant)

To conclude the discussion of the third interview question, the impact participants received or gained, through the organisational coaching

intervention had both a direct and indirect contributory factor to their recent success and accomplishments.

5.5 Discussion pertaining to Interview Question 4

Interview Question 4: Are you aware of any specific model that was being followed or adhered to by you coach? If so was this as a result of your intuitive interpretation, or was this structure explained to you by your coach during the coaching process?

Whilst none of the participants said they were advised of a formal model or format, all perceived some level of structure toward achieving specified objectives. Most said that this was combined with an element of flexibility allowing a certain degree of customisation.

The closest a single participant came to identifying the actual adapted and customised model (I/RE-GROW) that was used, stated his personal satisfaction toward this style or method.

> *"I picked up that she had very good structures, as I said with regards to, I can see this is a problem for you how are you going to deal with this problem. Have you got any idea of what else is coming and so what can you do to address that problem, how will you address that problem? What will this do for you and how will you know if you are successful - what impact will this have? That was her structure."* (Research participant)

This personal satisfaction was not appreciated by all participants, and a common theme of wanting greater personalisation with an element of mentoring, was expressed. This may have been as a result of the significantly varied demographics of the group, in particular that between skills, qualifications

and experience. If this were the case, it would then signify the relevance behind their desired need for greater individualism toward the organisational coaching intervention.

> *"At times I was left grasping for straws, when, whether incorrect or not, I was wanting to be taught."* (Research participant)

The researcher believes greater value could have been extracted with enhanced sustainability if the specific model and process, the series of actions that were followed during coaching was explained. An element of self-coaching could have been introduced into the coaching objectives, whereby coachees could have been made aware of the different stages of the model for sustained development purposes.

Although not communicated, the focus was that expressed by Buys (2007) (Chapter 2, p.12), as one of collaborated and facilitated support, aligning personal development and effectiveness to organisational goals and objectives.

In conclusion of the discussion of the fourth interview question, all participants were aware of some form of structure pertaining to the intervention itself.

5.6 Discussion pertaining to Interview Question 5

Interview Question 5: Do you believe the organisational coaching intervention had any personal or non-business related impact on you as an individual?

Whilst all, barring one participant, were aware of some level of impact, some were far more specific than others, with impact varying from that of child discipline through to self-reflection and impact on social community. Some through reflection of the interview question appeared to have a break through relevant to their specific situation and its significant value. There was one in particular that stood out

> *"It is very difficult to do that, to change. I don't flog a dead horse forever. You can quickly pick up whether the guy has the desire to change or not and the desire to listen to how he can change, ha ha, here we go - could be talking about myself. You know this mirror thing that she used to use ….. you're looking at yourself here! ... It is very real."* (Research participant)

"The unexamined life is not worth living" (Socrates 470BC). The researcher gained the opinion that the experience of reflection, although prevalent to the coaching process, was in certain situations uncharted waters. Reflection was expressed by many as one of the most valuable tools gained through their development and the entire intervention experience. However, this skill set was somewhat limited amongst most participants when it came to reflecting on perceived value and personal impact.

Rogers (2008) (Chapter 2, p.20), suggests that it could be as a result of a certain level of shame being associated to needing help or requiring remedial attention. Of particular interest, was the one specific response presented to research question five in chapter 4, p.47, which suggested the perceived lack of personal impact was as a result of the intervention being 'created'.

This observation and discussion is supported through the idiographic perspective of this specific research methodology as expressed by Ponterotto (2005) (Chapter 3, p.22), where the 'reality' of the experience is constructed by the research participant as they saw, interpreted or perceived it.

To conclude the discussion of the fifth interview question, almost all participants experienced a personal impact as a result of the coaching intervention. For some the initial awareness of this impact was through the consideration of the actual interview question.

5.7 Discussion pertaining to Interview Question 6

Interview Question 6: If you had to reflect back on the scale of impact of the coaching intervention, has there been any variance to this level of impact, since the time of taking part in the intervention to now? If so could you please explain this impact and any possible reason behind it?

The researcher believes this reflects the real essence behind the true experience of the coaching intervention. The desired result is naturally to have a sustained level, varied - but sustained, of both personal and professional impact.

The clear lack of any emerging theme reflecting this desired result reflects individuals' uniqueness and varied responses to exposure of the same / similar development or set stimuli. This could be as a result of our uniqueness and individual reaction toward, stimulus / response, where one size does not fit all. This is associated with the varied and specific operational, environmental, personal and or organisational structures, creating the realm for performance within the arena of growth and development.

