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The role of wellbeing in business coaching in South Africa

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The role of wellbeing in business coaching in South Africa

Laura-Ann Tomasella

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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 Management in Business and Executive Coaching

Johannesburg, 2014

ABSTRACT

Adult development in organisations is a topic that takes on new implications in complex, uncertain economic times. Globalisation and rapid technological advancements, coupled with local issues that create a highly stressful environment, influence the productivity, performance and efficiency of individuals in the workplace.

This research report is built on three research questions. The first explores business coaching as a positive process that develops capacities in individuals in order to influence organisational objectives. The second investigates the belief that individuals' wellbeing affects their productivity, performance and efficiency in the workplace, thereby affecting organisational results. The third research question examines whether wellbeing plays a role in business coaching in South Africa, and if so, how that role is characterised.

Following a review of the literature, qualitative research was undertaken using semi-structured face-to-face interviews to investigate the research questions.

The exploration of the coaching-wellbeing issue confirms that an association between wellbeing and business coaching exists. The role it plays in the coaching agenda is that of 'outcome', and while wellbeing has a genuine presence, it appears as an unarticulated result or by-product of articulated, legitimate business coaching goals.

Wellbeing emerged in business coaching conversations through four themes – engagement, happiness, health and stress. Experiencing coaching as a goal-orientated development intervention is found to enhance wellbeing. The research report furthermore confirms that coaching results in improved happiness, health and wellbeing.

DECLARATION

I, Laura-Ann Tomasella, 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 Management in Business and Executive Coaching at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Laura-Ann Tomasella

Signed at Johannesburg, on the 31 day of October 2014

DEDICATION

To Francesca Lia, who has been with me, one way or another, through most of this journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The journey of writing this research report was meaningful to me in a multitude of ways. My deepest thanks to the people who supported, encouraged and gave me the odd prod in a positive direction.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to understand if wellbeing plays a role in business coaching interventions in South Africa. If this is the case, the intention is to understand what this role is and gain an understanding of it.

This question will be explored from two angles: a literature review will discuss the theory behind the question, and an investigation of what actually happens in practice will be performed.

Wellbeing is a positive, multifaceted concept that takes into account a number of aspects of the human experience, including mental and physical health (Dunn, 1959; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Singer, 1998; Waterman, 1993). Wellbeing in the workplace is about performance affecting the bottom-line: individuals who are physically and psychologically well are able to perform better, signifying higher organisational utility (Altchiler & Motta, 1994; Daley & Parfitt, 1996). Business coaching is a human developmental methodology contextualised in the workplace (Huffington, 2006; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Kahn, 2011; Passmore, 2007; Stern, 2004; Stout-Rostron, 2012; Wasylyshyn, 2003). Wellbeing is considered an important factor in business coaching (Passmore, 2007). The research aims to understand if the concept of wellbeing plays a role in the activity of coaching in the context of organisational life, and if so, what this role may be.

The purpose of this research is stated at the outset in order to assist the formulation of reader expectations. The research report has been written to gain an understanding of the social world of coaching in organisations – the findings are intended to be used as a 'sensitizing device' (Knafl & Howard, 1984; p. 18) and not to conceptualise theory. This is therefore a descriptive report of the results of verbatim narrative accounts describing the interviewees' perceptions

of coaching and wellbeing. The purpose of the report is therefore to explore the possibility of a relationship between the two subjects and consequently how that relationship may be characterised, with the benefit of sensitising the reader. As far as the researcher is aware, little academic research exists on the topic.

1.2 Context of the study

This research report is contextualised geographically in South Africa and 'universally' in the workplace.

The South African context is highly charged with its people being exposed both historically and presently to violence and crime. Among women, the incidence of rape and gender-related violence in the country is especially high. These factors coupled with health issues, such as HIV / AIDS at epidemic proportions, result in a population subject to stresses on their mental health (D.R. Williams et al., 2004). The South African population is therefore exposed to trauma which creates psychological distress (S.L. Williams et al., 2007). This is a population that makes up the workplace.

A quarter of South Africa's workforce is affected by matters that contribute to reduced performance at work – these range from unhealthy living conditions, lifestyles and diets, to the prevalence of HIV / AIDS in the workforce. This results in high labour turnover, low productivity and a burden on employee benefit programmes. Furthermore, stress results in low production, accidents, absenteeism and medical costs (Sieberhagen, Rothman & Pienaar, 2009).

Globally, families and businesses are affected by the turbulent and competitive economic times. Massive changes to the workplace have taken place in the very recent past as a result of globalisation and the increased usage of technology. Furthermore the workforce has diversified, with an increase in female participation and a growing number of dual-earner couples (Sparks, Faragher & Cooper, 2001). Stress and uncertainty is at a peak during this time of immense economic change (Weinberg & Cooper, 2012). Numerous factors

negatively affect the workforce including, job insecurity, underemployment, inflexible work schedules, work hours, control at work, managerial style, lack of health care benefits, skill obsolescence, understaffing and cultures of overwork (Kossek, T. Kalliath & P. Kalliath, 2012; Sparks et al., 2001). Macroeconomics affects people's wellbeing and traditional economics has the tendency to ignore the psychological costs of economic trends such as recession (Di Tella, MacCullogh & Oswald, 2003). Coping and growing in this context are topics worthy of consideration and study.

The question, 'how are you?' is asked recurrently by everyone, everywhere. In the workplace, the question that is the focus of occupational health practitioners is, 'how does employee wellbeing affect organisational effectiveness?' (Sparks et al., 2001). Dunn (1959) signalled transformation in the way we perceive health and wellbeing – from initially focussing on the curative, rehabilitative and preventative aspects, a recent transformation in our perspective has taken place with our energies now focussing on positive aspects of health and wellbeing. Wellness programmes are put in place in organisations to support the positive health of staff (Parks & Steelman, 2008), while coaching programmes also take on this optimistic stance, facilitating positive growth and development.

This research aims to understand the role of wellbeing in business coaching in South Africa. The research will explore the individual's perspective of coaching and wellbeing, contextualised within the organisation. The organisation will be discussed and observed in the role it plays relative to the individual employee, to coaching and to wellbeing.

1.3 Problem statement

1.3.1 *Main research question*

The purpose of this research shall be to analyse if wellbeing plays a role in business coaching in South Africa, and if so, to understand what that role may be.

The measure of success of business coaching engagement is the improvement of workplace behaviour (Passmore, 2007). However, theorists "implicitly put the same amount of value on well-being and self-regard as goals in themselves" (Passmore, 2007; p. 69). The research aims to understand the *nature of this role* – whether wellbeing is a goal or an objective in the coaching agenda. In other words, whether it may be considered a legitimate purpose of coaching in organisations or whether it appears as an outcome, product or result of the coaching process. The research questions if the individuals involved in coaching talk about wellbeing, and if so, it enquires what the individuals articulate.

This will be investigated by asking the following sub-questions in order to understand the constructs that make up the research question:

1.3.2 *Research question 1*

What is wellbeing?

1.3.3 *Research question 2*

What is business coaching?

1.3.4 *Research question 3*

What is the role of wellbeing in business coaching in South Africa?

The results of the two sub-questions will then be examined together to gain an understanding if a relationship exists between wellbeing and coaching, and if so, to understand its nature.

The research intends to look at the role wellbeing plays in the individual's coaching experience within the organisational context.

1.4 Significance of the study

Recent years have seen the emergence of investigations into the role of wellbeing within the framework of business coaching interventions. Wellbeing could play various roles in business coaching interventions, but this is not explored in depth and / or widely in the literature. Little theory explicitly links the constructs to each other with literature typically addressing 'stress and coaching' or 'wellbeing and psychology'. Nonetheless, wellbeing is seen as being of value to business coaching (Passmore, 2007). To the researcher's knowledge, the explicit question of whether wellbeing plays a role in coaching has not been asked. Existing research examining wellbeing and coaching either together assumes this relationship or does not explicitly characterise the nature of the relationship. In the South African context, there is certainly no local literature or research in existence which investigates the role of wellbeing in business coaching in the country.

The purpose of the research is to explore the relationship between wellbeing and coaching. The benefit of this will be to sensitise the reader to this topic either as a valid and interesting subject for further research or as a legitimate subject to be considered in the workplace. Research intended to sensitise readers to a point of view of a particular sample should show that little research has been done on the topic (Knafl & Howard, 1984). The small body of literature on the coaching-wellbeing relationship will be reviewed in the next chapter.

Both the academic and the practitioner will benefit from this research. Students and thinkers with an interest in coaching or wellbeing, or both, will value the

research. Due to its relationship to the workplace and organisational life, this research will provide guidance to human resource practitioners concerned about the wellbeing of their staff. It will also provide guidance to those considering the implementation of coaching programmes in their organisations. Furthermore it will present a complementary perspective for coaches with which to view their coaching approach.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

This study will only address business coaching in the South African context. It will not address wellbeing coaching, or what could be termed ‘health coaching’ as this has been described by Palmer, Tubbs and Whybrow (2003) as a coaching intervention for health. It is therefore not contextualised in the organisation nor does it focus on business-related goals. The study deals with business coaching and its objectives, and not health coaching or its objectives.

The research will only refer to wellbeing and not ‘wellness’. However, the study will briefly explore worksite ‘wellness’ programmes for the purpose of positioning itself in issues akin to human resources in businesses. The literature review will briefly look at wellbeing programmes and employee assistance programmes (EAPs) in order to understand the background into which human resource practitioners and coaches work with employees. The research report will also explore the meanings of the two terms.

While the research is located within the boundaries of the organisation, it will only investigate the individual person. The study will refer to the coachee as the target of coaching and the coach as the facilitator of coaching. The study cannot examine the organisation or organisational ‘system’ as a whole as this will expand the report beyond the required limits. Due to many individuals making up the collective whole, the organisational system must be taken into consideration, but this is not the focus of the current study.

The context in which organisations operate may also be considered from time to time if relevant to the research. The field of behavioural economics and job satisfaction theory will be reviewed in order to understand the larger context of occupational health and wellbeing.

The coaching discussed within this research report refers to a coaching dyad – an individual coach and individual coachee in conversation – sponsored by an organisation. It does not refer to one coach working with a group of coachees, whether they are a team or not. The subject of the research is essentially the coachee as the recipient of coaching and assuming the coaching is beneficial, the object of improvement and development.

The 'business coach' or 'coach' referred to in the research report is someone who operates externally to the organisation, and does not play the role of internal coach.

1.6 Definition of terms

1.6.1. The term 'business' refers to an organisation engaging in and aiming to create products and services operating in an economic system. The research may refer to this as the commercial 'organisation' and 'business' interchangeably. This research report is contextualised in business because it is written in the environment of a business school and this is a Masters of Management specialised in the field of business and executive coaching.

1.6.2. The term 'business coach' refers to coaches who operate within all facets of business, and who may be termed 'executive coaches' or 'corporate coaches', but who do not necessarily only coach executives. When referring to 'coach', this report is only referring to business coaches, and not 'life' or other coaches.

1.6.3. Wellbeing and well-being are terms that may at times be used interchangeably. The working definition for wellbeing will be: a concept that describes a 'way of being'.

1.6.4. The working definition for coaching will be: a concept that describes ‘an intervention’.

1.6.5. The coachee is the person being coached, while the client is the organisation who employs the coachee and the coach who is engaged to intervene with that coachee (Joo, 2005). In direct quotes from articles, the ‘client’ may refer to the person being coached.

1.7 Assumptions

The following assumptions have been made regarding the study:

1.7.1. That the sample respondents have enough knowledge to clearly articulate answers to interview questions.

1.7.2. That the total number of respondents is sufficient to obtain adequate data.

1.7.3. That interviewees were articulate enough to verbalise an idea of what the topics meant to them.

1.7.4. South Africa refers to the South African working context. Assumptions about the definition of terms in the title of the research were made, and these were presented as ‘working definitions’ in order to provide a foundational point to work from.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review will introduce and discuss the key constructs present in the research problem. These key constructs will be explored using peer-reviewed articles found via the Wits Business School databases at disposal. Articles were preferred on the basis of number of citations, but it is important to note that the research is contextualised in South Africa, and that South African journal articles may not be cited to the extent of international articles.

Firstly, the review will explore a definition of the concept of wellbeing. The working definition adopted to conceptualise wellbeing: is 'a way of being'. A wide range and abundance of articles exist around its definitional complexities (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999; Dunn, 1959; Ryff & Singer, 1998) and its application in practice (Di Tella, MacCulloch & Oswald, 2003; Kahneman & Krueger, 2006; Keyes, Shmotkin & Ryff, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Waterman, 1993). Due to the broad definitions of wellbeing, selecting the most pertinent articles was generally a complex task.

The second construct in the research is 'business coaching'. The working definition of coaching adopted to initiate discussion is: 'an intervention'. This characterises it as an activity.

The literature linking wellbeing and coaching will be explored. This is the third construct present in the title of the research report. There is little academic literature which explicitly considers the role of wellbeing within business coaching or the relationship between the two.

2.2 Definition of topic or background discussion

The topic in question is the role of wellbeing in business coaching. In other words, this research aims to understand whether wellbeing is discussed or not

discussed in coaching conversations and if it is, how wellbeing is characterised in business coaching. In both instances, the research will explore how wellbeing is addressed, either as a goal to the coaching process, as a part of the agenda, as a framework or paradigm to work within, as a foundational block or as an outcome.

In order to establish a foundation to the research question, the study is built on two underpinning topics, namely, the exploration of wellbeing and the exploration of business coaching in South Africa. Upon these two constructs, the study will aim to understand the role of wellbeing in the context of the organisation, and its impact on the individual who has experienced coaching, the coach who coaches in organisations and the HR practitioner who drives coaching in the organisation. How South African companies deal with the issue of employee wellbeing is explored as a side-line issue, informing and interacting with business coaching in the organisational context, but is not part of the scope of the research.

2.3 Conceptual framework

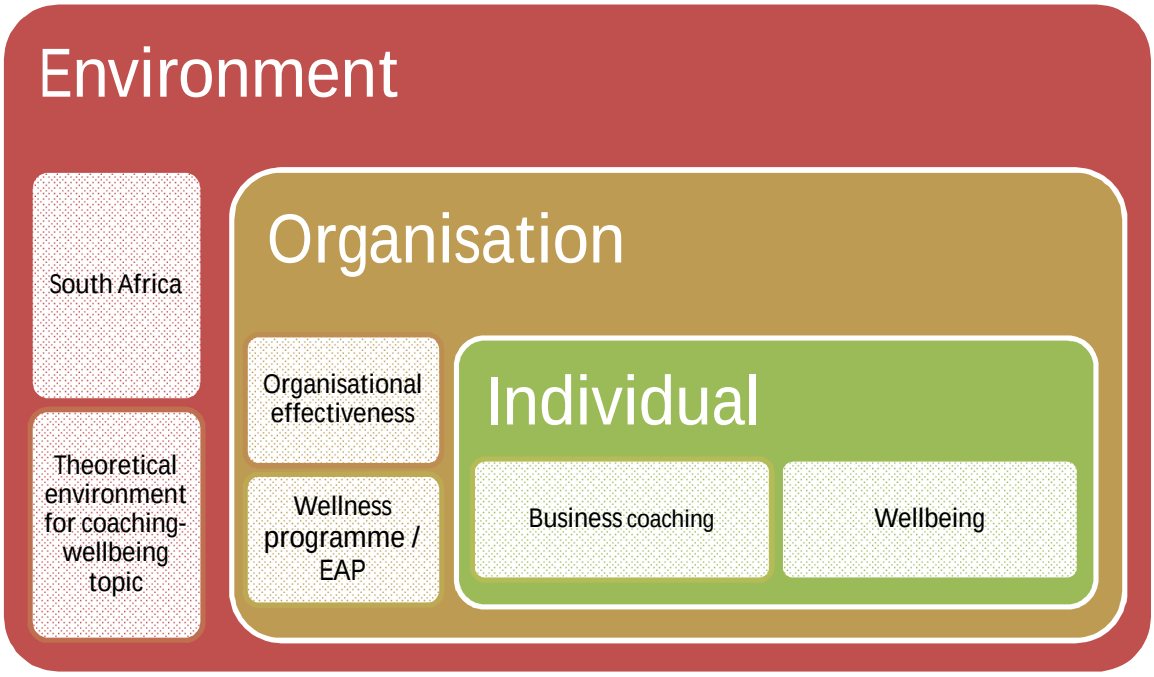

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2.4 Wellbeing

Wellbeing is a complex construct referring to a person's physical state of 'being well' and describes a 'way of being' in terms of optimal functioning and experience. The positive composition of the term indicates that "the state of being well is not a relatively flat, uninteresting area of 'unsickness' but is rather a fascinating and ever-changing panorama of life itself, inviting exploration of its every dimension" (Dunn, 1959; p. 786).

The way in which wellbeing is defined affects the macro and micro aspects of our collective and individual existence. In government it affects economic, education and social policy and in our homes it affects how we parent our children to how we conduct our professional lives (Di Tella, MacCulloch & Oswald, 2003; Kahneman & Krueger, 2006; Keyes, Shmotkin & Ryff, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Waterman, 1993). The concept is explicitly positive (well)

and about human existence (being) (Diener, Suh, Lucas & Smith, 1999; Dunn, 1959; Ryff & Singer, 1998). It is considered an integrative concept (Ryff & Singer, 2002), incorporating and guiding a broad range of subjects from mental to physical health of individuals and their social structures (Keyes et al., 2002; Ryff & Singer, 2002).