The results here are similar to those in chapter four, question 6 (pp.48-49) where the uniqueness and the varied responses between participants highlight the validity of this research methodology. Ponterotto (2005) (Chapter 3, p.22), highlights the constructivism-Interpretivism paradigm considers multiple equally important and valid realities, according to various individuals.

In conclusion of the discussion of the sixth interview question, no specific theme or commonality was identified between participants' responses. This however adds rigor to the research methodology and paradigm.

5.8 Discussion pertaining to Interview Question 7

Interview Question 7: Considering present day, and any possible retained impact the organisational coaching intervention may have had, do you think this level of impact will alter at all over the next 12-18 month period?

The researcher believes, whilst being similar to question six in receiving a varied responses from research participants, the single response of a research participant in chapter four, research question 7 (p.50), seemed to summarise all responses identifying the primary theme emerging between them. Simply stated it was development to a level of sustained unconscious competence in areas where specific skills were applied, with reduced effectiveness and declining impact in areas untouched or not required.

The sustainability of impact through the heightened significance coaching has on developmental programs, as expressed by many such as Hurd (2003); Stober (2005) and Mosca et al.. (2010) (Chapter 2, p.14), needs to be taken into consideration. The single most contributory and influential factor on the leadership and managerial style was that of the internal training and development program of 'Leader as Coach', as mentioned in chapter four, research question 2 (pp.41-42). This, in combination with the organisational coaching intervention, created a definite impact on long term sustainability.

In conclusion of the seventh interview question discussion, the level of impact discussed in both this and the previous question (Discussion pertaining to interview question 6 p63) relates to the short and medium term sustainability of the organisational coaching intervention. Whilst responses varied between participants, the resulting sustainability was a plateau of higher sustained performance.

5.9 Discussion pertaining to Interview Question 8

Interview Question 8: Looking forward if you were in the position to advise someone, why would you either recommend or alternately advise against such organisational coaching interventions?

Question eight was designed to test the rigor of participants' responses, with the perception that a perceived beneficial impact would cause participants to support organisational coaching interventions. Similarly any negative or unnoticed impact would see participants either being indifferent toward, or against the entire intervention.

Participants' experiences, and consequential words of caution, when considering coaching interventions, were more generalist advice that would hold true for all coaching interventions, not necessarily just that of organisational coaching.

> *"My advice to anybody would be, if they have an opportunity to test the water themselves and to put an ego, preconception, personal embarrassment, you name it, whatever, put it away, then certainly go ahead and do it."* (Research participant)

It is believed that this caution is not as a result of the lack of perceived impact or any possible negative impact, but rather as a result of their personal challenges, and learning or developmental experiences being so significant.

> *"Some frustrating times and some big moments as well. It was an emotional roller coaster pretty much, but ya if you can hold on, there is no doubt about the value."* (Research participant)

In most instances the new ideas and elements of development and change, which are essentially the value that an external coach can add, are considered valuable – of course if not hindered by existing organisational structures and

mind sets. However, there could also be a concern regarding an understanding of organisational culture that may be lost as a result. In chapter 2 (p.21), Zeus and Skiffington (2000) support the first statement highlighting this as being a beneficial contributor.

In conclusion of the discussion of the eighth interview question, the emerging theme was that a positive impact on participants was motivated through their willingness to recommend, some emphatically so, organisational coaching. This theme supports the answers and statements applicants provided in earlier questions regarding their personal impact.

5.10 Discussion pertaining to Interview Question 9

Interview Question 9: Is there anything in general regarding personal impact of the coaching intervention we have not covered that you would like to comment on?

As reflected in the previous chapter, the specific style of this question resulted in the identification of multiple themes. This is one of the advantages of this specific type of research design, as explained in chapter 3 (p.24). In order to add value to the discussion process, each theme will need to be discussed individually, with a final conclusion statement to close the research question discussion.

5.10.1 Method of Coaching

The specific theme that emerged here when reference was made to the method of coaching was that of telephonic coaching. All participants (excluding the single participant that received face-to-face coaching) expressed a desire for face-to-face coaching as opposed to that of a telephonic intervention. The lack of direct personal interaction reduced the level of impact, due to an association of distance and possibly reduced trust or empathy.

However, understanding the business environment and the geographic challenges is a reality organisations and coaching participants need to consider. Focussing on these opportunities has resulted in an entrepreneurial spirit evolving more traditional methods as expressed by Bennett and Bush (2009) (Chapter 2, p.19). Challenges still remain though, when considering the perceived increased benefit associated with face-to-face coaching, versus that of telephonic coaching, acceptance of this coaching method becomes a little more challenging.

5.10.2 Style of Coaching

In the literature review (p.21), Jules (2009) explores the true form of coaching as being flexible and adaptive, and not that of a single approach or stand-alone intervention. It is believed that through interview questions and feedback received, a greater impact could have been achieved, if a more personalised or rather individualistic approach to the organisational coaching was adopted. It is assumed that a certain level of personal empathy was lacking in the desire to create an overall organisational impact. This feeling may be as a result of a preconception or misconception, around the purpose and function of organisational coaching as expressed by the coachees through the interviewing process.

Expanding on the specific style of coaching was the perceived negative impact of time pressure between individual coaching sessions. This specific theme appears to be somewhat contradictory, as clear benefit was expressed as a result of the intensity of the program. The lack of time is often used as an excuse or reason for reduced performance. This could be a possibility here, where the personal accountability of a perceived reduced benefit or impact, was negated and transferred to circumstantial or environmental factors, thereby abdicating the coachee of accountability.

5.10.3 Contributor to 'Leader as Coach'

As an internal factor impacting on leadership and managerial style or performance, the researcher believes the company's decision to run in parallel to the organisational coaching, the 'Leader as Coach Initiative' added extensive value to both programs and the overall impact of the participants. Feldman (2001) (Chapter 2, p.14), expressed the more holistic contributing factors of high levels of development being a deciding factor in organisations wanting to optimise and leverage the opportunity, with long term potential exceeding short term performance. Having the opportunity to be exposed to both sides of the coin, gave participants a greater understanding of the process and created an environment for them to practice their recently acquired skills. Through the organisational coaching process, they were then able to reflect meaningfully and receive impactful guidance.

5.10.4 Motivational impact

Although not identified as a specific theme through any of the questions, when the sum of participant responses was analysed, one of the common themes that emerged through question nine, was that of motivation and the impact the organisational coaching had on participants. This varied from pre-session anticipation, to heightened levels of post-session enthusiasm. Overall the sustainability of the motivation is difficult to measure, and may only be as a subconscious result of a sustained higher level of performance. It is possibly through this mutual growth and development, toward this sustained performance, that participants receive some form of sustainability from the motivation. (Jules 2009)

> *"There was a very non-threatening, but a very forthright approach to the coaching which was appreciated and motivating." (Research participant)*

Levels and aspects of motivation varied from the process of the intervention, through to the end objective.

> *"Coaching improves your efficiency as a leader and enhances your competitiveness, your personal competitiveness, this was a major motivator."* (Research participant)

Within the literature review (p.13), Grant, Curtayne and Burton (2009) focus on the motivational association behind an increased ability to deal with stress. This was one of the more subconscious elements expressed through the analysis. Although still present as a result of market and operational demands, there was overall a greater level of leadership and managerial competence in this regard. This competence contributed an overall motivational influence

To conclude the discussion of the ninth interview question, each one of the four themes' sub-headings could be a complete research topic of its own. The discussions covered within this chapter's questions, have focused purely on, and been limited to, research participants' feedback and specific points within the literature review. The primary themes carried through the discussions, were that of a desire for increased empathy. The overall experience was however, motivational on various levels, aided by their leader as coach roles.

5.11 Conclusion

In conclusion therefore, although initially expressed in general terms, all research participants stated that they received some form of beneficial impact, either directly or indirectly as a result of the intervention.

This impact varied between participants possibly as a result of their broad demographic variances in age, skills, qualifications and experience resulting in different needs and values.

There was undoubtedly increased significance and an overall greater impact with the simultaneous participation in the ‘Leader as Coach’ workshop. Not only was this a management and leadership development intervention, but it was topical to the organisational coaching intervention and resulted in a natural on the job training, within a supporting culture. Substantial impact was created because of this greater significance given to these secondary elements.

Contributory to their success, were not only the so called soft skills elements, but the tools and processes learnt through the intervention. This highlighted the value of coaches not just probing for reflection and development or improvement opportunities, but playing the multi-skilled role of mentor and teacher as and when required.