2.4.1 *Definition of wellbeing*

Traditionally, wellbeing has been viewed from two overarching perspectives: hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. The former refers to happiness and describes wellbeing in terms of the attaining pleasure and avoiding pain (Ryan & Deci 2001). The latter refers to living with a sense of meaning and actualising one's potential, and defines wellbeing in terms of personal functionality (Keyes et al., 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Waterman, 1993). These two traditions have a long history with theoreticians opening their discussions on wellbeing with definitions from Aristotle, who considered hedonic happiness a vulgar ideal, with true happiness being found by expressing virtue through actions and finding gratification via right or wrong desires (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989; Waterman, 1993). These two foci will be explored in the review that follows.

When reading the following two subsections, it is imperative to bear in mind that wellbeing is considered a positive multidimensional phenomenon (Ryff & Singer, 1998) that embraces aspects of both hedonic and eudaimonic definitions of wellbeing – each perspective being distinct yet overlapping with the other (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2008). "Wellness is not just a single amorphous condition, but rather it is a complex state made up of overlapping levels of wellness" (Dunn, 1959; p. 786). It integrates external factors at macro-level such as social structures, and internal factors at micro-level such as individual biology (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Singer, 2002).

2.4.1.1 Hedonic wellbeing

Hedonic wellbeing describes wellbeing as happiness derived from achieving goals and living a valuable life (Diener, 2000 & Keyes et al., 2002). According to Ryan and Deci (2001), most research into hedonic psychology assesses subjective wellbeing (SWB) with SWB being the main research outcome variable. SWB is a term used to represent colloquial 'happiness', and comprises three components: life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood (also referred to as affect), and the absence of negative mood or affect (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003; Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith, 1999). Life satisfaction is a cognition, resulting from reflection, while happiness or positive mood is an emotion (Argyle & Martin, 1991). SWB suggests that wellbeing is a function of goal attainment based on unique individual values rather than a function of personality traits (Oishi, Diener, Lucas & Suh, 1999).

Equating hedonia to wellbeing and using SWB as a measure or indicator to define psychological wellbeing is debatable due to it being highly idiosyncratic and culturally specific (Diener et al., 2003; Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Waterman (1993) suggests that hedonic enjoyment is characterised by feeling pleasant affect when physical, intellectual and social needs are satisfied. This suggests that hedonic wellbeing can be represented as a pleasure / pain continuum in human experience (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Hence, components of SWB can be divided up as follows: life satisfaction, satisfaction with important domains (like work or marriage), positive affect (the experience of pleasant moods and emotions) and low levels of negative affect (Diener, 2000). Feeling more positive affect and less negative affect point to psychological wellbeing (Diener, Sandvik & Pavot, 1991).

2.4.1.2 Eudaimonic wellbeing

Eudaimonia can be described as having 'feelings of personal expressiveness' or living congruently with oneself (Waterman, 1993). The word 'eudaimonia'

derives from '*daimon*' or 'true self' and refers to striving towards excellence and perfection, which gives significance and direction to life (Ryff, 1989). Ryan and Deci (2001) suggest that eudaimonic wellbeing comes about when people are living in accordance with their deepest values and are fully engaged in their activities. It is sometimes referred to as psychological wellbeing (PWB), which describes thriving though the existential challenges of life – pursuing meaningful goals, personal development and establishing positive relationships (Keyes et al., 2002).

Ryan and Deci (2000) indicate that the state of personal expressiveness (PE) can be described as feeling intensely alive and existing in a state of authenticity. This experience is felt when people feel intrinsically motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000), experience a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; 1988), or have a peak experience (Maslow 1964 and 1968). PE is associated with being challenged and endeavouring which could affect short-term happiness negatively; while hedonic enjoyment is not associated with challenge and therefore no endeavour (Waterman, 1993).

Eudaimonic wellbeing has also been explored from a lifespan perspective of positive mental functioning (Ryff & Singer, 2000). Flourishing throughout one's life and realising one's true potential is described as psychological wellbeing (PWB), distinct from SWB in that wellbeing is more complex than being happy and satisfied with life. PWB can be defined by and measured by six dimensions representing aspects of "human actualisation: autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery and positive relatedness" (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; p.720). Furthermore, positive mental functioning is shown to promote positive physical health (Ryff & Singer, 2000). Whereas SWB sees wellbeing in terms of life satisfaction and happiness, PWB derives from conceptualisations of human development and the existential challenges of life (Keyes et al., 2002).

Eudaimonic wellbeing has also been explored from a third perspective in the literature, namely self-determination theory (SDT) (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In this

formulation, wellbeing is seen as life satisfaction and psychological health, and revolves around self-realisation as the core in defining wellbeing. It takes a two-pronged approach, attempting to describe what it means to actualise oneself as well as exploring how this can be achieved. The theory puts forward three fundamental psychological needs – autonomy, competence and relatedness – and posits that the satisfaction of these needs is essential to wellbeing, among other aspects of the human experience (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). SDT recommends contextual and cultural factors that support wellbeing, and that the fundamental psychological needs influence and foster subjective wellbeing (SWB) and eudaimonic wellbeing, rather than define it (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Life satisfaction is a theme that is explored extensively in wellbeing literature (Diener et al., 1999; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989; Waterman, 1993).

2.4.1.3 Hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing together

The literature has examined and discussed the two positions of wellbeing from different viewpoints, which have overlapped and complemented each other. According to Ryan and Deci (2001, p.161), both viewpoints grapple with "cultural relativism versus universals in human nature". The concept of 'human flourishing' is measured and conceptualised as a multidimensional combination of the two (Keyes, 2002). This concept can be described as going beyond happiness, encompassing both feeling good – hedonia – and doing good – eudaimonia (Frederickson, 2013; Keyes, 2002). This positive psychological function – the opposite of common mental disorders – is discussed below.

2.4.2 *The psychology of well-being*

The psychology of wellbeing or positive psychological functioning (Ryff, 1989) is discussed in this subsection from three points of view: personality, emotions or affect, and attachment. The relationship between psychology and categories of wellbeing deals with the meaning of the construct as well the connection between them.

The first perspective looks at the personality traits that are consistently associated with personifying wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2001). These are observed in the relationship between emotions and happiness. SWB deals with the notion of feeling emotion and reflecting on it. This is the second point of view referred to above. Self-perception is the mechanism that judges emotion as positive or negative, and that generally positive affect is more prevalent than negative affect (Diener & Lucas, 2000 as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2001). Argyle and Martin (1991) propose that people who are successful at creating frequent positive affect for themselves are likely to be happy. Ryan and Deci (2001) explain that the eudaimonic position is not so much a definition of wellbeing, but rather an outcome of living with meaning. Eudaimonia expresses "emotional access and congruence [being] important for well-being" (Ryan & Deci, p. 151).

The concept of attachment in psychology theory appreciates the importance of supportive, trusting personal relationships between people for mental health and congruence (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Attachment is also referred to in the literature as relatedness: "[o]ne would expect a strong, universal association between quality of relationships and well-being outcome" (Ryan & Deci, 2001; p. 154). Secure, intimate and meaningful attachments therefore correlate to greater wellbeing. Social relationships, especially marriage, influence positive affect and satisfaction in addition to preventing distress (Argyle & Martin, 1991; Ryff & Singer, 2000).

2.4.3 *Physical health and wellbeing*

Generations of scholars and philosophers have believed that health and spirit are inextricably connected (Ryan & Frederick, 1997). The association between physical health and wellbeing seems obvious, especially negative terms: illness brings with it pain and displeasure, and can furthermore present functional limitations, restricting potential for positive sensations and life satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Singer, 2002).

Defining health positively points to conceptions of flourishing, leading a meaningful life and having quality attachments (Ryff & Singer, 2000). Embodying these eudaimonic dimensions yields positive effects on health, and wellbeing affects biology (Ryan & Frederick, 1997; Ryff & Singer 2000; Ryff & Singer, 2002). Positive relationships have particularly salubrious effects (Keyes et al., 2002; Ryff & Singer, 2000). Interpersonal flourishing is used to describe the relationship between personal wellbeing and thriving (Ryff & Singer, 2000).

Feeling alive and energetic is indicative of positive physical health and eudaimonic wellbeing. Subjective vitality (Ryan & Frederick, 1997), a term describing this state of having energy available to oneself and the conscious experience of feeling positively alive and enthusiastic, is affected by both somatic and psychological factors. Somatic influences such as sick and experiencing fatigue or pain, and psychological influences such as having a purpose, being effective and being in love are examples of these factors. The subjective feeling of vitality can therefore be a phenomenological indicator of personal wellbeing (Ryan & Frederick, 1997).

2.4.4 *Wellbeing and business*

Wellbeing is arguably a crucial variable in an individual's economic decisions (A. Sousa-Poza & A.A. Sousa-Poza, 2000). Economic performance is relevant because it is a means to an end: the enrichment of people's feeling of wellbeing (Oswald, 1997). Wellbeing and business are discussed in this literature review as job satisfaction on the micro-level and behavioural economics on the macro-level. These reflect the two major trends at the juncture of economic and psychological research, being the investigation of wellbeing at work and the investigation of general wellbeing and happiness in terms of economics (A. Sousa-Poza & A.A. Sousa-Poza, 2000). Wellness programmes within organisations are discussed later.

Over the past 50 years industry has been globalised and information technology has revolutionised how we work. The workplace has changed radically and in

response, the workforce has diversified. Employees face turbulent times, change and uncertainty which impacts on occupational wellbeing. These concerns include job security, work hours, control at work and organisational managerial style (Sparks, Faragher & Cooper, 2001). In an organisational context employee wellbeing is referred to as occupational, organisational or worksite wellness / wellbeing.

In South Africa, The Occupational Health and Safety Act (no. 85 of 1993) deals with issues relating to health and safety in the workplace, but its definition of health is phrased in terms of the absence of ill health or injury attributed to work-related causes, with no obvious reference to psychological wellbeing. As a developing country, issues such as safety and heavy physical work take priority over psychological and social stressors (Sieberhagen et al., 2009). In this research report, wellness in the workplace is discussed with reference to white-collar workers, rather than individuals involved in manual work which may result in injury and which has its own particular stressors.

2.4.4.1 Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction is a psychological construct (Wanous, Reichers & Hudy, 1997) that has been described as 'well-being at work' (A. Sousa-Poza & A.A. Sousa-Poza, 2000) as it is an important predictor of overall wellbeing (Judge & Watanabe, 1993; A. Sousa-Poza & A.A. Sousa-Poza, 2000). Job satisfaction is considered an important aspect of the individual's life (Faragher, Cass & Cooper, 2005). It has been included in this literature review as it is relevant to subjective wellbeing (Furnham, 1991; A. Sousa-Poza & A.A. Sousa-Poza, 2000) as well as being relevant to the context of the research, which investigates the individual functioning in relation to his environment, or the worker within an organisational setting.

Job satisfaction or occupational wellbeing (Warr, 1990) has been viewed both as a universal concept and as constituted by components of satisfaction within the range of aspects that make up an individual's job (Faragher et al., 2005).

This has been debated because a single-item measure can be either useful or lacking, depending on the assumptions made about individuals in the workplace and the characterisation of business (Wanous et al., 1997).

Conversely, job satisfaction has been viewed as a construct consisting of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction dimensions (Warr, 1990). These can be divided into eight separate elements as a diagnostic and evaluative scale. According to Warr, Cook & Wall (1979, p. 130), these elements include: “work involvement, intrinsic job motivation, higher order need strength, perceived intrinsic job characteristics, job satisfaction, life satisfaction, happiness and self-rated anxiety”. The term ‘job’ is referred to as the tasks undertaken in a specific organisational setting, while ‘work’ refers to jobs in a general sense (Warr et al., 1979).

This scale includes the element of ‘life satisfaction’, which has been examined in the literature in terms of ‘leisure satisfaction’ (Furnham, 1991) or life beyond solely the contemplation of one’s job. Job satisfaction and general wellbeing may not necessarily be positively correlated as individuals could compensate for work dissatisfaction outside of the workplace, and nevertheless report good general subjective wellbeing (Furnham, 1991). Nonetheless, job and life satisfaction are significantly and reciprocally connected (Judge & Watanabe, 1993).

The literature suggests that the variables that determine job satisfaction can be seen as “work-role outputs: work compensation, job security, advancement opportunities, interesting job, independent work, helping people, usefulness to society, good relationship with management, good relationship with colleagues” (A. Sousa-Poza & A.A. Sousa-Poza, 2000; p. 519). A. Sousa-Poza & Sousa-A.A. Poza (2000) found that a change in one of these variables has an influence on job satisfaction, and that having an interesting job and good relations with management ranked as the most important variables, followed by high income and being able to work independently.

Faragher et al. (2005) report that the link between job satisfaction levels and mental and physical health has been explored in the literature, with low job satisfaction being associated with burnout, self-esteem, depression and anxiety in order of strength of association. The connections found suggest that job satisfaction levels are important aspects influencing the health and wellbeing of workers, and that organisations should develop stress management policies to identify unique work practices that cause the most dissatisfaction in their organisations, as well as create policies to eradicate these practices in an exercise to improve employee health.

The subsection on job satisfaction has been included in this literature review on the assumption that satisfied workers should perform better, and that organisational performance influences economic performance (A. Sousa-Poza & A.A. Sousa-Poza, 2000). Agreeable conditions facilitate wellbeing, and the research in the field examines this assumption as a background to individual wellbeing.

2.4.4.2 Behavioural economics

Behavioural economics investigates general wellbeing and happiness in terms of economics. In the literature, wellbeing is interchangeably referred to as happiness, life satisfaction and social welfare (Easterlin, 2003). One of the most characteristic questions of this field is: ‘does money make people happy?’. The field asks if economic growth is positively associated with social welfare or happiness (Easterlin, 1974). Politicians and policy makers need to make decisions based on empirical evidence, rather than on assumptions about happiness, such as the notion that economic growth and productivity betters society (Oswald, 1997) as macroeconomic change affects people’s happiness (Di Tella et al., 2003). It is important to distinguish that while economists typically measure utility, subjective wellbeing measures aspects of individual’s perceptions of their experiences (Kahneman & Krueger, 2006).

The field studies people's subjective reports of their preferences and intentions, rather than the long-established approach of economists studying people's actual preferences, choices and decisions (Oswald, 1997). "It is not straightforward to find believable macroeconomic instruments that can identify the well-being equation" (Di Tella et al., 2003; p. 3). Due to the complexity of individual happiness, people make inconsistent choices and fail to learn from experience. The relationship between true preferences and actual choices is not necessarily rational and linear. For this reason, self-reporting on subjective wellbeing has been examined by economists to measure consumer preferences and social welfare (Kahneman & Krueger, 2006).

Various methods are used to measure 'experienced utility' and 'remembered utility'. The former is what people feel about experiences in real-time (hedonic flow on the pleasure / pain continuum) while the latter is how they remember their past experiences (Di Tella et al., 2003; Kahneman & Krueger, 2006). Kahneman and Krueger (2006) explain how the relationship between the two aspects of utility is of interest to wellbeing because researchers have found that in retrospective evaluations, the duration of experiences of pain and discomfort is completely neglected. Rather, emphasis is placed on three points: the end of the episode, the peak or the trough.

The measurement of subjective wellbeing (SWB) is related to individuals' health outcomes, neurological characteristics and functioning. Responses can predict future behaviour and measures collected in real-time can provide a view of wellbeing connected to how people spend their time – in a pleasant or unpleasant emotional state. Findings from self-reported data on wellbeing can impact on economics in that it can be used to complement traditional forms of data informing policy. Countries are developing national wellbeing indices for this reason (Kahneman & Krueger, 2006). The Kingdom of Bhutan measures 'Gross National Happiness', and other national scales in countries like the United Kingdom and Australia also exist.

Returning to the question asked at the beginning of this subsection, ‘does money make people happy?’, the research has yielded mixed results. A seminal paper by Easterlin (1974), illustrates that while money is an important factor contributing to happiness, it is not the only determinant. Within countries, a clear positive association between income and happiness was found, while in national comparisons among countries, the association was weak (Easterlin, 1974).

In developed economies, economic growth has been found to ‘buy’ only a small quantity of additional happiness. This is due to the phenomenon of ‘relative income’ (Oswald, 1997) where happiness increases as income rises, but this is based on the assumption that other’s income remains static (Clark & Oswald, 1995). This calls into question the consequence of a whole society getting richer. In practice, unemployment is the chief contributing factor to unhappiness, spurring the idea that rather than concentrating on economic growth, government policy should focus on creating employment (Clark & Oswald, 1994; Oswald, 1997). The fear of being unemployed also has an effect on peoples’ psyche (Di Tella et al., 2003).

2.4.5 *Worksite wellness*

Worksite wellness programmes are discussed briefly in order to understand how organisations view and support the wellness of their staff. The term refers to the services funded and promoted by organisations to support good health, or to identify and rectify potential health-related problems (Parks & Steelman, 2008). These services are referred to as programmes, and can be called organisational wellness programmes, or in the South African context – employee assistance programmes (EAPs).

These services can be provided directly by the organisation or subcontracted through a third specialist party, and may be classified into two categories: EAPs that focus on fitness and comprehensive EAPs. Fitness orientated programmes encourage physical movement and provide access to facilities (Daley & Parfitt,

1996). Comprehensive programmes include a fitness component, but provide educational assistance on finance, nutrition and stress reduction, among others (Parks & Steelman, 2008).

The rationale behind companies offering EAPs is mainly to promote job satisfaction and reduce absenteeism – two phenomena that are measurable. Other reasons are to develop high-functioning employees, improve their health as well as have an influence over healthcare, to provide added benefits to employees and improve their morale (Parks & Steelman, 2008). Furthermore, it is thought that the development of a healthy workforce through health-promotion schemes may enhance employee wellbeing, commitment and performance (Sparks et al., 2001). This is based on the assumption that employees who are physically and psychologically well are able to perform better and the effect would constitute higher organisational utility (Altchiler & Motta, 1994; Daley & Parfitt, 1996).