With regards to the coaching method applied, no formal explanation was given. However, all participants were aware of some sort of structure being followed. The question around intervention sustainability and self-coaching should be considered. Should method explanation along with self-coaching ability become a part of the intervention objectives? This could impact on the overall awareness and continuity of the impact on coachees.

For almost all participants, there was a level of personal beneficial impact associated with the intervention. Of interest however, was the noted process of reflection through the interviewing process, resulting in a specific awareness or breakthroughs for certain participants regarding their personal impact or value gain.

Interesting to note was that although significantly varied in their response, all participants stated in some way or the other, the reaching of a higher level of performance as a result of the intervention. Had a different methodology or paradigm been used, this heightened level and associated impact may have been lost, with some participants stating a clear reduction in impact and others highlighting a significant increase.

The positive impact the participants experienced as a result of the organisational coaching intervention, was supported through their willingness to recommend such interventions, albeit somewhat customised.

Some of the themes identified through the final open probe question, revealed a need for greater empathy and awareness of individual needs or preferences. Although beneficial and motivational, greater impact could have been drawn if these specific needs were met.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter will initially focus on a summary of findings and conclusions with regards to the research, with particular reference to the context as specified in chapter one under the heading, ‘Context of the study’.

Recommendations will follow, based on the value the research will add, to specific stakeholders as identified in chapter one, sub heading 1.4: ‘Significance of the study’.

The chapter will conclude with suggestions for further research, based on those areas identified during the research process.

6.2. Conclusions of the study

In chapter one, the context of the study focussed on the need, benefit and the demand for coaching and in particular, the impact organisational coaching has on coachees, and the limited research available in this regard.

What this research has shown, is that as Kutilek and Earnest (2001) suggested, in chapter 1 (p.1), is that as a result of the participation in the organisational coaching intervention, participants have on average improved three key functions namely, skills, performance and development. This impact or value coachees received, varied in intensity and functionality between participants. For some, it was the soft skills elements of people management, communication and collaboration, whilst for others; it was the more traditional tools and processes that were significant and had impact. With the benefit being directly associated to coaching, the result supports Nel et al.. (2008) where in the context they point out the increased awareness of coaching being

considered, as something of increased value and benefit to organisations as a whole.

The desire for face-to-face coaching as opposed to telephonic coaching was very prevalent. Participants expressed that face-to-face contact would improve trust and empathy, and that it would increase the beneficial impact of the process. As explained in the text, the desired benefits of coaching are sometimes restricted by costs, particularly pertaining to organisational coaching with a multi-national organisation. Considering geographic and operational necessities, and the participation of multiple participants, the telephonic method is often, as in this case, the only possible solution within technical and financial constraints.

Whether intentionally planned or not, the inclusion of the training and developing initiative of 'Leader as Coach', added significant impact to research participants and the organisational coaching culture as a whole. Grant (2003) (Chapter 1, p.2), points out, that this is certainly not a new practice and dates as far back as the 1930's.

The sustainability of the impact on research participants varied significantly. This has a direct association with the sustained organisational benefit and it is one of the primary motivators, and financial justifiers, for the organisational coaching investment. This varied result of the coachees' sustained level of impact, may be one of the reasons behind the current limited research available on the subject matter. The diverse operational environment, along with dynamic business requirements, had varying effects on participants' levels of impact sustainability. Some participants, as a response to an environmental requirement, became more operational, thereby impeding development and sustained impact. Others saw similar situations, as the catalyst to development and greater levels of sustained impact. This individualistic reaction to stimulus and response is a management, leadership and coaching conundrum, requiring skilled professionals, if optimal and sustained impact is desired. Certain elements pertaining to increasing sustainability will be explored under recommendations.

In support of Feldman (2001), the introduction of the organisational coaching intervention succeeded in enhancing current levels of performance and leveraged new opportunities from a professional and personal perspective. Multiple internal and limited external factors congruent with the organisational coaching intervention, contributed to these increased levels of performance.

What was unanimously supported and communicated by the research participants was that the overall increased organisational performance and results attained, were directly related to the organisational coaching intervention. Whilst markets and a combination of macro and micro economic influencers certainly had an impact, it is the people managing and leading within the organisation, that had the ability to determine, where possible, the level of that impact.

The thematic analysis revealed two primary themes directly related to the research question (theme 1 and 2 below) with the final theme still being of significance, but showing no direct relation to the research question, adding value rather to recommendations. These were:

Theme 1: Heightened performance reached a plateau. Both personal and professional impact was gained through organisational coaching, however the fields of impact were limited and were expected to sustain on a heightened plateau.