Health conditions contribute to lost productivity, commitment and performance. Depression, anxiety, negative mood states, migraines, decreased mental alertness, failing eyesight, respiratory illness, arthritis, diabetes, gastro intestinal disorders and musculoskeletal disorders can all have an effect on organisational effectiveness (Berry, Mirabito & Baun, 2010; Daley & Parfitt, 1996; Sparks et al., 2001).

Employers who provide EAPs are viewed as placing importance on employee's wellbeing, boosting their attitude towards the organisation (Daley & Parfitt 1996; Parks & Steelman, 2008). Participation in EAPs has been associated with job satisfaction as well as employee retention. Employees participating in EAPs tend to have lower absenteeism rates, supporting the assumption that these individuals are healthier so are less likely to be absent due to illness. Similarly, the association between participation in wellness programmes and job satisfaction is positive (Daley & Parfitt, 1996; Parks & Steelman, 2008). This is due to the presence of the EAP creating the impression that the organisation values, cares for and supports its employees, contributing to the contribution of

a positive organisational culture. EAPs are also shown to be important means of recruiting and retaining, as well as reducing stress levels (Parks & Steelman, 2008).

2.4.6 *Stress*

Stress is another complex construct, reflecting a change in the physical or internal state of the individual in response to challenging or threatening stressors (Lazarus 1993). Broken down into its logical components, stress according to Lazarus (1993) is made up of the following:

2.4.6.1 *A causal agent:* referred to as a stressor, a causal agent may be internal or external to the individual. This demonstrates that stress is inherently relative – there is a person-environment relationship;

2.4.6.2 *An evaluation:* this is a judgement of whether the stressor is threatening or benign. This can take place as a cognitive or physiological response;

2.4.6.3 *Coping processes:* utilised to deal with the stressor. The coping process can be physical or mental;

2.4.6.4 *The stress reaction:* a complex pattern of consequences on the mind and body.

One can therefore distinguish between psychological and physiological stress (Lazarus, 1993). Situations requiring physical effort trigger primitive physiological responses – the autonomic nervous system controlling functions of the body that are not under conscious control, such as heart rate – and also cause emotional distress and physical illness. On the other hand, stress can also benefit goal attainment and create energy in challenging circumstances. It can therefore be divided into two types: eustress and distress (Colligan & Higgins, 2005; Selye, 1976 as cited in Lazarus, 1993). The former can be described as positive and motivating, or salutogenic, or while the latter term negative and damaging, or pathogenic stress (Sieberhagen et al., 2009). While stress can stimulate productivity and efficiency, it has been associated with a

number of physical disorders as well as having a psychological effect (Colligan & Higgins, 2005).

In searching for literature related to stress in the workplace, a bigger weighting examines the ‘distress’ form of stress. Work ‘distress’ is also referred to as “job strain [which] occurs when job demands are high and job decision latitude is low” (Karasek, 1979; p. 287). The term ‘job decision latitude’ refers to the transformation of stress into action (Karasek, 1979), while the term ‘job strain’ refers to employees who face high demands yet have minor control over their work. These are people who are hypothesised as being at risk for ill health (Tsutsumi & Kawakami, 2004). In South Africa, stress is regarded as a serious occupational risk, but it is approached pathogenically and is managed as a cause of ill-health, while eustress is not vigorously explored in the workplace (Sieberhagen et al., 2009).

It is well established that negative stress in work and life is a causal factor of physiological and psychological disruptions and even disease. A clear relationship exists between daily stress and physical health, both at the time of the stress response and subsequently (DeLongis, Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). This includes problems such as head and backaches, colds and sore throats (DeLongis et al., 1988). The connection between daily stress and mood disturbance in individuals is more complicated. In the workplace, stress affects both the individual and organisation through impacting morale, interpersonal relations, medical aid expenses, production errors and accidents, labour turnover, productivity and absenteeism (Sieberhagen et al., 2009; Colligan & Higgins, 2005). Employee assistance programmes (EAPs) provide a facility for employees to flourish and take responsibility for their own wellbeing (Colligan & Higgins, 2005).

EAPs are a support mechanism designed and encouraged by the organisation as a coping mechanism (Faragher et al., 2005). The design and delivery of EAPs can be based on risk assessments of stress, pinpointing aspects of work that cause the most dissatisfaction among employees. Working hours,

autonomy or work control, workload and management style are all factors that raise the level of stress. Improving these factors will impact job satisfaction and will produce the greatest benefits to the employees' mental health (Faragher et al., 2005). The design of EAPs should also consider the perceived positive and negative stressors in the workplace. In other words, the upshot of work demands perceived as challenging, is positive for employee wellbeing and has constructive results for individual wellbeing. Conversely, work demands perceived as obstructing productivity and performance produce lower job satisfaction levels and higher turnover (Sparks et al., 2001). Work stress should therefore be viewed from a more holistic perspective, integrating eustress (Nelson & Simmons, 2003).

2.5 Coaching

The coaching referred to in this definition will be 'business coaching' – this means that the research does not consider life or other kinds of coaching. Coaching is therefore referred to in context of an organisation or system with the aims and goals of the organisation in mind – productivity, performance, efficiency, growth – discussed below.

Coaching here also refers to the use of external coaches in organisations rather than internal coaches or managers-as-coaches. In other words, the research focuses on coaches whose exclusive aim is to coach the individual employee and who have no official authority over their coachees (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

This subsection attempts to provide a conceptual understanding of business coaching, and expands on the presentation of its definition by exploring terms, skills and methodologies associated with the subject.

2.5.1 *The definition of business coaching*

Definitions of coaching vary in clarity and concision (Grant, 2001; Joo, 2005; Kilburg, 1996; Stern, 2004) and while literature often takes a practitioner perspective, rigorous qualitative and / or quantitative academic research has lagged behind (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). Business coaching is a multifaceted experiential process, made up of composite constructs and various interconnected parties. It is important be aware that it is contextualised by the organisation (Huffington, 2006; Joo, 2005; Kahn, 2011; Passmore, 2007; Stern, 2004; Stout-Rostron, 2012). The goal of business coaching is therefore to promote success at all levels of the organisation by affecting the actions of the individuals being coached (Kahn, 2011).

The promotion of business success through coaching could be characterised as "performance enhancing behavioural change" (Passmore, 2007; p. 69) or as furthering the effectiveness of the client in his or her role in the organisation (Huffington, 2006). Executive coaching is described as "an effective positive individual change methodology" (Grant, Curtayne & Burton 2009, p. 397), and the coaching relationship as a "directionally influential helping dynamic" established between coach and coachee (Kemp, 2008; p. 32).

Coaches encourage coachees to think for themselves and develop an awareness of their behaviour which has an impact on their performance in the workplace. This is based on a dynamic relationship between the parties, the results of which impact performance at a systemic level – individual, team and organisation (Stout-Rostron, 2012). The use of words such as 'promote', 'encourage', 'facilitate' and 'think for themselves' all indicate the theme of self-directed learning, but the extent to which definitions in the literature emphasise direct instruction and teaching versus self-directed learning also vary (Grant, 2001). Simply stated, a coach "helps to carry an executive from one point to another" (Stern, 2004; p. 154).

In defining coaching, the core constructs that arise thematically include collaboration and partnership, mutuality and equality, emphasis on relationship, constructing solutions versus analysing problems, a positive-focussed process, assuming that clients are functional and capable, recognising that the coach has the expertise to facilitate learning rather than being subject-matter-experts, and that goal attainment is more effective and sustained in adults through self-directed learning (Grant, 2001; Passmore, 2007; Stern, 2004; Stout-Rostron, 2012).

Coaching is described as a positive intervention rather than dealing with 'derailing' behaviour as a corrective or remedial intervention (Stout-Rostron, 2012). It deals with 'non-clinical' populations, focussing on developing competencies and capacities (Green, Oades & Grant, 2006). Business coaching is also viewed differently to counselling within the workplace as the negative perceptions and stigma associated with counselling does not carry through to coaching, which is viewed positively (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2005).

The purpose of coaching is to improve work effectiveness and behaviour, and is seen by business as a learning and development tool (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Wasylyshyn, 2003). Coaching is offered in order to produce business results for employers through the provision of objective feedback to leaders as means to cultivate growth and align individuals with organisational values (Kahn, 2011; Sherman & Freas, 2004). The developmental areas of executive coaching, aimed at coaching leaders, comprise of increasing and supporting intra- and inter-personal self-awareness, self-expression, awareness of complexity of leadership role, engagement, coherence, resourcefulness, locus of control and self-actualisation values (Cilliers, 2011).

Coaching is emerging as a strategic developmental tool used in industry due to turbulent economic times, globalisation and radical innovation in the transmission of information (Huffington, 2006). While it is perceived to benefit individuals and organisations positively, the domain of what coaching entails, the methodologies used and the scope of its outcomes, is varied and lacks

empirical evidence. This makes it problematic to put boundaries around the construct (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

Various local and global establishments exist which regulate the coaching industry. These organisations provide their own definitions of coaching as well as ethical guidelines. This literature review has been informed by academic journal articles.

2.5.2 *The coaching intervention*

The coaching conversation is a face-to-face or telephone interaction between a coach and coachee (Stout-Rostron, 2012) around which both procedural matters and content is designed by and agreed to by the parties involved (Stern, 2004). It is normally a short- to medium-term engagement but may continue over a number of years. Business coaching conversations are an exercise in relatedness, rather than accomplishment or adherence to any particular kind of coaching methodology or skill (Kahn, 2011). The conversations themselves are intended as an opportunity for reflection, with the focus on transforming them into the potential for learning and action. With this in mind, the coach encourages and holds the coachee accountable to work toward achieving desired outcomes over a series of sessions (Stout-Rostron, 2012).

The coaching intervention can be defined as the series of coaching conversations between the same coach and the same coachee, supported by similar goals, outcomes and themes. The term ‘intervention’ is used with regularity in coaching literature, but its meaning is assumed. Feldman and Lankau (2005) identify four phases of the coaching relationship when they refer to the coaching intervention: data gathering, feedback, periodic coaching sessions and evaluation. These are quite standard over coaching relationships, even though coaches have highly unique and idiosyncratic approaches to the discipline (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

Kilburg (1996) identifies five major components of the executive coaching intervention, where the coach plays a “helping role with an individual identified as a client” to learn how to function better as a person and leader in an organisation (Kilburg, 1996; p. 138). These components include, “establishing an intervention agreement, building a coaching relationship, creating and maintaining expectations of success, providing experiences of mastery and cognitive control, and evaluating and attributing coaching successes and failures” (Kilburg, 1996; pp. 138-9). The intervention could therefore be described as the overarching format in which the cycle of coaching conversations take place.

2.5.3 *The background of coaching*

Business coaching is informed by various allied and parallel disciplines – leadership theory, management theory, organisational development, consulting, psychology, adult learning theory and sports coaching (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Sherman & Freas, 2004; Stout-Rostron, 2012). From the standpoint of business executive coaching, the coaching intervention occurs within the context of the workplace, underpinning a clear argument for coaching to originate from this point and be informed by traditional psychotherapy, rather than originate from psychotherapy and be informed by the other established fields mentioned (Kahn, 2011; Passmore, 2007). This emphasises that coaches be versed in the leadership issues, business and management principles and organisational politics in which executives operate (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

Initially coaching was applied in organisations to correct deficiencies in employees, but recently it has been used to facilitate learning and tap potential, especially in high performing individuals (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

2.5.4 *Coaching objectives*

Business coaching is offered to executives to improve their performance, better manage people, improve communication, deal with conflict, manage projects

and systems more effectively, as well as deal with stresses due to balancing work and personal life (Stout-Rostron, 2012). Not only is it an individualised leadership development intervention that modifies behaviour, but it also has the objective of organisational re-engineering (Stern, 2004).

On an individual level, coaching provides the space and time for executives to reflect in order to slow down and expand awareness with the purpose of addressing their limitations and noticing the outcome of their behaviour and actions. Cavanagh (2006) describes three reflective spaces in his systemic model of coaching as a 'complex adaptive conversation'. Coaching facilitates the individual to develop the aptitude to be involved in both an internal and external conversational process. This is a meaning-making process through the instrument of open and reflective engagement (Cavanagh, 2006). Increased self-awareness enables executives to contemplate their choices rather than react to events. "Strategic coaching should integrate personal development and organisational needs" (Sherman & Freas, 2004; p. 3) in order to have leaders adjust to new responsibilities, moderate unproductive behaviour, develop habits and attitudes, engage better, work better in teams, align to collective goals, plan business and personal strategies, facilitate succession and adjust to organisational change (Sherman & Freas, 2004; Stern, 2004; Stout-Rostron, 2012).

Coaching therefore can result in learning, behavioural change and growth in the coachee, on behalf of the organisation (Joo, 2005). The tangible outcomes on organisational effectiveness are difficult to measure as coaching is causally far removed from financial results. Outcomes that include pay raises, promotions and improved performance evaluations can be measured in real terms (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

2.5.5 *Organisational coaching programmes*

The results of coaching in the coachee benefit a third party – the organisation. Coaching reaches executives and leaders through coaching programmes run

by their organisations. It is often provided to fast-track high-performing junior and middle managers, as well as to high-potential employees, problem employees, executives, leaders and expatriates (Joo, 2005; Stout-Rostron, 2012). This kind of systematic rollout of a coaching programme requires mention as business coaching is about the organisation. It cannot be seen in isolation as a purely individual experience because it originates and affects the organisation as a whole (Huffington, 2006; Kahn, 2011). Systematic coaching programmes in organisations that reach a mass of executives and leaders provide a regulated way for organisations to strengthen relationships with their most significant employees while concurrently increasing their effectiveness. With these in place, the entire organisation benefits from the cultural change fostered by coaching (Sherman & Freas, 2004).

Coaching in organisations creates a triangular relationship between the coachee who benefits from it, the organisation who sponsors the coaching – often referred to as 'the client' or 'the sponsor' – and the coach who provides the service. The client or sponsor is a collective of interested parties including the coachee's line manager or boss, team players and the human resource department. The coaching is thought to be most successful when all parties involved agree on explicit goals that legitimately further their own interests as well as those of the collective (Sherman & Freas, 2004).

For this reason, the coach should involve the coachee's key stakeholders to provide systemic feedback in both directions. These stakeholders would include the parties involved in staging the coaching, such as, the human resource or leadership development departments, as well as the coachee's manager, peers and direct reports (Stern, 2004).

2.5.6 *Contracting*

Triangular relationships are complex in nature, so early and regular contracting is fundamental to allowing it to operate functionally (Stout-Rostron, 2012). Coaching contracts reflect the sensitive nature of the intervention, and do not

only include documenting the legal and financial aspects of the relationship, but also include defining roles, goals and accountability for each part. This brings the parties into closer alignment even before the actual coaching conversations begin and is as central a part of the coaching process as the coaching itself (Sherman & Freas, 2004; Stout-Rostron, 2012). Contracting is underpinned by ethical guidelines, set out by the international and / or national associations for coaches. The contract could also be underpinned by the competence frameworks set up by these same associations.

2.5.7 *Success of coaching*

Academic studies investigating coaching have increased in number over recent years, and while these studies establish the possibility of coaching's benefits and potential, little research examines how exactly it works and its success out in practice (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Joo, 2005).

While it is notorious that coaching in organisations is seldom measured, the theory that debates the achievements of coaching suggests the following: the success of coaching is based on the quality of the relationships between the three parties and the extent to which each intervention in the coaching programme integrates and aligns with the sponsoring organisation (Kahn, 2011). The primary measure of the accomplishments of coaching interventions in organisations is seen to be "its impact on the development of more effective workplace behaviour" (Passmore, 2007; p. 69).

The success and impact of coaching can be evaluated by looking a number of different outcomes from various points of view. The evaluations that coaches receive from their coachees are normally subjective and are not based on empirically valid techniques to measure effectiveness (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). The success and impact of coaching has been measured in the literature through investigating coaching as a transfer-of-learning tool, as a behavioural change tool, as having an impact on transformation and transactional styles in leadership and through coaching effectiveness (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

On an applied level, Stout-Rostron (2012) suggests measuring coaching using a framework that examines visible behavioural change, improved performance and business results, and personal and professional behaviour. A coaching strategy in alignment with business goals should allow for measurement of the success of the coaching intervention, and not allow it to operate in isolation (Stout-Rostron, 2012).

2.5.8 *Business coaching in South Africa*

Business coaching in organisations in South Africa has become more prevalent since about 2000, and since approximately 2005 organisational development and human resource departments have been training internal coaches or managers-as-coaches (Stout-Rostron, 2012). The emergence of coaching is related to an explosion of talent related to market and social growth in the developing economy. While coaching in the global market is beginning to mature, coaching in South Africa is beginning to be established with sturdy theoretical roots – both practitioner and academic programmes are developing at masters and doctoral level (Stout-Rostron, 2012).

The pool of diverse, qualified and experienced coaches in South Africa is small, and companies employing external coaches are maturing in their selection of coaches, as well as being more demanding of measureable results and return on their investment (Stout-Rostron, 2012). In response to this, organised associations to regulate the discipline have sprung up both in South Africa and globally. Coaches are beginning to collaborate in order to offer coaching services to executives and organisations (Stout-Rostron, 2012).

2.6 Business coaching and wellbeing together

This section of the review looks at the relationship between coaching and wellbeing as it appears in the literature. People wish to feel happier (Diener, 2000; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006) and the pursuit of increased and

sustained positive emotion is an important empirical objective (Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). Assuming that coaching is one methodology of pursuing 'happiness', this section examines how coaching together with both hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing are seen in the literature.

The literature drawn on to write up this subsection does not necessarily examine wellbeing in relation to business coaching directly. Due to the limited literature discussing the two subjects together, wellbeing in terms of life coaching and counselling or psychology has been examined, as well as wellbeing related to coaching objectives such as goal-attainment. Generalising from psychotherapy research to executive coaching is a common trend due to their functional similarity (MacKenna & Davis, 2009).

Wellbeing and coaching has been located in positive psychology and 'coaching psychology', due to its links with happiness, positive affect, positive mental functioning and self-determination theory. While this is a mode of viewing coaching, this report is careful to locate coaching and wellbeing in business, with business theory and practice informing the coaching intervention as well as psychology theory and other allied areas. Based on the stand-alone section on business coaching in this Chapter, for the purposes of the current section of the literature review, it is assumed that coaching is a forward-moving, objective-orientated process (Joo, 2005).

The literature that discusses wellbeing and coaching together appears in several fields, notably coaching psychology (Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009; Green, Oades & Grant, 2006). In December 2013, at the fourth European Coaching Psychology Conference, Grajfoner presented a paper entitled 'Integrating business and coaching psychology to enhance performance and wellbeing at work' but this has not been published yet and was unavailable to the researcher. Wellbeing and coaching are discussed in the context of positive psychology because of its emphasis on strengths (Govindji & Linley, 2007). In research which positions wellbeing and subjective vitality as the outcome of

coaching, an individual's strengths knowledge and use were associated with wellbeing and vitality (Govindji & Linley, 2007).

The field of psychology as a whole is seen to influence the coaching-wellbeing issue as follows: "well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult learning or psychological approaches" (Palmer & Whybrow, 2006; p. 8 cited in Huffington & Hieker, 2006; p. 1).

In recent research, the business coaching-wellbeing relationship also appears in theory on 'coaching with compassion' (Boyatzis, Smith & Beveridge, 2012). The coaching-wellbeing issue is also discussed in terms of life coaching (Grant, 2003) and wellbeing and coaching are associated in papers on stress (Gyllensten & Palmer 2006), self-determination theory and goal-attainment.

2.6.1 *Wellbeing and 'coaching for compassion'*

Empirical studies examining the effect of the coaching process on the coach, the coachee and the client are small in number, hence insufficient theory has been developed around this (Boyatzis, Smith & Beveridge, 2012; Feldman & Lankau, 2005). Even fewer studies have examined wellbeing's role in coaching.

A recent article by Boyatzis et al., (2012) looks at coaching for compassion, inspiring wellbeing (among other factors) within organisations. Coaching for compassion is defined as "an interpersonal process that involves noticing another person as being in need, empathizing with him or her, and acting to enhance his or her well-being in response to that need" (Boyatzis et al., 2012; p.p. 154-155). Coaching with compassion is also aimed at the coachee's development by focussing on their 'Ideal Self' (Boyatzis et al., 2012) and their strengths, leading to positive outcomes for both the coachee and the organisation. From this perspective, coaching for the outcome of wellbeing appears to be a developmental relationship facilitating the achievement of goals and realising potential, whether a deficiency or problem is identified or not.

Compassion is directed towards both the hedonic and eudaimonic conceptions of wellbeing. In the instance that compassion is activated in response to an individual's desire to grow, the coach focuses on the coachee's eudaimonic wellbeing, supporting his growth and development (Boyatzis et al., 2012).

The creation of a safe space and the establishment of a trusting relationship between coach and coachee are known to create an emotionally significant experience for the coachee and have a lasting effect on wellbeing and coaching progress (Boyatzis et al., 2012). Positive emotions encourage wellbeing and the development of psychological resources (Fredrickson, 2013). Boyatzis et al. (2012, p. 166) state that, "[C]oaching with compassion [is shown] to lead to a significant, positive impact on the coachee's physical health, well-being, and sustained, desired change...". With business coaching occurring in the context of work, organisational outcomes via coaching for compassion can lead to greater commitment, organisational citizenship and high quality relationships (Boyatzis et al., 2012).

2.6.2 *Workplace wellbeing – an outcome of executive coaching*

In an empirical study conducted by Grant, Curtayne & Burton (2009), increased workplace wellbeing was shown to be an outcome of executive coaching where it also enhanced goal attainment, increased resilience and reduced depression and stress. This resulted even though the coaching intervention was focussed on the achievement of goals aligned with the organisation's leadership objectives, and not on improving the individual's wellbeing. The research suggested that goal attainment could be a reason for the improvement in wellbeing and that the coaching as a support mechanism providing autonomy which can buffer the impact of stressors. Participants experienced increased self-acceptance and confidence as a result of their coaching experience, which has been related to workplace wellbeing (Grant et al., 2009).

2.6.3 *Goal-striving, wellbeing and coaching*

Research on goal-constructs has an established history in psychology theory, especially in terms of “goal-commitment, goal-difficulty, and goal-expectancy” (Green, Oades & Grant, 2006; p. 142). This is significant to the coaching intervention, as coaching supports effective goal-setting and promotes goal-striving. Personally meaningful goals are important vehicles for self-discovery and for the satisfaction of psychological needs (Sheldon & Elliott 1999). Goal-striving is the movement away from an existing state to an aspired meaningful condition (Sheldon, Kasser, Smith & Share, 2002). The self-initiated process of pursuing and attaining goals enables individuals to make rapid transformations in their psychosocial evolution (Sheldon et al., 2002). As discussed previously, coaching is a goal-orientated process for the success of individuals and organisations, as well as being a means of positive change (Joo, 2005; Sherman & Freas, 2004; Stout-Rostron, 2012).

Within the field of wellbeing, it is accepted that the proactive process of possessing and advancing towards important goals is associated with enhanced psychosocial wellbeing and vitality. Goals are representative of the individual’s endeavours to develop and find meaning and purpose (Sheldon et al., 2002). Following this line of reasoning, goal-setting within a coaching framework improves both goal-striving and wellbeing (Green, Oades & Grant, 2006).

In a study examining life coaching as enhancing goal-striving, wellbeing and hope, participants experiencing coaching were found to have an increased subjective as well as psychological wellbeing (SWB and PWB). Although these increases were measured using self-reports, the results were shown to be maintained over time, and enhanced the individuals’ positive psychological functioning (Green et al., 2006). The results were consistent with a study conducted by Grant (2003) which found that life coaching enhanced mental health, goal-attainment and quality of life.

2.6.4 *Self-determination Theory*

If coaching is regarded as a means of facilitating, achieving and supporting goal attainment, then it is critical to look at the relationship between wellbeing and goals or goal progress. Feelings of competence or efficacy concerning goals are associated with positive affect and wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Proponents of self-determination theory (SDT) propose that only self-sanctioned goals will enhance wellbeing. The pursuit of goals autonomously predicts wellbeing outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000 as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2001).

As illustrated in the subsection reviewing coaching, the field concerns the healthy psychological development, motivation and engagement of individuals. SDT looks at the conditions that facilitate and enhance these aspects of human functioning in the various domains in which they operate, including the sphere of work. These are described as psychological *needs*: competence, autonomy and relatedness (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). When these needs are satisfied, they are essential for psychological growth, integrity, wellbeing, experiences of vitality and self-congruence, and yield enhanced mental health, self-motivation and assimilation of cultural practices (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Frederick, 1997; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). SDT therefore theorises that autonomy, competence and relatedness are essential for eudaimonic wellbeing or self-realisation (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

The SDT approach posits that autonomy, competence and relatedness are primary factors that cultivate wellbeing, rather than being aspects that define it (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The theory focuses on the ‘dialectic’ between the active, growth-orientated individual and his environment which either supports his development or undermines it. Growth is the endeavour to master and integrate experiences into a coherent sense of self (Ryan and& Deci, 2002). This is the reason that SDT has been included in this section discussing wellbeing and coaching together – coaching is a mode of cultivating and fostering positive development and growth.

2.6.5 *Self-concordance – how autonomy relates to wellbeing*

Self-concordant motivation is rooted in SDT, focussing on the individual's personal goal statements rather than only the contextual factors that support and sustain goal-striving (Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001). Self-concordant or self-integrated goals are those that fulfil basic needs and align with one's authentic self and core values (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). The term describes a feeling of ownership accompanying self-initiated goals (Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001). Coaching is a development tool employed to determine and reach a set of mutually developed goals established by the coachee in relationship with a coach (Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009).

Individuals put more sustained effort into attaining goals that are self-concordant and therefore there is a higher likelihood of attaining them (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Goal attainment in itself is associated with greater wellbeing, but the effect on wellbeing is weaker when goals are not self-concordant. In other words, not all progress is necessarily beneficial to the individual. Individuals who attain goals that are self-concordant attain a greater sense of wellbeing – both in mood and in life satisfaction – from their achievement. The reason for this is that the process of striving for goals satisfies psychological needs: autonomy, competence and relatedness. These are described as daily activity-based experiences that accumulate over the period of striving for goals (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999).

Govindji and Linley (2007) examined self-concordance, strengths-use and wellbeing, and suggest that these factors could be the basis of designing coaching approaches. The study found that people who are in touch with their own values, needs and feelings and who use their strengths, experience increased wellbeing. Govindji and Linley (2007, p. 151) postulate that, "organismic valuing and strengths use are both important and independent influences" on subjective and psychological wellbeing. This study defines SWB as affective balance and life-satisfaction, while PWB is defined as "engagement with the existential challenges of life" (Govindji & Linley, 2007; p. 149).

Self-concordance is assessed by measuring four motivations:

a. External motivation, or acting for a reward or to please others;
b. Introjected motivation, or acting to avoid guilt;
c. Identified motivation, or acting to express important beliefs and values; and
d. Intrinsic motivation, or acting because it is inherently enjoyable and interesting to do so.

(Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006)

Sheldon and Elliot (1999) discuss how focussing on self-concordant goals implies that individuals have to learn and go through a developmental process in order to distinguish between aligning goals with values and interests important to themselves versus with goals that are alien or imposed by cultural norms. They further state that this is especially the case in aligning the individual to organisational goals, in order to encourage ownership, engagement and performance. Workplace wellbeing is found to have "increased significantly following coaching" (Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009; p. 405) in research focussed on aligning executives' goals with the organisation's leadership objectives. The coaching interventions in the study were not focussed on executives' wellbeing, indicating that setting self-concordant and personally valued goals in coaching may benefit the wellbeing of both the organisation and the employee (Grant, Curtayne & Burton 2009).

2.6.6 *Coaching, wellbeing and stress*

As indicated in the introduction of this proposal, negative stress is damaging to health and wellbeing (DeLongis, Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). With coaching being directed at so-called high achievers, coaches are in a position where they are dealing with people who are exposed to work pressures and hours that are highly stressful (Sparks, Faragher & Cooper, 2001; Stout-Rostron, 2012). Excessive stress over a long period of time is associated with physical and mental health problems (Colligan & Higgins, 2005; Lazarus, 1993). While

activities, like exercise outside the workplace help alleviate stress, this often comes at the cost of scheduling, choosing priorities and having to decline activities that contribute to work goals (Rock & Page, 2009; Sparks, Faragher & Cooper, 2001). On this basis, and on the basis that contemporary organisations place emphasis on performance and well-being, surprisingly few studies have examined coaching's impact on dealing with change and workplace stressors (Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009).

According to Faragher, Cass & Cooper (2005), occupational health experts could consider creating counselling interventions for employees with stress-related health problems in order to reassess their work and explore ways of creating positive stress flows. This will not only improve individual performance, but will have a knock-on effect for the organisation (Faragher et al. 2005). Various interventions are used in organisations to reduce workplace stress, and although there are mixed reports concerning the effectiveness of counselling in the work context, coaching has been shown to be effective in self-reports on tackling it (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2005).

Gyllensten and Palmer (2006) report that the management of stress is a main theme arising out of a study conducted to examine the association between executive coaching and stress reduction, management and prevention. Coaching was found to be a method of reducing stress indirectly as the coachees had not begun coaching with the goal of reducing stress. However coaching assisted them in managing other work-related problems that were the cause of stress. Coaching was also found to be a resource for coping with stressful situations and participants said that coaching could be useful for coping with stress in the future. The study furthermore found that coaching was a source of stress as the time spent involved in the intervention had to be useful and productive in order for coachees not to view it as time better spent working and getting things done (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2006).

2.6.7 *Wellbeing, coaching and 'interpersonal neurobiology'*

'Interpersonal neurobiology' (Siegel, 1999) is discussed briefly because interpersonal neurobiology presents a framework for wellbeing in psychotherapy, a discipline that informs coaching. Rock and Page (2009) argue that since coaching has emerged as a discipline, there has been renewed attention on the human brain and its connections to mental and social life, and state:

> *...contemporary neuroscience is beginning to provide a scientific platform to support the practice of coaching. Coaching may be seen as an application of theory arising from neuroscience research (p.15)*

Siegel (2006) describes the term 'interpersonal neurobiology' as an approach to understanding human experience and development by drawing on various independent scientific fields and finding common principles to describe "human experience and the process of change across the lifespan" (p. 248). Siegel (2006) states that the aim of the approach is to create a basic framework to explore ways in which:

> *...one individual can help others alleviate suffering and move toward well-being. The central idea of interpersonal neurobiology is to offer definitions of the mind and of mental well-being that can be used by a wide range of professionals concerned with human development (p.248)*

While Siegel's (1999, 2001, 2006) research refers to therapeutic experiences towards achieving well-being, this research report is about business coaching as a 'helping dynamic' (Kemp, 2008; p. 32) concerned with human development.

Interpersonal neurobiology describes wellbeing as a "flow of well-being" (Siegel, 2006; p. 259) depicted as a triangle of wellbeing, with the three points being

‘empathic relationships’, ‘a coherent mind’ and ‘an integrated brain’. Interventions that move a person towards wellbeing, promote the integrated flow between these three points (Siegel, 2006). Ryff and Singer (2000) refer to ‘empathic relationships’ as ‘relational flourishing’ or ‘interpersonal flourishing’ in terms of wellbeing. Integration refers to the method in which functionally separate components of the brain are gathered together into a functional whole (Siegel, 2001). Energy and information flows within an individual brain or between brains. The ways in which energy and information flow individually or interpersonally generates the experience of *mind* (Siegel, 2001). This is why the mind is defined as “a process that regulates the flow of energy and information” (Siegel, 2006; p. 248). The coaching relationship is an interpersonal affair of two minds engaged with each other.

2.7 Conclusion of literature review

A working definition of wellbeing and coaching establishes a start to this research report. Furthermore, it serves the purpose to bridge information from the literature review with the data gathered in practice, for later use in discussing the results. With this in mind, wellbeing is broadly defined as a concept describing a ‘way of being’ while business coaching is considered a concept describing ‘an intervention’.

This literature review has discussed the concept of wellbeing in terms of the two traditional views of the subject: hedonic wellbeing has been described as subjective wellbeing (SWB), life satisfaction and positive affect or ‘happiness’; and eudaimonic wellbeing has been illustrated in the descriptions of living congruently with oneself and one’s values, psychological well-being (PWB), positive mental functioning and self-actualisation, as well as self-determination theory (SDT). The literature suggests that these two views of wellbeing are associated but distinct (Keyes et al., 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2001), while subjective vitality represents a dynamic aspect of wellbeing linked to physical health (Ryan & Frederick, 1997). This report has adopted a working definition of wellbeing to

create an umbrella term to unite the conceptualisations of the construct without placing any preconceived notions on it: wellbeing as ‘a way of being’.

Business coaching was then defined in terms of the organisation. It is seen as a triangular, collaborative relationship between the coachee, the organisation and the coach (Joo, 2005; Sherman & Freas, 2004). It is defined as a positive-focussed process to develop competencies and capacities in coachees (Stout-Rostron, 2012; Green et al. Grant, 2006). Its purpose is to advance work effectiveness and behaviour, and is seen by organisations as a learning and development tool (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Wasylyshyn, 2003). Coaching is offered as a strategic development device to produce business objectives by cultivating individuals (Huffington, 2006; Kahn, 2011; Sherman & Freas, 2004).

Finally, in viewing these two constructs together, the literature drawn on generally views wellbeing as an *outcome* of business coaching. This is a result even though the coaching focuses on achieving goals aligned to the organisation’s leadership and business objectives, and is not focussed on the goal of improving the individual’s wellbeing (Grant et al., 2009).

Coaching supports setting and striving for personally meaningful goals (Sheldon & Elliott 1999; Sheldon et al. 2002; Sherman & Freas, 2004; Stout-Rostron, 2012). Goal-setting within a coaching framework improves both goal-striving and wellbeing with coachees having enhanced subjective and psychological wellbeing (Green et al., 2006). Furthermore, self-sanctioned and self-concordant goals increase wellbeing (Govindji & Linley, 2007; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001). Focussing on self-concordant goals implies that individuals undergo developmental processes especially the case where individual goals must be aligned to organisational ones in order to encourage ownership, engagement and performance (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999).

A study on ‘coaching for compassion’ (Boyatzis et al., 2012) deemed coaching as inspiring wellbeing: when compassion is activated in response to a

coachee's desire to grow, the coach focuses on the individual's eudaimonic wellbeing, supporting his growth and development (Boyatzis et al., 2012).

In a study examining coaching and stress reduction (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2006), coaching was found to be a means of reducing stress indirectly because it assisted coachees to manage work-related problems that were the cause of stress. Coaching was found to be a resource for coping with stressful situations but was also found to create stress if it was not productive (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2006).

In viewing these two constructs together, there is a 'functional similarity' (McKenna & Davis 2009) that is worthy of observation:

1. Both are positive constructs (Dunn, 1959 & Grant et al., 2009);
2. While one is a process and the other is a concept, both are dynamic notions (Joo, 2005; Kemp, 2008; Ryan & Frederick, 1997); and
3. Both are person-orientated.