Theme 2: Parallel development magnified impact. The leader as coach initiative played a major role in the derived impact gained through the organisational coaching intervention.

Theme 3: Telephonic coaching reduced perceived empathy. Significant demand for face-to-face coaching was expressed.

To answer the research question therefore: *'What is the perceived impact of organisational coaching on coachees within a South African Context?'*

Whilst much was discussed on how to improve the overall sustainability and impact gained through organisational coaching, the impact was undoubtedly contributory, developmental, motivational and beneficial, from a coachee's perspective in South Africa.

6.3. Recommendations

The following recommendations, which are based on the outcome of the research, are intended for, but not limited to, professional coaches, CEO's, managers, organisational leaders and anyone considering the implementation or the facilitation of an organisational coaching intervention.

The researcher believes that with specific regards to the structure and format of coaching, and the desire and need for sustainability, there would be value in coaches including, and organisations requesting, that the model, as well as the overall process followed, is explained to coachees. Further, that both during and particularly toward the end of the intervention, participants should be coached in developing their own skills toward a level of so called self-coaching. With an understanding of the methodology and repeated practice of the process, a self-coaching culture will develop and contribute significantly to the overall impact and sustainability of the coaching intervention. Explaining and describing the specific coaching models and process utilised should form part of the coaching objectives.

It is recommended that participants are required to formally reflect at different stages of the intervention. They could be required to reflect in writing about their perception and impact the process has on them at various stages; what elements amplified this and what inhibitors they might have identified. It is through such a guided process of reflection that coachee development sustainability can be enhanced. Additionally through the coaches ability to respond and react to this reflective feedback, provided by the coachees, the overall impact of the intervention is elevated.

It was clearly stated that there were multiple developmental contributory influencers during the coaching intervention. Based on this it is recommended that additional appropriate development and training opportunities be undertaken in parallel to organisational coaching interventions. These additions will complement the intervention, thus providing greater return on investment. The extra value obtained through the 'Leader as Coach' initiative was evident, however if such or similar types of programs are not applicable, others focussing on personal development may carry just as much significance. It is recommended that organisations, CEOs and business leaders leverage the opportunity created by such interventions.

As a result of the diversified operational and geographic environments of multinational organisations, face-to-face coaching is a difficult and often impossible option. My proposal would be to clearly explain this to all participants and to further express the purpose and process behind telephonic organisational coaching. Certainly there is and should be an element of individualisation and flexibility. However, purpose of organisational coaching is to have a broad overall impact through a multitude of participants. To prevent any preconceptions and misconceptions reducing possible impact, this matter needs to be clearly explained and presented to all participants.

Applied intensity created an impact; it was also expressed to be an inhibitor to greater impact. Once again, explain the reason for the intensity. Create an environment where participants may express their concerns, but be aware of the real need, and possible inhibitor to impact, as time pressures are not always the culprit. Have a certain level of flexibility regarding intensity, and communicate if and where necessary, the specific stage of the intervention against a common benchmark indicator, to allow any possible inhibitors to be effectively addressed.

6.4. Suggestions for further research

- There would be value in researching the impact and sustainability on coachees in an organisational coaching intervention, where half of the participants received face-to-face coaching, whilst the other half received telephonic coaching.
- Would the personal impact and overall organisational result have been so successful if additional training and development had not occurred, specifically that within the realm of leader as coach? This is a question that would definitely require further research between organisational coaching participants, and organisations undertaking different approaches.
- A very broad, but interesting research concept would be that of: Is the strongest and most sustainable form of learning or development that of learning whilst teaching / doing? Is the greatest level of accountability and authentic ownership, created through self-accountability, as a result of empowerment, reflection and a necessity of awareness for self, peer and employee integrity?
- Although all participants responded positively, regarding their personal impact as a result of the organisational coaching intervention, it is clear that some had greater challenges and possibly, consequently, greater victories. It may be a fine line to draw, but are the greatest and most sustainable influences the most difficult and challenging? Is there any association between the personal perceived level of intervention difficulty, the challenge of implementing a changed mind-set or outlook, and the level of impact in achieving this accomplishment? The notion of where a great reward will often only present itself as a result of a great challenge. Additional and complimentary to this, there would be value in research establishing factors differentiating individual impact of an intervention. Is it possible that the greatest barrier to overcome for such an intervention to have an impact is that of self-reflection – ‘Johari’s window’?
- As one matures and develops through a coaching intervention, a stage is reached toward the end of the program, where certain skills need to be