Broadly, the small body of coaching-wellbeing literature views the role of wellbeing as a positive outcome of business coaching that is attained indirectly through the achievement self-sanctioned occupational goals.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section will describe the research methodology used in this study. Qualitative enquiry will be discussed, followed by the actual research design. As the research is in the field of social sciences, it is positioned using a qualitative, interpretivist approach underpinned by a constructivist paradigm. First paradigm and methodology will be discussed, and then the practicalities involved in undertaking the research will be explored. The intended benefit of the research is to sensitise (Knafl & Howard, 1984) the reader to the topics examined.

The research proposal dealing with the topic and methodology has been scrutinised by a Research Panel and the Ethics Committee at WBS, and was approved.

3.1 Research paradigm

In order to find answers to the research questions, the research is established in a constructivist paradigm, due to its suitability to the subject of human behaviour (Gergen, 1985). Constructivism is a broad and complex theory that puts forward that human knowledge is constructed (Phillips, 1995), and that individuals learn or construct knowledge actively through a process of social interactions (Gergen, 1985; Philips 1995). Therefore the focal point of knowledge is not the individual, but rather learning and understanding is inherently social, between individuals – a co-construction of knowledge (Palincsar, 1998). The paradigm therefore is suitable to coaching which is a learning process that takes place in a relational setting, but also suits the methodology in which the data was gathered and understood.

The research is designed to use data obtained from personal interviews. This puts the researcher in a collaborative role with practitioners in order to establish theory from practice, and recognises the importance of building a basis of communication between the two parties (Cobb & Yackel, 1995).

The coaching-wellbeing topic furthermore has not been well researched. With positivist research not being an appropriate approach, a constructivist paradigm supports data on human's perceptions about their behaviour and experiences.

3.2 Research methodology

The research method used in this research report is qualitative. This type of research "uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings" (Golafshani, 2003; p. 600). Qualitative research is therefore also termed 'naturalistic' research, versus quantitative research which uses logical positivism and therefore quantitative methods such as statistics. The research report aims to produce findings deriving from practices in organisations where wellbeing and coaching are activities or concerns. These activities and concerns unfold naturally in actual situations. The findings will then stimulate understanding and insight into these phenomena (Golafshani, 2003).

The research takes a phenomenological approach as it involves examinations of the interviewee's personal experiences as well as their perceptions of these (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Due to its focus on human beings and their experience, phenomenology is used extensively in health and social sciences (Biggerstaf & Tompson, 2008; Creswell, 2007). The results of the interviews conducted were examined phenomenologically through exploring the 'lived experiences' (van Manen, 2007) of coaching and wellbeing for the individuals interviewed. The interviewees were considered the subject of the research, while the phenomena they experienced and related were considered the object (van Manen, 2007). The phenomenological approach to analysis puts the experiencing subject at the heart of the research effort (Biggerstaf & Thompson, 2008). "Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon" (Creswell, 2007; pp. 57-58).

This qualitative study therefore aims to provide a comprehensive understanding into the personal and social worlds of the research subjects. The researcher is not objective nor can she claim to be, as the research is based on a small sample that was intentionally selected for its particular criteria, and the evidence collection method used involved close contact between the researcher and the subjects. The research yields detailed, rich and extensive evidence and as a consequence, analysis is open to emergent concepts and ideas (Remenyi, 2006).

Each interviewee's personal experience of wellbeing in their business coaching conversations was examined, acknowledging the role of researcher. This refers to the 'lens' of the research in this qualitative enquiry as being both that of the researcher, where the researcher interacts with the topic and is involved in a sense-making process; and of the participants of the study where the participants reflect their perceptions of a socially constructed reality (Creswell & Miller, 2000; p. 125).

While qualitative enquiry lends itself to research in the social sciences (Creswell, 2007), one of the reasons for choosing this method of analysis is due to the nature of coaching as a discipline. Coaching revolves around a "conversation" (Stout-Rostron, 2009; p. 39) where the coach and coachee reflect on the coachee's experience and the meaning he derives from it. Phenomenology reduces individuals' experiences of phenomena – in this case coaching and wellbeing – to a description of a 'universal essence' (Creswell, 2007; p. 58). These phenomenon are the 'objects' of human experience (van Manen, 1990; p. 163 as cited in Creswell, 2007; p. 58).

3.3 Research Design

The research is designed as an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) in order to understand how the interviewees made sense of their experiences and the meaning they made in terms of them (Smith & Osborn, 2003). Therefore their experiences of coaching and wellbeing were explored, as well

as their sense of their coaching experience and their state of wellbeing. IPA is underpinned by Husserl's (2012) endeavours to construct a philosophical science of consciousness, putting forward that the meanings that individuals ascribe to events are accessible only through an interpretative process – understanding the human realm through phenomenology. Therefore IPA recognises the researcher's involvement with the data – in this case data obtained from interviews (Biggerstaf & Thompson, 2008). The researcher's involvement with the interviewees indicates a reality that is socially constructed (Cobb & Yackel, 1996). Phenomenology attempts to understand living subjects who are not simply reacting mechanically to external stimuli, but instead responding to their own perceptions of what these stimuli mean to them (Laverty, 2003).

Qualitative research is associated with methods of data collection that generate narrative and not numerical data (Knafl & Howard, 1984). This IPA examines fifteen interviews that had been transcribed verbatim into a written format. It was a dynamic process for the researcher, who played an active role in attempting to understand the interviewee's personal world through their narratives. The researcher's own comprehension was required to make sense of the interviewee's perceptions and experiences through a process of interpretative activity. There was therefore a two-stage process of meaning-making – the interviewees attempting to make sense of their worlds, and the researcher attempting to make sense of the interviewees making sense of their worlds (Smith, 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2003). The themes emergent from the data surfaced phenomenologically.

The way the research is presented is based on Knafl and Howard's "[g]uidelines for reporting qualitative research based on study purpose" (Knafl and Howard, 1984; p. 19). The benefit of the study was identified as sensitising the reader to the subject. The research design of this type of descriptive report is represented by the authors as in Figure 2 below.

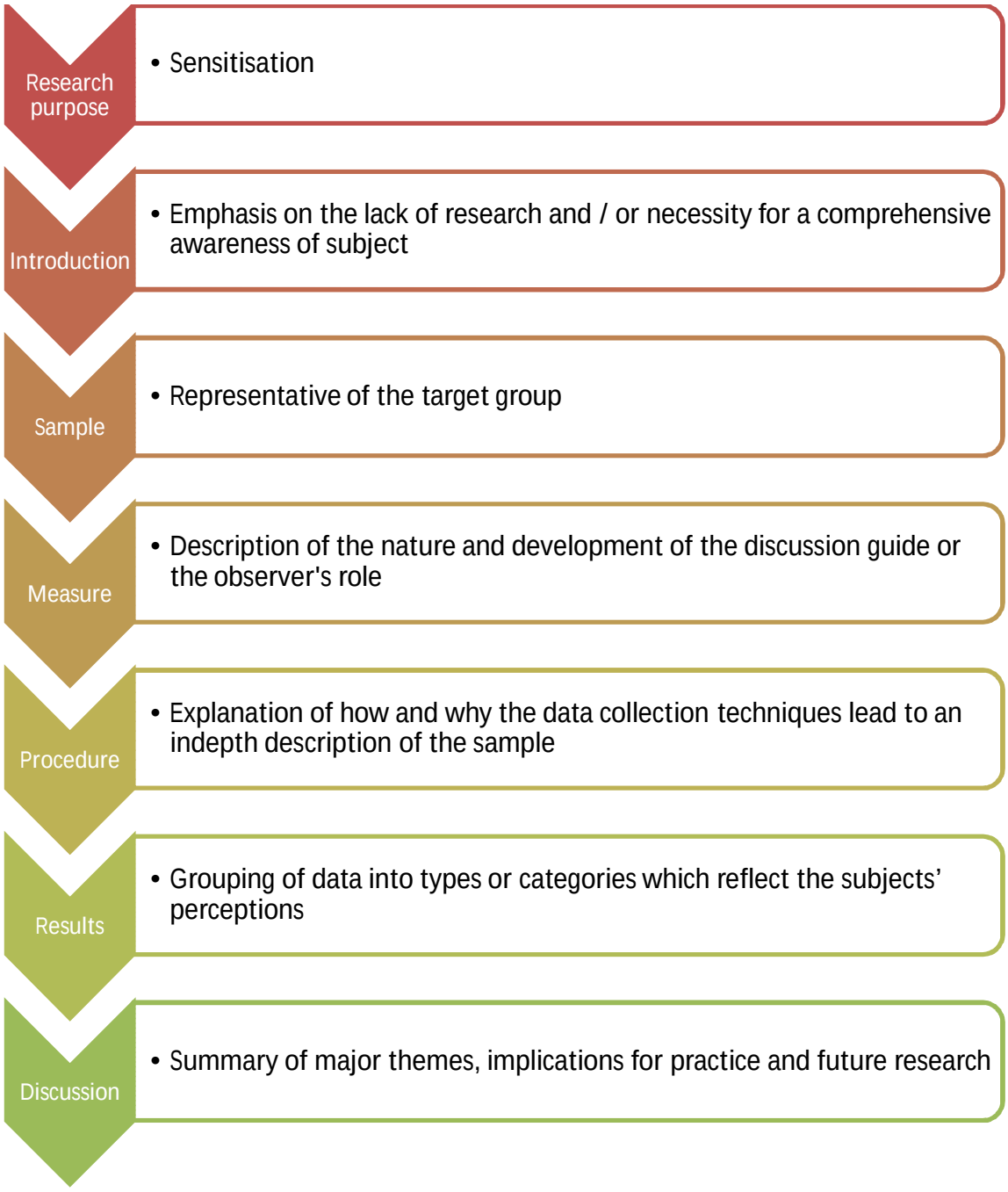

Figure 2: Guidelines for reporting qualitative research (Adapted from Knafl & Howard, 1984; p.19)

In terms of the actual procedure used to execute this study, there is no standard way to perform an IPA, but Smith and Osborn (2003) offer the following model of the research process:



Figure 3: Research design (adapted from Smith & Osborn, 2003)

This design is examined below in the next subsections.

3.4 Population and sample

3.4.1 *Population*

IPA studies are usually carried out on small sample sizes (Smith, 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2003). Fifteen interviews were conducted in this research so that an in-depth examination of the individuals' perceptions (Biggerstaf & Thompson, 2008) could be gathered. This is called an idiographic approach, as opposed to a nomothetic study, which makes probabilistic claims about individuals (Smith 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2003).

A limited number of organisations were willing to allow for an external researcher to interview participants. Nonetheless the three organisations where interviews took place were selected by the researcher with the following criteria:

a. That the three organisations represent different industries or sectors;
b. that the three organisations run coaching programmes for their staff; and
c. that they were willing for one HR practitioner, two employees who had been coached and two external coaches contracted to them, to be interviewed as is illustrated below

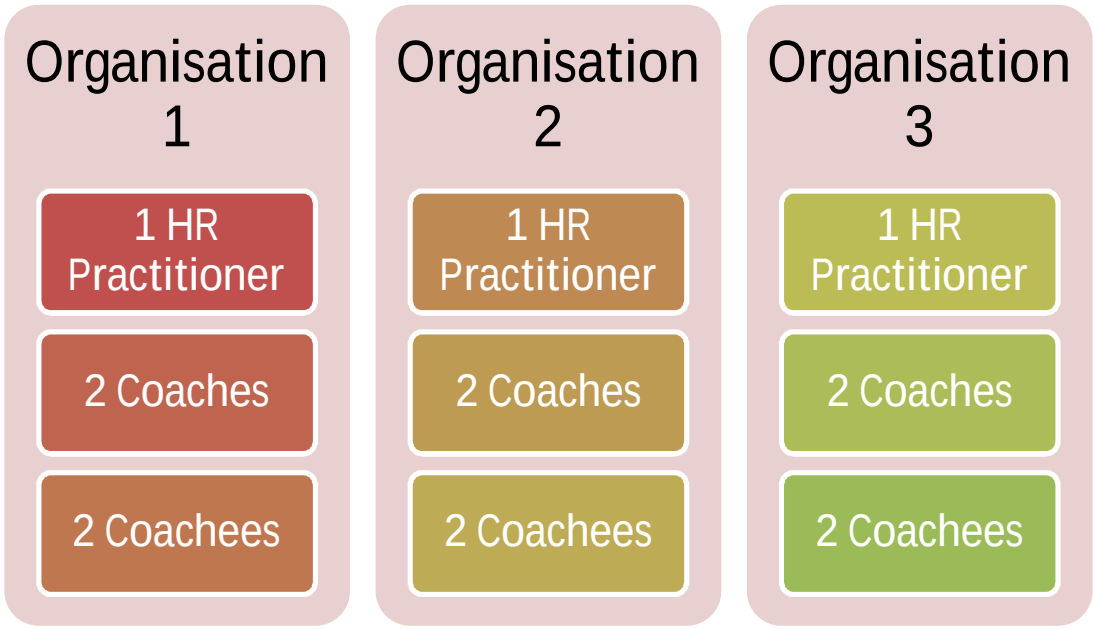

Figure 4: Sample structure for personal interviews

The organisations where interviews took place were in the following industries:

1. Organisation 1 – call centre management.
2. Organisation 2 – retail and distribution of FMCGs.
3. Organisation 3 – insurance.

Organisation 2 ran coaching interventions through a leadership development programme run by HR where high-potential managers and leaders were

selected to benefit from sessions with a coach as well other development experts. Organisation 1 and 3 ran coaching through their leadership development divisions in their human resource departments, while Organisation 3 was running coaching programmes over a substantial number of years with coaching training also provided to managers. Organisation 1 was in the initial stages of understanding the role of coaching in the organisation. All three organisations offered external coaches to executives, leaders and high-level managers, but not to the generic workforce. If operational staff were exposed to coaching, this was through their managers, internally, rather than through the use of external coaches.

All interviews took place in the Johannesburg offices of the various organisations so that the researcher could interview the subjects face-to-face.

3.4.2 *Sample and sampling method*

A sample size of fifteen interviewees resulted due to the triangulation of HR practitioner, coach and coachee illustrated above in Figure 4 (five interviewees multiplied by three organisations). This was decided on the basis that business coaching comprises of various interconnected parties and is contextualised within organisational life (Huffington, 2006; Kahn, 2011; Passmore, 2007; Sherman & Freas, 2004; Stern, 2004; Stout-Rostron, 2009). The sample is therefore purposive with the research being relevant to the people selected (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

A representation of the 15 respondents with demographic data follows. Gender, age and ethnicity were not relevant to this study. While the table below is organised by company, the findings were not necessarily arranged in this way: the findings generally could not be grouped by company or by role.

Table 1: Representation of respondents

Code	Designation / Level in organisation	Coaching qualification (if applicable)	Years in organisation	Years practicing as coach
Call centre management				
Organisation 1, HR Practitioner	HR practitioner - HR Director	n/a	3	n/a
Organisation 1, Coach 1	External coach - own practice	Consciousness Coaching and other practitioner courses	n/a	7
Organisation 1, Coach 2	External coach - own practice	Consciousness Coaching	n/a	+5
Organisation 1, Coachee 1	Head of Industrial Relations, Remuneration and Benefits, and Organisational Development	n/a	5 and a half	n/a
Organisation 1, Coachee 2	Head of HR Operations	n/a	3	n/a
FMCG retail and distribution				
Organisation 2, HR Practitioner	HR practitioner - Group training manager	n/a to this research report, although also a practicing coach	10	n/a
Organisation 2, Coach 1	External coach - own practice	PCC - Centre for Coaching	n/a	12
Organisation 2, Coach 2	External coach - own practice	PCC - Centre for Coaching and PCC ICF	n/a	6
Organisation 2, Coachee 1	Divisional HR manager	n/a	?	n/a
Organisation 2, Coachee 2	Divisional HR manager	n/a	6	n/a
Insurance				
Organisation 3, HR Practitioner	General Manager, Human Capital Development	n/a	2	n/a
Organisation 3, Coach 1	External coach - own practice	MA in clinical psychology and various coaching practitioner courses - ORSK, Unisa, Centre for Creative Leadership and more.	n/a	11
Organisation 3, Coach 2	External coach - own practice	PhD in psychology and a post graduate diploma in executive coaching with the Institute for Human Relations from Middlesex University	n/a	15
Organisation 3, Coachee1	Head of Motor Assessing and Repairs	n/a	30	n/a
Organisation 3, Coachee 2	General Manager for Retentions and Collections	n/a	28	n/a

The coachees interviewed were all in senior leadership positions and coaching was offered to these respondents to develop and support their leadership potential. Coaching was offered to develop and sustain “effective leadership performance” (Cilliers, 2011; p. 2). None of the coachees interviewed were part of the generic operational workforce.

Of the coaches interviewed these were all external coaches who were not employed within the company, but operated from their own practice as a vehicle for their services. All had over five years of business coaching experience, and all positioned themselves as business executive coaches, and not as life coaches. The external coaches used by two of the three companies had academic backgrounds in coaching or psychology, or both, while one of the companies used coaches who had done practitioner courses from a particular coaching academy. All of the coaches came out of business prior to becoming coaches, many of them having a long track record within their previous companies.

None of the coaches professed to strictly adhere to a particular methodology, and while they stated that they drew on various coaching methods which they had attained over the years, many of them had a strong leaning to a particular school of thought or coaching paradigm. Of the companies listed, the following external coaches were selected by the relevant contact person (normally the HR Practitioner or his assistant) for interviewing:

1. Organisation 1 – call centre management: Both coaches interviewed were trained by an institution called the ‘Consciousness Coaching Academy’.
2. Organisation 2 – retail and distribution of FMCGs: Both coaches were targeted by the company due to being Integral Coaches, both having obtained the Professional Coach Certification from the Centre for Coaching, the University of Cape Town Graduate School of Business.
3. Organisation 3 – insurance: Both coaches selected by the company had post-graduate qualifications in psychology, in addition to being both

trained and educated through various academic and practitioner coaching programmes.

For the purposes of this research report, human resource practitioners as representative of the organisation are termed the ‘client’, as they are the paying party who engage the services of a coach for the benefit of a coachee. The reasoning behind interviewing human resource practitioners was to gain an understanding for the context of coaching and occupational wellness.

The purpose of interviewing business coaches operating externally was to obtain a perspective exposed to multiple coachees and multiple human resource practitioners. The researcher hoped to obtain insights into wellbeing issues and approaches of dealing with these issues from broad exposure within the context of business. Furthermore, the intention of interviewing coachees was to understand the experience of the recipient of coaching – the party who is intended to benefit from coaching interventions offered by the organisation.

3.5 The research instrument

The research instrument was a semi-structured interview. An interview is a “formal technique whereby a researcher solicits verbal evidence or data from a knowledgeable informant” (Remenyi, 2011; p. 1). In order to understand the interviewee’s perceptions of the subjects, the researcher had to employ a flexible data collection instrument. Semi-structured interviews allowed for discussion to emerge, permitting the researcher, who also played the role of the interviewer, to modify questions in the light of responses or probe meaningful areas which arose (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The semi-structured interview therefore allowed for a co-creation of responses (Creswell, 2007), producing data which contributed towards an understanding of the research problem. Richness and detail in the data was important, as this gave a deeper understanding into the subject’s social world (Knafl & Howard, 1984).

Interviews were conducted using a discussion guide which the interviewer brought with her to each interview to facilitate conversation. The discussion guide was not sent to interviewees in advance, although each interviewee was emailed an outline of the intention of the research as well as information to pre-empt queries about confidentiality and other sensitive issues. These documents are attached in Appendix A and Appendix B.

The discussion guide in question was adapted for each category of interviewee based on their respective roles: HR Practitioner, coach and coachee. This resulted in three separate discussion guides (see Appendix A) taking into account the different roles of the respondents and built around three key themes. The discussion guide was intended to create cohesion to the interviewing effort in order to obtain:

1. The interviewee's perceptions of wellbeing;
2. their perceptions of coaching; and
3. their perceptions of the relationship between wellbeing and coaching.

While the discussion guides were built around these themes, the interview process aimed to enter the psychological and social worlds of the interviewees in keeping with the constructivist paradigm. The interviewees were regarded as experiential experts on coaching and wellbeing, and giving them the maximum opportunity to relate their thoughts and feelings without being prescriptive (Biggerstaf & Thompson, 2008; Smith & Osborn, 2003).

3.6 Procedure for data collection

The research instrument was semi-structured interviews. Each interviewee was met with separately at times convenient to them. The interviews were intended to be explorations of the participant's experience and ideas relating to the concept of wellbeing and the activity of coaching. The interview questions were kept broad in order to allow answers to emerge from the interviewee's own views and perceptions. The interviewer was aware of her role in building trust in

order to encourage an authentic account of each interviewer's lived experience (Smith, 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2003). The ideas and notions asserted by the interviewees were verbalised in the context of a discussion. The researcher made an effort to make the respondents feel comfortable and relaxed in order to encourage this authentic account.

The purpose of the interviewing procedure was to allow for the interviews to drive the findings, rather than presenting preconceived notions of the concept and having a definition or an opinion drive the interviews. Ultimately, the interviews were devised as 'discussion' rather than a tightly controlled question-and-answer-session.

From a practical point of view, the interview time was limited to approximately 45 minutes in consideration for the interviewees demanding schedules. The interview questions were open-ended to allow the interviewee to explore the ideas and issues that come to mind in order to produce rich data (Smith & Osborn, 2003). The interviews were initiated with foundational questions in order to obtain background information on coaching, the interviewee and the organisation, but with the underlying aim to establishing a rapport with the interviewee. Building trust and confidence was thought to be essential to establishing the reliability of the data.

In order to record the sessions as accurately as possible, a digital voice recorder was used to document each interview. This assisted the interviewer to concentrate on establishing rapport (Smith & Osborn, 2003) but also to obtain verbatim data. The interviews were transcribed by a third party, and not by the researcher. Appendix D is a CD with the voice recordings of the 15 interviews.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

After completing the cycle of interviews they were transcribed in order to transform the data from audio format into verbatim written format. These transcriptions were loaded onto Atlas, a software tool for analysis of qualitative

data, which the researcher used to identify and code the trends, patterns and themes that emerged. The division between analysis and writing up was found to be artificial, as the analysis was further developed during the writing stage (Smith & Osborn, 2003).

The presentation strategy used was prescribed by the Wits Business School format for Masters Research Reports. A similar format is recommended by Smith and Osborn (2003), which involves presenting the results containing the emergent thematic analysis and then discussing this linked to the literature.

The analysis is an attempt at understanding the content and complexity of the meanings generated by the interviewees, rather than measure their frequency. This involves the researcher engaging in an interpretative relationship with the transcripts at each of the stages of analysis (Smith, 2004; Smith & Osborn, 2003). This description of understanding the content and complexity of meanings reflected what happened in practice in analysing themes and patterns emerging from the dataset. The sequence of the researcher's interpretative stages is described in the theory as follows:

a. First encounter with the text – looking for themes:
    i. Familiarisation with the data and taking initial notes;
    ii. Transforming initial notes into themes.
b. Connect or cluster themes:
    i. This is an analytical or theoretical ordering, where the researcher attempts to make sense of the connections between emergent themes: some themes can be clustered together, while others can be categorised within a larger theme.
c. Produce a coherently-ordered table of themes possibly in the form of a hierarchy.
d. Produce a final table of super-ordinate themes with supporting quotes.

(Adapted from Smith & Osborn, 2003; Biggerstaf & Tompson, 2008)

These steps are not intended to be prescriptive, but rather open to adaptation, a mode of operating that may be awkward for researchers accustomed to a positivist paradigm (Pringle, Drummond, McLafferty & Hendry, 2011).

The analysis undertaken by the researcher complemented the structure above, but employed technology to simplify and streamline the process. Atlas was used in the stages described as 'looking for themes and connecting the themes' – it was used as a tool to sort, label and cluster data. Themes were extracted in order to encapsulate the essential qualities and expressions found in the content. This master list of themes obtained from the first interview was used to identify more occurrences of the same themes in subsequent interviews, while also remaining open to the possibilities of new themes. This was done in a cyclical fashion (Biggerstaf & Thompson, 2008).

Once all the interviews had been coded, the themes were ordered and clustered, to make interpretative sense of these phenomena. Transcripts may elicit themes that do not necessarily match the questions asked on the researcher's discussion guide (Biggerstaf & Thompson, 2008), and this was found to be the case in practice. One table was produced, but this was done using Excel, with the researcher flipping between to Atlas and Excel in order to create it. The table of the birds-eye-view of themes is reproduced in Chapter 4, as Table 2. The researcher's role is to understand the nuances of the data, looking for richness and how the theme relates to other parts of the data rather than frequency (Biggerstaf & Thompson, 2008). In considering the data, the researcher found that the frequency of a word did not necessarily elicit a theme: themes arose from interviewees attempting to explain concepts with a stream of consciousness, rather than a concise, pre-formulated phrase.

The process of interpretation involved the researcher's own mode of making meaning and interpreting other individual's personal experiences. "Qualitative researchers have come to embrace their involvement and role within the research" (Golafshani, 2003; p. 600). Rather than reduce the researcher's role, IPA acknowledges it, and in so doing legitimises it as a component of the

enquiry. The researcher thus has to be self-aware and reflexive while analysing the data (Biggerstaf & Thompson, 2008).

These qualities of self-awareness and reflexivity are supplemented by the ability of the researcher to adapt the methodology to the nature of the research (Davidsen, 2013). The purpose of this research is to understand if wellbeing plays a role in coaching, and if so, what characterises that role. The research methodology therefore has to permit description of the narrative accounts that produced the themes making up the topic.

In writing up the findings, the researcher used ample direct quotes in order to demonstrate that themes are firmly rooted in what the interviewees actually said (Pringle et al., 2011). The researcher attempted to synthesise the interviewees' points of view, but the presentation of results had to be selective as there was more data than could reasonably be presented in one report (Knafl & Howard, 1984). For this reason many rich quotes were excluded. Quotations transcribed in Chapter 4 were often long, as breaking them up into smaller phrases or single sentences would either isolate them from their context which is where meaning is constructed, or would not illustrate the complexity of the interviewee grappling with concepts. An effort was made on the part of the writer to keep quotes as economical as possible.

3.8 Limitations of the study

a. The context of this study is geographically-bound with data obtained from human resource practitioners, coaches and coachees operating in the South African context of business.
b. The study deals with the individual experience and perceptions, and is not an examination of the system in which the individual operates. The individuals are contextualised within organisations so the researcher had to continually employ self-reflective awareness (LeCompte, 2000) in analysing the data and writing it up, and checking that the subject of the writing was in fact about the individual and not the organisation. A fine

line between accurately representing the organisation as a contextual requirement and not making the organisation the subject of the research was continually assessed.

c. The researcher could not control the selection of interviewees that the human resource practitioners put forward for the study. The researcher did not question the motivations for the HR practitioners choosing particular coaches or coachees for examination.
d. IPA privileges the individual and sample sizes are small. This focus on understanding the individual in-depth is also a weakness in the research. While the themes extracted are important to this sample, they do not necessarily reflect a much broader view on the topics.

3.9 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability are strategies to ensure rigour in quantitative and qualitative enquiry. The need to demonstrate that qualitative research is credible is especially pertinent because of the difficulty in applying valid and reliable strategies to data that cannot be quantified (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson & Spiers, 2002; Golafshani, 2003), especially in a business school environment.

As stated previously, this research was conducted in a qualitative paradigm. “Good qualitative data are as unbiased as possible” (LeCompte, 2000; p. 146). Qualitative data are collected and analysed by human beings, who may be selective about what interests them. Researchers therefore need to develop a reflexive awareness to realise that this affects the credibility and utility of research results. Additionally qualitative data are complex and can be ambiguous, further complicating accuracy (LeCompte, 2000). The researcher must therefore apply procedures that ensure the rigour required for academic research. Functioning in a qualitative, interpretivist paradigm, validity and reliability are requirements to ensure rigour, but these are not necessarily terms that can be applied exactly to qualitative research in the same sense that they

are applied in quantitative research. They are nonetheless concepts that are pertinent to both paradigms (Morse et al., 2002), with the qualitative paradigm being suited for this particular research being conducted.

A researcher must attempt to articulate a theoretically informed choice in her attitude to rigour, and attempt to select an approach that is methodologically and philosophically fitting with the investigation (Caelli, Ray & Mill, 2003).

3.9.1 *Validity*

Many definitions of validity exist and therefore just as many procedures to establish it (Creswell, 2007). The procedures pursued for this research report to establish validity follow:

a. The researcher triangulated the data by clustering across data sources, interviewing in three different organisations and furthermore obtaining three different points of view, namely, that of the HR Practitioner, the coach and the coachee. This was thought prudent in searching for convergence to form themes among the 15 interviews which were sources of information (Creswell & Miller, 2000). “Constructivism values multiple realities that people have in their minds” (Golafshani, 2003; p. 604) and triangulating the data sources maximised this for this particular study.
b. Validity describes the accuracy with which it represents the interviewee’s accounts of their perceptions of coaching and wellbeing – in other words it does not refer to the actual data, but the inferences drawn from the data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). The researcher endeavoured to build trust with the individuals she interviewed and during the interview attempted to understand the organisational culture that they operate in. She also asked for clarification and checked for misinformation during interviews, in order to ascertain the soundness of her understanding as well as that of the eventual readers of the transcripts (Creswell, 2007).

c. Furthermore, the researcher attempted to establish credibility by providing “thick, rich description” (Creswell & Miller, 2000; p. 128) in order to simulate an experience of the researcher’s journey for the reader. This employs a constructivist perspective to build as much detail as possible into the research so that the reader is able to assess the applicability of the findings for himself (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

3.9.2 *Reliability*

Reliability in quantitative research is the “replicability [sic] or repeatability of results or observations” (Golafshani, 2003; p. 598). It is argued by some thinkers that reliability in qualitative research is congruent to validity because of the absence of the measurement of data (Golafshani, 2003; Morse et al., 2002), but this research report recognises the context of the Business School in which it is put forward, where quantitative data is the traditional paradigm of establishing a study and where reliability, or the measures taken to enhance the dependability of the research (Golafshani, 2003), is an important construct.

The reliability of the data was enhanced by employing a digital recorder and having the interviews transcribed verbatim. Atlas was used to label data with emergent themes. This was of great assistance in establishing uniformity and consistency over the themes, as the data was read and reread to identify data that were relevant to the research questions (LeCompte, 2000). Reliability is also enhanced by documenting the methodology used and the process applied in obtaining, recording and analysing the data here in this report.

3.10 Conclusion

Understanding of the role of wellbeing in business coaching in South Africa is researched in this research report through the interviewing of human resource practitioners, coaches and coachees. This is followed by a literature review and a qualitative analysis of the data from interviews using a phenomenological

approach. The data is then discussed in terms of the literature, in order to understand how it corresponds to current theory in existence.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe the results obtained from the data collection. Firstly observations on the demographic profile of the interviewees will be discussed, followed by a report of their perceptions of the research question broken down into three constructs:

1. Their perceptions of the nature of wellbeing;
2. their perceptions of their coaching experiences taken from each of the three particular viewpoints (coach, coachee and HR practitioner) of the business coaching intervention; and finally
3. their reading of the role that wellbeing plays in coaching from this perspective.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss findings clustered around themes emergent from the data. The benefit of the research is to sensitise the reader to the findings so the "qualitative findings are important in and of themselves as it is the richness and detail of the data that give the reader an understanding of the subject's social world" (Knafl & Howard, 1984; p. 18). This chapter was written bearing this premise in mind. The findings reported do not necessarily mean that the same pattern or theme emerged a large number of times. Findings are not reported on the basis of the quantity of times a theme appears in the dataset – this is a qualitative research report, using the researcher as a tool for interpretation (Biggerstaf & Thompson, 2008). No quantitative methods were used.

The researcher did not send a preformulated definition of wellbeing or coaching to the interviewees prior to each interview, nor were the interviewees given sight of the discussion guide at any time. A copy of the documents sent to participants introducing the research is attached in Appendix B. The

interviewees therefore did not answer questions using a definition prescribed by the literature review or by the interviewer before the interview.

4.2 Demographic profile of respondents

The demographic profile of the interviewees is detailed in the previous chapter. Results clustered as themes or seen as patterns were generally random, with no visible pattern connected to an organisation or role of the interviewee. If the findings are clustered in a particular category of interviewee, this is reported, if relevant. Where there is intersection of findings, these are reported, if relevant.

4.3 Term-switching between 'wellbeing' and 'wellness'

The first, most obvious observation over all the respondents regarding the construct of wellbeing was switching of the terms 'wellbeing' and 'wellness'. Few of the respondents requested a definition from the interviewer in order to initiate or reignite the interview, and they showed confidence in what 'wellbeing' meant. The respondents seemed to refer to 'wellbeing' and 'wellness' interchangeably or would not notice at all that they were asked only about 'wellbeing' and never about 'wellness'. This is illustrated in the data following.

4.3.1 *General switching of terms*

The following quotes illustrate how the words 'wellness' and 'wellbeing' are used unconsciously and interchangeably:

> *People were working all night. It is physical exhaustion and the inability to regenerate; that is the opposite of well-being. You can't actually have a sense of wellness if you are physically exhausted. You can't have a sense of well-being if you can never switch off.*
>
> *(Organisation 3, Coach 1)*

So when you talk to me about wellness or wellbeing or what was the word? I mean that is how much it means, it hasn't even stuck – what was the word?

(Organisation 1, Coach 2)

These quotes illustrate the semantic overlap between the two words, and that their meanings are possibly the same.

4.3.2 *Wellbeing associated with wellness programmes*

Wellbeing was also associated immediately with wellness programmes, especially by HR practitioners. The organisations involved in the research offer wellness programmes to the larger part of the workforce, and while these were accessible to senior management and executives, they were spoken about in the interviews as being promoted by them rather than used by them. Wellness programmes and Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) were used as an instrument to keep their workforce well, positive and healthy. In two of the organisations the EAPs were contracted to a third party service provider, while the third organisation was planning to contract a third party in the near future. Business leaders appeared as drivers of EAPs and wellness initiatives:

… there are things that people are doing to try and look after the wellness of their people. So like this morning I had… it was voluntary, but I took my staff through getting vitamin B injections, and flu injections, and you know, making it a fun environment. So on my floor, call it the xxx song okay, because if it is your birthday then they get together and they sing and clap and whatever. So it is just about almost creating that family environment, because we spend so much time here, and you know they work hard, but let's have fun and let's care about each other.

(Organisation 3, Coachee 2)

It is aimed probably, mostly the generic staff base; you know I think for me if I had to look at a gap there is not a focus on executive wellness and you know having a program for them; it is more I think aimed at the general employee population.

(Organisation 3, HR Practitioner)

These quotes illustrate how a coachee, who is an executive in her organisation, is a driver of the company's EAP as a vehicle for engagement and retention, and how the HR Practitioner in the same company identified a gap in executive uptake. The coachee contextualised this in the 'family' culture espoused by the organisation and its values. Wellness programmes were mentioned in terms of absenteeism, attrition, return on investment and employer of choice:

Where we are going to be able to measure our return on investment, because it is all not just magnanimity, is where we are trying … to measure in terms of absenteeism, attrition and all that sort of thing, and making links to usage, etc, etc.