taught, to aid sustainability. This can be applied through self-reflection to create a certain level of self-coaching. I believe that if this is done, a greater sustainability will endure as the participants will understand the process of analysis and the methodology of reflection in self-coaching. For example in explaining the methodology of the modified version of GROW / I-Grow / RE-GROW as expressed in the research report. If this is explained and laid out at the onset or the beginning of the process, the participants will acquire greater skill in this, or alternate methodology processes and foster greater self-learning through reflection. Research investigating the perceived long term impact and sustainability of coaching interventions, on coachees in this regard, will reveal contrasting evidence if favour of the proposed process. Is the assumed absence of such a processes, within the coaching intervention, a psychological ego or esteem barrier, certain coaches may possess, as a means of them wanting to ensure longevity, through the continuation of the coaching process? Is there an element of the hero style mentality within, or associated to, certain coaches?

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APPENDIX A: LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Respondent

I am in the process of completing an MBA through the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg (Wits). My MBA thesis is on the effectiveness of organisational interventions as a whole, with particular focus on objective achievement and higher levels of performance.
I would be grateful if I could arrange a 90 minute interview with you to better understand contributing factors of your recent accomplishments and continued success.
I understand that you are extremely busy; as such your agreement to contribute toward my research would be greatly appreciated.

The interview will not ask you to disclose any strategic activities or structures within your organisation, but rather focus more on surrounding elements and contributing factors of your success.
Confidentiality will be observed throughout the thesis process and the final research report will be for academic purposes only.

I will contact you to finalise timing and a location that is convenient for you

Thank you for your contributory assistance

Yours sincerely

Brett Wallace

APPENDIX B: ACTUAL RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Interview with Coachee's

Thank you for taking the time to assist me with my research, I understand that you are busy and as such I shall commit to adhering to the time fame we agreed on.

Once again I would like to re-assure you that the interview will only focus on the perceived impact of the organisational coaching intervention, and that confidentiality will be observed throughout the process. The final research report is for academic purposes only.

Firstly congratulations on your recent success, this is indeed an accomplishment to be proud of. In a fast moving competitive environment everything counts and success stories are not everyday occurrences.

1. Considering the organisational coaching intervention you took part in during 2010. Do you think this intervention had any significance or impact on you from a business perspective, and if so, could you please explain?

2. Considering your accomplishments, is there anything else internally – within the organisation or externally, that may have impacted your leadership and managerial style over the past 24 months?

3. Considering your success and accomplishments of the recent period, do you believe that organisational coaching contributed in any manner, to this success? If so could you please expand?

4. Are you aware of any specific model that was being followed or adhered to by you coach? If so was this as a result of your intuitive interpretation,

or was this structure explained to you by your coach during the coaching process?

5. Do you believe the organisational coaching intervention had any personal or non-business related impact on you as an individual?

6. If you had to reflect back on the scale of impact of the coaching intervention, has there been any variance to this level of impact, since the time of taking part in the intervention to now? If so could you please explain this impact and any possible reason behind it?

7. Considering present day, and any possible retained impact the organisational coaching intervention may have had, do you think this level of impact will alter at all over the next 12-18 month period?

8. Looking forward if you were in the position to advise someone, why would you either recommend or alternately advise against such organisational coaching interventions?

9. Is there anything in general regarding personal impact of the coaching intervention we have not covered that you would like to comment on?

Once again, thank you for your time and agreeing to assist me in my research.

APPENDIX C: CONSISTENCY MATRIX

Table 3: Consistency matrix

Research problem: Establish the perceived benefit of organisational coaching from the coachee's perspective.					
Sub-problem	**Literature Review**	**Research question**	**Source of data**	**Type of data**	**Analysis**
No Sub-problem	Buys, L. (2007) Bresser, F. (2011 Clutterbuck, D. (2004) Rogers, J. (2008) Turner, E (2009) Zeus, P and Skiffington, S. (2000) Feldman, D. (2001)	What is the perceived impact of organisational coaching on coachees within a South African context?	Participants in semi-structured interviews.	Qualitative	Qualitative. Constructivist – Interpretivist In-depth semi-structured interviews. Data analysis, data display, data interpretation. Conclusion.