(Organisation 1, Coachee 1)

So that there is a channel for communication to satisfy the wellbeing side – because we want staff to stay and so reduce attrition and make it a choice company to work for.

(Organisation 1, Coachee 2)

4.3.3 *A 'well' culture*

Reference to wellbeing in the workplace was made to a 'well' culture in general, with specific reference made to physical health and wellness programmes. The theme of a 'caring', 'intimate' and 'fun' culture also came about:

So there is a very personable approach, no one is Sir, or an MD is called by his name, it is a very intimate culture and it is a fun culture. So from a wellbeing perspective, when there is soccer

world cup, [Organisation 2] goes all out. The distribution centre is totally got flags and things are happening, and activities.

(Organisation 2, HR Practitioner)

…organization's culture, where we can look after your health, we can facilitate looking after your health, your mental health, your financial wellbeing, which we use another company for that xxx is now tied into. But for me wellness is also a mental state, as in 'do I want to get up in the morning and come to work?' And that talks to culture: things like are individuals being managed appropriately? Are there avenues to talk to line managers or are line managers avoiding those conversations because they don't know what to do with it and feel ill-equipped?

(Organisation 1, Coachee 1)

These quotes illustrate wellbeing in reference to organisational culture. Furthermore the second quote shows the perception that occupational wellbeing offerings and individual mental wellbeing were perceived as separate concepts, with a well mental state stemming from values and interpersonal skills.

4.4 Wellbeing is holistic and multidimensional

All interviewees were asked for their definition of wellbeing. Defining wellbeing as holistic and multidimensional recurred in the dataset, both explicitly – using the words 'holistic' and 'multi-dimensional' – as well as indirectly when looking at the dataset as a whole:

…so again I use the word 'holistic', so it is not one dimensional, it is multi dimensional.

(Organisation 1, Coach 1)

So I think when we talk integral and holistic, wellbeing is what we are after.

(Organisation 2, Coach 1)

Wellbeing was defined as holistic and multidimensional in terms of the individual as a whole person in his or her own right:

…define wellbeing is almost in a holistic way: for me wellbeing is a combination of attitude, the way I see the world, the way I view myself in the world, the consciousness with which I … or the consciousness I bring to my way of being in the world.

(Organisation 2, Coach 1)

The dimensions of wellbeing referred to by this coach relate to the individual's attitude, frame of reference, self-perception, consciousness and way of being. Furthermore, the wellbeing of the whole self was mentioned in terms of the coaching process:

So there is a whole you, a whole being to be dealt with, as a whole being, and ja, having a balance of both I think for me makes absolute sense. Absolute sense.

(Organisation 2, Coachee 2)

As previously, the holistic and multidimensional nature of wellbeing was also referred to *indirectly*. The following quote is illustrative of the perspective of wellbeing being a collective sum of parts – the individual's internal world through to the external, environmental factors influencing the organisation:

So you know it is having an environment that is well, it is having the individual that is well, it is having the external influences that are well. It is not just about flu jabs and testing; to me it is looking at the internal wellness of the organization as well as looking at the external factors.

(Organisation 1, HR Practitioner)

So to draw that back to wellbeing, wellbeing has to be considered along the pathway, it can't be left behind. It needs to be as relevant as doubling your turnover and so at the same time, so not losing your wellbeing and then you get that. So it is about all parts being equal and then you move; not move too quickly here and then there is a big cost to you there. So that has major implications, some people it could impact them for the rest of their life. There are implications at just goal achievement, so that is where I believe wellbeing is fundamental.

(Organisation 1, Coach 1)

The various aspects that make up wellbeing refer to the individual as well as the organisation in the quotes above. The last quote refers to the dynamic nature of wellbeing, as well as the linkage between wellbeing and goal achievement. The following quote also illustrates the implicit reference to the assorted dimensions – 'all that' which makes up wellbeing is mentioned in terms of measuring the organisation's condition of wellbeing:

So if you look at Organisation 1 for example, how do you measure our state of wellness? Is it the number of interventions, is it the rand value, how many times employees use services? Very tricky. And then to start – whatever those are – and you agree with my definition that it is everything from relationships to performance management to you name it – culture, everything – how do you measure all that?

(Organisation 1, Coachee 1)

The dimensions for this coachee range from relationships to performance management to culture to the measurement of wellbeing.

4.5 The parts that make up wellbeing are interrelated

The data described wellbeing as being made up of various parts, with the connection between all these parts being interrelated and not separate or independent:

> *It is those kind of conversations, that to me would speak to wellness. So they are not providing the solution of wellness, but they speak to wellness. There is an inter-relatedness between them. … So ja, for me there is a kind of relationship between physicality, well being, coaching, awareness, values, where you are coming from. I think it is undeniable. I am happy to be made wrong there but I have evidence in my world that it is undeniable, the relatedness of it.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coach 1)*

The wellbeing and coaching is seen by this coach as being related to the individual's physical self, self-awareness, values and perspectives. Again, this interrelatedness was remarked on openly, as in the quote above, but also indirectly:

> *…you are not only dealing with the mind but you are dealing with the mind and heart and the whole body, and when you do come to the office what it is that you experience at home affects you seriously when you are at the office.*
>
> *(Organisation 2, Coachee 2)*

The aspects that make up individual wellbeing – the mind, heart and body – are related to the organisational context, and the interviewee makes the observation of the impact of the individual on the organisation. Therefore, this quote implicitly connects aspects of the individual, and relates them to the context in which the individual operates.

4.6 Wellbeing is subjective

Another pattern that emerged when the respondents spoke about wellbeing is the highly subjective nature of the concept:

> *And wellbeing will look differently for different people, I mean even if you look at it in terms of balance, what is balance for me may be different to you, because we hold different things as being important to us, so it is about understanding that. So it is really about working with the person in terms of when they are well, what does that look like? What is their wellbeing at the optimum level? Somebody who is an athlete it is going to look like different for somebody who goes to gym maybe once a week.*
>
> *(Organisation 2, Coach 2)*

> *But they might say 'my wellbeing' and then I will ask them what they mean by that. And then of course it is whatever is in their conscious space right now, and that may be different in a year's time.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coach 2)*

The first quote illustrates a personal conception of wellbeing dependent on values and activities, but also evolving and changing over time. The subjectivity of wellbeing is spoken about in the second quote in terms of the customised approach employed by coaches. Both these quotes present the coaches' points of view of wellbeing's subjectivity, but all categories of interviewees used phrases such as 'for me':

> *So for me wellbeing encompasses, yes it is the physical health, it is ensuring that there is financial fitness, you know, that people are managing from a financial perspective, that it is not just about the individual's wellbeing, it is about the influences that surround them.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, HR Practitioner)*

So how does one put that into a wellbeing sort of context, but for me if we are looking at individuals and individual competence, just people, then surely are we not doing wellbeing stuff?

(Organisation 2, HR Practitioner)

Also for me, how I deal with people, and listen better and understand, try and understand better. So you are never too old to grow and learn!

(Organisation 3, Coachee 1)

These quotes show the subjective breadth of the interviewees' perceptions of wellbeing: physical health, financial fitness, individual wellbeing, influences on the individual's wellbeing, individual competencies in the workplace, managing and communicating with people, and capacities such as listening and understanding, were all mentioned. The interviewees did not present an objective, universal definition of wellbeing – their ideas and perceptions of wellbeing were personal and individual, particular to their role as coach, coachee or HR Practitioner, as well as their context.

4.7 A characteristic of wellbeing is congruence

The theme of congruence appeared in the data as a description of the quality of connection between the various parts that make up wellbeing as a whole: the individual had to be congruent with himself in order to be described as 'having' wellbeing. The data said that if people are in a state of wellbeing, then they have energy and this brings capability and the possibility of engagement. Congruence was referred to explicitly, but also indirectly. Here a coach refers to it as a state of flow:

Because then you can actually figure out what your passions are. Most people are not connected, so it is that state of flow, it is when work doesn't feel like work…

(Organisation 1, Coach 2)

> *…so does the person have a sense of purpose, are they congruent with what they say and do, and then do they have the ability to self-observe. And then the relationship stuff, which is very important in business, and then the technical stuff, are they coping with organizational skills, with their self-management skills…*
>
> *(Organisation 2, HR Practitioner)*

Congruence for this HR Practitioner means having a sense of purpose, acting on statements and having the ability to self-observe. This was described as the individual being in harmony with oneself, but also in terms of consonance with the workplace – relationship to work and alignment of values with those of the organisation.

The converse of congruence was described as 'a disconnect', not 'incongruence':

> *It is a combination of how I think about things, and how I am about things, is there congruence? So wellbeing is about congruence because disconnect is going to show up in some way, whether there is a values outage or whatever it might be, but if there is a disconnection it will show up at a wellbeing level.*
>
> *(Organisation 2, Coach 1)*

The disharmony between the individual and the organisation was evident in the data as resulting in physical ill-health. This, as well as the connection between emotional wellbeing and physical health, is discussed later in the findings. Congruence therefore appears intra-personally and between the individual and organisation.

4.8 Perceptions of coaching in organisations South Africa

This section presents the results of the interviews regarding perceptions of coaching in South African organisations. This subsection conveys how coaching is applied in each organisation in practice, and coaching's contribution in various areas of the individual functioning within the organisation.

4.8.1 *'Location' of coaching in the organisation*

When asked about wellbeing, interviewees spontaneously discussed executive wellbeing separately to wellness programmes that target the generic workforce. It was evident that coaching is a part of the human resource effort under leadership development and human capital development, rather than being a part of the wellness offering or an employee assistance programme:

> *Now I have brought [coaching] into HR and I have made it all very streamlined. So it now sits under learning and development or it sits under HR.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, HR Practitioner)*

The data demonstrated that coaching was offered as a specialised intervention offered to executives, leaders and high potential managers:

a. In Organisation 1, coaching is offered only to the executive, with encouragement from the CEO. It played a fairly new role in the organisation, with the HR practitioner intending to promote and reorganise it in the future. Coachees were limited in their choice of coach that they could select. No measurement took place to review its success.
b. At Organisation 2, coaching is a part of a programme aimed at high-potential leaders with the scope of developing this talent within the company. It was part of a series of interventions, including engagement with a psychologist. The programme lasted nine to 12 months and had a start and conclusion date. No formal measurement of the success of the

coaching intervention itself was performed, although the programme as a whole was seen to be successful. Coachees were introduced to various coaches with the coachee selecting who would be best suited to themselves.

c. Organisation 3 has a long history with coaching in the company – not only do executives and managers have access to coaches, some have long-standing relationships with their coach. Coaching is also spearheaded by the CEO, who is viewed as a prominent driver of coaching in the company. Managers are also trained to coach, and coaching-type consultations take place between managers and line employees.

Within the organisations interviewed, coaching was positioned to increase the effectiveness and capacities of executives and high-potential managers, as well as support them. It was not utilised as a solution to fix derailing behaviours or a lack of performance. The trend was that coachees would generate their own goals and developmental areas, and identify their own competencies to be worked on, giving them agency and autonomy in the coaching space. This was observed to increase their wellbeing:

> *What we are trying in terms of our positioning of coaching, we are really working very hard to see to position coaching as a development opportunity for top performance. So we don't want to create a culture where someone isn't performing, and the manager is saying 'go to a coach so they can fix you' – type of scenario: it is really saying 'we see the potential in you, we really value your contribution, you working for us as an employee, we want to develop you further, and in terms of your development we think you should focus on these competencies, or you can identify your own competencies, your own development areas, and then you have access to that coach.*
>
> *(Organisation 3, HR Practitioner)*

…a sense of autonomy and agency allowed people to make different choices, about how they were working – not necessarily leave their jobs, but about how they were working to put better boundaries in. And that actually opened the way for people to get some sense of emotional and physical well-being.

(Organisation 3, Coach 1)

… so wellbeing was being able to not be so emotional, and using coping mechanisms, so just being able to relax, and focus on the job and get the job done, so not getting sucked into… I keep referring to emotions and politics and whatever, it is just being focused on what it is you need to do. So you here, there is a job, the company believes in you, and they know you are going to be able to do it so go in now and do what you need to do, and not get sidelined by all this 'stuff' that is happening around you!

(Organisation 3, Coachee 2)

The latter quote illustrates the complexity the coachee deals with at a high-ranking level in the organisation as well as her confidence that the company has faith in her. It also demonstrates the support coaching provides in terms of coping mechanisms and being able to use the coaching as time-out to reflect on the demands on her.

4.8.2 *Positive versus negative perceptions of the coaching experience*

The themes that emerged in terms of perceptions of coaching could be split into two clear categories: positive and negative perceptions of coaching. This was clearly evident because all interviewees perceived coaching in the positive, but two had had negative experiences. The distinction here is that all interviewees, whether HR practitioners, coaches or coachees, perceived coaching to be a positive intervention, but their experience in practice either confirmed or conflicted with this. The following is a quote from a coachee who did not benefit from coaching:

> *I think it can be a safe environment for people to share, as well, and a good coach will enable that person to sort out their own *** you know (laughs)…*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coachee 1)*

The two interviewees who had negative experiences were coachees: the one was an HR generalist, interviewed as a recipient of coaching, so understands the coaching mechanism, and although she affirmed a positive perception of coaching, the coaching experience that she was interviewed about did not align with her understanding of coaching in general. She patently stated that the coaching did not benefit her, and she was clear on the reasons why – she was not offered a panel of coaches to choose from and was consequently not offered a chemistry session with the coach who was assigned to her, there was no tripartite agreement between client, coach and coachee, and furthermore she also felt she was not listened to:

> *I didn't gel, I didn't know why she was there. Ja, it was … I felt that she didn't really pick up my queues.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coachee 1)*

The second coachee who formed part of the exception, was exposed to coaching for the first time as part of a leadership development programme where sessions with a psychologist were included. This coachee stated that the coaching benefitted her in the work-space, but that although she chose her own coach, the chemistry in the sessions petered out and a 'blockage' occurred:

> *I am not sure if it was the kind of questions or the kind of approach which I sometimes found a bit frustrating – and that is why I say the selection of a coach is quite critical, making sure that you have the right person on board. But in my mind at that point in time yes, I was aware of myself, what it is that I need to work through, and despite this friction I would work through the exercises because they were working and they were yielding results.*

(Organisation 2, Coachee 2)

The coachee asserted that the coaching produced business results for her, yet felt frustrated by her coach.

Over the board, perceptions of coaching were positive, both in the interviewees' experience and their observations of others' experiences. The word 'benefit' was repeated by all groups of interviewees:

> *One of our EXCO members at the moment has been doing personal coaching and business coaching, well he is EXCO so… and he feels it has seriously, seriously benefited him.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coachee 1)*

Leaving wellbeing aside, the interviewees reported positive perceptions of their experience of coaching citing improvement in various work-related categories. Again, 'improvement', or 'help', or 'better' are words used to describe this positivity, but no quantitative measurement was reported voluntarily. The categories of improvement mentioned included conflict resolution, behaviour linked to self-awareness, behaviour linked to wellbeing, behaviour in the workplace, communication, confidence, leadership development, leading of discussions, lobbying for support of influencers, performance in the workplace, self-awareness related to individual, self-awareness related to multiple organisational systems, self-awareness benefitting relationships, self-mastery, work-life balance and improvement of workflow:

> *And the coaching is also helping if there is conflict – because there will be conflict from time to time – there are eight guys and one woman, you know, I mean there is a lot of testosterone in that room. So there will be conflict.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, HR Practitioner)*

> *So I am more confident and ja, I just feel it has made me more positive.*

(Organisation 2, Coachee 1)

> *I think if you sort of go to your coach and want to discuss issues, so then mostly I think it was probably about relationships, and people, and getting buy-in or communicating better. Ja. So it's lots about people.*
>
> *(Organisation 3, Coachee 1)*

> *…I am almost inclined to say that self-generation comes from self-awareness. So once I have moved something to the consciously incompetent then I need someone to help me travel that path from thereon, otherwise I can say 'okay so now what?'*
>
> *(Organisation 2, Coach 2)*

These quotes show the perspective of the three categories of interviewees, over all three organisations. Coaching was viewed as a positive intervention yielding constructive gains over a range of organisational issues. These were seen as legitimate business coaching issues. Coaching was seen by all categories of interviewee as a goal-orientated process making development and transformation possible. Interviewees also saw coaching as facilitation rather than a directive approach to development, with goals generated by the coachee, rather than motivated by the coach or client:

> *I think one of the things we hope to achieve through our coaching process is people who are self-generating, so they do not create or not have a dependency on a coach at closure. So it is about self-correction, self-generation towards the end, and definitely for us, what I have seen, it is about achieving a result. So when they start off with a coaching process it is very clearly defined what they want to get out of it.*
>
> *(Organisation 2, HR Practitioner)*

While the concepts mentioned above cover the range of business issues and objectives mentioned when the interviewees spoke about coaching, the

particular organisational concern mentioned repeatedly in the dataset was that of leadership development.

4.8.3 *Coaching for leadership development*

The reason for the prevalence of this theme is probably because of the demographic interviewed – all the coachees were in high-level leadership positions or leaders in managerial positions targeted for advancement. All three organisations acknowledged offering coaching only to these categories of employee. Thus coaching was seen as a tool to develop leaders into better leaders as well as to develop current leaders into bigger roles.

HR Practitioners and coaches viewed coaching for leadership development as providing support, optimising roles, dealing with complexity, being more effective, creating self-awareness, developing positive behaviours, integrating with themselves, personal leadership issues, transitioning roles, and developing potential and competencies:

> *So we have got somebody in a leadership role that is needing extra support that we would consider coaching.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, HR Practitioner)*

> *So business coaching would focus more on role optimization. It is not technical skills transfer, but it is really helping the individual to take a leadership role on the appropriate level of work; the complexity of level of work they are operating on; and to help the executive to optimize role effectiveness.*
>
> *(Organisation 3, Coach 2)*

> *So they are looking for levels of competence that are increased, but they are also looking for a different level of consciousness in their leadership. And I think consciousness, an increased consciousness cannot help but have an impact on wellbeing. I mean I know that with the people I work with, the shift from*

unconsciously incompetent to consciously incompetent, is massive.

(Organisation 2, Coach 1)

…the purpose of coaching; coaching isn't … doesn't exist for the purpose of ensuring employee's wellbeing, leadership development coaching is there for the purpose of developing leaders, developing competencies in people to be able to reach their full potential as leaders, it is about shifting ways of beings, so that they can engage in that way of being, they can integrate that way of being into themselves…

(Organisation 2, Coach 2)

Viewed from the position of the coachee, these interviewees who are leaders in their organisation expressed that coaching is a safe space for reflection. Hence, the theme of reflection for leaders emerged – time to reflect, space to reflect and the forum of coaching as a 'safe' space to reflect:

I think it is just nice to sit with someone, and I think a coach, a coaching relationship is amazing, it is awesome; so it is really a safe space of … ja, sharing and getting information and asking those questions.

(Organisation 3, Coachee 1)

…being in a leadership role you are doing a lot of self-reflection and the impact that you have on people around you. So not just on the business per se, but your responsibility as a leader. So you know your actions, your decisions that you make, has a huge impact on people – which is the core, which then has an impact on the actual financial results.

(Organisation 3, Coachee 2)

The need to reflect as leaders was viewed in the positive, with coaching being an effective tool to allow reflection and development in the areas mentioned by

the HR practitioners and coaches interviewed. The last quote builds on this by alluding to the influence that leaders have on the people they lead, which then influences financial results.

The data also demonstrated the knock-on effect that coaching had on leaders to apply techniques they had learned in the coaching for managing their staff better:

> *So definitely it has helped me because I have been able to then use it with my staff, and I look for the same cycle that my coach used with me. So it has definitely helped me with my team.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coachee 2)*

> *I won't say that I was not an effective manager in terms of leading people, but I give them more space on the very clear understanding that they need to get clear goals and be accountable for their actions. And you can see the people coming out of their shells, it is not a question of me sitting down in a meeting and 'come, this is what we are going to do'; it is more of a challenge here of 'how do you go about sorting it out'.*
>
> *(Organisation 2, Coachee 1)*

The last quote illustrates a more facilitative, less directive style of leadership which the coachee recognised and adopted after going through a series of coaching interventions.

4.9 The role that wellbeing plays in coaching

The root question of the research is to explore the role that wellbeing plays in the business coaching intervention. In this section, the relationship between the two, produced from the data, will be observed.

The researcher asked all categories of interviewees directly about this relationship. Various patterns emerged, but none being as prevalent as the following two:

1. that wellbeing is never an overt goal of the coaching conversation, but is rather an inadvertent outcome; and
2. that the word wellbeing was hardly ever articulated.

4.10 Wellbeing as an outcome of coaching

Although coaching was seen as a goal-orientated process, wellbeing was never described by interviewees as a goal on the coaching agenda. Results from the dataset described wellbeing as a by-product of the coaching conversation, as an unintended outcome or an unarticulated outcome:

> *[Wellbeing] is an outcome. It is a little bit like… so if that is the outcome it isn't always articulated as an outcome.*
>
> *(Organisation 2, Coach 1)*

The fact that wellbeing was present in the coaching conversation was undisputed and unquestioned by the interviewees. What was discussed by them was the form that wellbeing took within the conversation. It was described by interviewees as an 'outcome, a 'by-product', a 'necessary ingredient' and as 'emergent', but never as being a goal or as a part of the agenda. The 'legitimate issues' listed previously such as conflict resolution and performance, are goals for business coaching interventions. This pattern that appeared throughout the data is explained by a coach:

> *I don't think that people come to me as a coach and say 'right, I need to work on well-being because I am…' If people do that, they are actually at the end of their tether! There is other stuff they are working on before that, they are working on like maybe getting a*

promotion, or maybe participation, or finding energy in work because they have got bored.

(Organisation 3, Coach 1)

In light of this clear distinction – 'legitimate' issues as goals and wellbeing as an outcome – business coaching and wellbeing were described in relation to each other by the respondents, in the following ways:

a. Coaching was described as creating a move towards a more balanced way of being, regulating and developing a number of unique components, such as confidence, that make up functioning in the workplace:

And just trying to put it across, to say 'alright, I have a voice, I have something to contribute, this is what…' – it gets quite stressful because it is like 'okay what is it that you are going to do to warrant that we do give you attention?' So it was always very not so comfortable position to be in, and ja – for her it was saying 'alright, now how do we work through making sure that you are contributing, that you are linking what you are doing to the business, that you are getting the right airtime so to speak in that team, and you are not keeping quiet and not…'

(Organisation 2, Coachee 2)

b. Coaching was described as bolstering relationships and communication within organisations between people and generating more effective modes of interaction:

Well it is looking at the person and saying 'alright, who are you, how are you, what can you tell me about what you think we should do in this environment?' – not what I want you to do. So less of the command control, more of the engaging, and actually bring thinking people to the fore, rather than robots, or people that do purely out of routine. So I think coaching has a role to play there to

get closer to people, because people have opinions, but we don't ask them. And it is the same, it is not different in a team environment I believe.

(Organisation 2, HR Practitioner)

c. Coaching was described as focussing on 'legitimate', hard issues – professional development, business goals, engagement and inter-organisational relationships – rather than focussing on wellbeing.

I don't know if it was the intention, but no, I never thought about it in that way. I was more concerned about the professional side of things and you know, what was going on in the business and how I was engaging and relating and whether I was in the right space.

(Organisation 1, Coachee 2)

d. Wellbeing was described as a part of the developmental process. Enquiry about wellbeing by coaches creates a basis for resourcefulness and the foundation to move from one developmental stage to another. The most illustrative quotes came from coaches, but it was recognised by other categories of interviewee as well. Wellbeing was described as being a component that must be present before growth and development conversations can take place:

I don't think [wellbeing] is ever a direct outcome, but it is a necessary ingredient to get to the outcome that we are working with…

(Organisation 2, Coach 2)

'I have got these goals and these targets and this is what I want to do and whatever' and I think if I have to reflect back, it wasn't just coping with stress and wellbeing…. And that she probably very cleverly dealt with it. Because you can't deal with anything else until you get that under control, off the table. So in those sessions,

if I have to reflect back, I think that was the big thing that we worked on – whether I realized it or not at the time!

(Organisation 3, Coachee 2)

e. Wellbeing was described as resulting from the coaching space by allowing for agency, choice-making and autonomy. Wellbeing was also described as improving when goals on the coaching agenda were achieved, such as more self-awareness, improved competencies and better options:

What I have seen with wellbeing probably has been the primary outcome of the coaching, because people have been stuck in various places in their life and have not been well or there is something missing, so they are in spaces that they could be in better spaces; and the coaching has certainly helped them become more competent, more self-aware, shifting paradigms, and views on their issues, and actually come up with new possibilities. That has led to happier people, whether we define that as wellbeing – yes, but ja, it is there, but whether it is in the agenda to say okay we are going to talk about your wellbeing, not yet, no.

(Organisation 2, HR Practitioner)

…one of the things that comes out of coaching is a sense of agency, I can make my own choices, and those choices have a knock-on effect on to well-being, in general.

(Organisation 3, Coach 1)

f. Wellbeing was described as ensuing from the coaching intervention by the awareness created about conscious actions, habits and patterns that produce positive health. This coachee speaks of the 'legitimate' issues that are the foci of the coaching agenda, and health-related goals as a supportive part of this:

> *… when we set our goals and the sort of things we are going to focus on, then of course in there is always you know 'going to be healthy this year' and keeping health. So what does that mean? Going to the gym, doing a medical, following up. You know? On that side it is the physical well-being.*
>
> *(Organisation 3, Coachee 1)*

Interviewees therefore demonstrated that by undergoing a coaching process aimed at business objectives, wellbeing unintentionally improved as a result. Stories were volunteered as well as asked for by the interviewer. These described individuals shifting positively in the workplace due to coaching improving wellbeing. HR practitioners and coaches told stories of third parties while coachees recounted their own story. Coaching for wellbeing was shown by the dataset to be resultant from the coaching intervention and / or assumed within coaching conversations. It is not a primary, articulated goal on the agenda.

4.11 Themes articulating wellbeing in coaching conversations

As demonstrated above, wellbeing was shown not to be a primary, articulated *goal* on the agenda, and it was also shown not to be articulated at all in the coaching conversation. In other words, the word 'wellbeing' turned out to be used very seldom in conversation either by the coach or coachee, or by HR practitioners in driving coaching interventions in the organisation.

> *So 'I have a case of wellbeing'. ***! Who talks like that? People don't, that is not the word they will have attached to it. So no, whenever it comes up as I need to be in a place of wellbeing, I mean how else would you describe it? I need to be well, as a being. So no.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coach 2)*

> *…Organisation 2 [coaching] definitely is leadership development and I think their overall outcome, even if they don't articulate it, is that they want, they are looking for organizational health by investing in their executive or leadership groups to bring about change.*
>
> *(Organisation 2, Coach 1)*

Four themes emerged from the data that interviewees used to describe their perceptions of wellbeing in the business coaching conversation. These were engagement, happiness, health and stress. Interviewees used these constructs to define or substitute the word 'wellbeing' in relation to their experience of coaching.

4.11.1 *Engagement related to wellbeing and coaching*

The quality of the connection between the individual and the company he or she works in is commonly described as 'engagement'. In the data, the word engagement was used repeatedly, and it came up as a theme in terms of defining wellbeing in general. It was also linked to coaching in that positive engagement was seen as a part of the coaching conversation in order to encourage wellbeing. This quote demonstrated engagement of the individual with his work and all the facets that make up his life:

> *…it is actually about engagement, and being able to engage and wanting and desiring to engage – with all sorts of things – not just work, but family and the wholeness / the fullness of life: if you are in a state of wellbeing then there is energy and with energy comes along the capability and possibility of engagement, and without that people withdraw, so the opposite of well-being – so disengaging, burnout and distress. All the bad stuff. And actually disease, it does lead to extreme disease.*
>
> *(Organisation 3, Coach 1)*

As described in the quote above, engagement is associated with the roles that make up people's lives – work and family – as well as with physical health. It was seen by this coach as able, wanting and desiring to engage, with the coach's task to facilitate this in coachees. Engagement was related to emotional health in terms of the individual being connected to their work – this was seen on a different three-level scale – not engaged, engaged and highly engaged:

> *Wellbeing is a state of mind of the individual's connection to the business and engagement: are you engaged, highly engaged or not engaged? So that for me is the wellbeing. Is this a place I want to be, do I want to stay here, am I feeling emotionally connected to the work that I do?*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coachee 2)*

Associating the individual with the workplace, a happy employee was seen as an engaged employee encompassing two aspects of human existence – emotional and cognitive engagement:

> *…for me that is not wellbeing, for me wellbeing is being engaged work, head and heart. And loving it. You know? That is how I would define it. Engaging heads and hearts.*
>
> *(Organisation 2, HR Practitioner)*

All three quotes illustrate that all the interviewees essentially held the same opinion – engagement was positively associated to wellbeing – a highly engaged employee would be linked with having elevated wellbeing. This appeared as a working part of the coaching conversation.

4.11.2 *Happiness related to wellbeing and coaching*

From the analysis of the dataset, it would appear that there is a connection between wellbeing and happiness. Interviewees spontaneously spoke about happiness when asked about wellbeing.

> *I think what comes to mind is laughter. I think it is about… I don't know how best to describe it but somehow being in your happy place you know. A happy place…*
>
> (Organisation 2, Coachee 2)

Happiness did not appear to have the same connection to wellbeing each time it was mentioned. Broadly speaking, wellbeing appeared in the data as the individual being happy to go to work in his organisation. This appeared in the following ways as happiness in 'life' affecting work and vice versa, and in terms of the individual's engagement in the workplace:

> *I have always been somebody that I love what I do and I do what I love, but the environment has a huge impact on me – apart from that: I can love what I do but if the minute I walk in those doors my happiness just drops to the floor if I am having a difficult time, so being able to understand better how to engage with others and stakeholders in the organization through the coaching, has allowed me to increase my space of happiness. …I think from a wellness perspective and feeling happy in the place that I work, I am definitely happier than I was six months ago – I was very unhappy six months ago. So it has almost been a bit of a roller coaster that I have been on…*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coachee 2)*

This coachee referred to wellbeing and happiness almost interchangeably, as was the case with many of the interviewees. This quote illustrates the positive impact of coaching on her happiness, and also illustrates the impact of her work environment on how she feels. She later went on to disclose that she was not inspired by her leader, and her inability to relate to him was also a cause of unhappiness in her job. Her experience speaks to positive relatedness, and how coaching developed her ability to realise her own potential, rather than having to be inspired in order to flourish. The quote above essentially expresses her experiences of happiness versus unhappiness.

Wellness programmes appeared as vehicles to promote and support the wellbeing of its staff from a practical, functional point of view, while happiness appeared in the dataset related to the individual and not the collective. All the quotes in this subsection support this. A fun culture and a caring organisation were two concepts that were mentioned, but not a 'happy' organisation.

Regarding individual happiness and its various manifestations, one respondent spoke about human beings naturally tending to wellbeing and happiness:

> *… in fact we expect the status quo to be wellbeing, happiness and contentment and all of that stuff.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coach 2)*

This quote encapsulated the pattern that emerged repeatedly in the interviews at Organisation 1: the pursuit of wellbeing as happiness was discussed by a coach and a coachee, in detail, with a tendency to connect the terms unconsciously. This noted, there were interviewees from other organisations that spoke about happiness, and these were mainly coachees.

Happiness was viewed as two interrelated camps – work and life. The dataset taken as a whole indicated the pattern repeatedly so that it would be difficult to separate these two poles:

> *…how do you rate your percentage of happiness? Because it is a mixture of both business as well as personal, and then you struggle over how do I separate it all? … that basically for me is the happiness side of things because ja, I don't have a hugely complicated personal life, so a lot revolves around my business life. If I am unhappy at work I am unhappy at home (laughs) and if I am happy at work I am happy at home.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coachee 2)*

In relation to the coaching conversation, this coachee was particularly vociferous about the positive impact that coaching had on her at work, and she referred to this naturally, as happiness.

The theme of engagement came up again when talking about happiness. The desired quality of the engagement of the individual to his work was described in terms of happiness:

> *I would just give my own interpretation of wellbeing; I believe that it relates to wellness, that is my view, being happy working for [Organisation 2], being proud for [Organisation 2], and to be provided the opportunity to become all that I am possible of becoming. To me that is my definition of wellbeing.*
>
> *(Organisation 2, Coachee 1)*

> *So [wellbeing] is a bit like the word 'happiness', you know, so if I am saying to you 'how is your job going?' you are not going to say to me 'oh wow, I am so engaged! … Yes, you are going to say 'I am really happy' or 'I am really unhappy'.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coach 2)*

> *Simply put I would say wellbeing for me is a person who understands what they need to be doing, has the resources to do it well, has the support structure to do it well and the autonomy to go and do that, and must know the boundaries as well, so that it is a happy employee. I can't put it any simpler; somebody who understands all of that which engages them and I am not talking about the safety issues and safety boots…*
>
> *(Organisation 2, HR Practitioner)*

These quotes speak to a number of issues that make up the 'happy employee' described by Organisation 2, HR Practitioner – a clear grasp of job description, resourcefulness, support structure, autonomy, boundary clarity and engagement, but also fulfillment of potential, opportunity and a sense of pride.

Happiness was also addressed in terms of goal-attainment and specifically in relation to wellbeing and coaching jointly.

> *…the pursuit of happiness, with a direct attachment to exactly where we want to be, is in direct proportion to the amount of unhappiness we feel, discontent, the amount of arguments we have, etc … So people often say, 'well okay so how will I ever achieve my goals?', 'will I ever make any money?', 'I want to do that deal', … if you are not operating from a place of passion and purely for money it is probably not going to work out the way you want it anyway. So then you experience unhappiness or your wellbeing is down.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coach 2)*

> *So taking an interest into people's personal goals. So what is it that they want to achieve, having development plans and development of yourself and others? It is not just about your work, but in the end a good balance will create more profit, so will create more happier people.*
>
> *(Organisation 3, Coachee 1)*

A pattern emerged over the data by all categories of respondents was that self-fulfillment and achievement was a way of achieving happiness. The second quote by Organisation 3, Coachee 1 extends this further – he described his own happiness as being increased by leading and guiding individuals who work for him to achieve their own goals. This was a theme throughout his particular interview but was also echoed by other executives interviewed, although it came through less explicitly.

One respondent defined happiness and wellbeing as being separate concepts. This respondent was a coach from Organisation 2, and was the only respondent to distinctly identify wellbeing and happiness as different concepts.

We are after wellbeing, we are not after happiness, we are after wellbeing…

(Organisation 2, Coach 1)

Of all six respondents to mention happiness, this was the only response that took an opposing view to the desirability of happiness, and was mentioned in terms of aims and goals of the coaching intervention. The coach referred to wellbeing as being more substantial than happiness, containing characteristics such as resilience, attitude and patience.

4.11.3 *The physical dimensions of wellbeing related to coaching*

Physical dimensions for the individual overlap the mental and emotional aspects of wellbeing. While references in the data to mental and emotional wellbeing were made, they were not as prevalent as the direct, explicit references made to the physical wellness or wellbeing of the individual.

The following references to physical wellbeing and symptomatic manifestations in the physical were made: ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder), addiction, energy, diet, exercise and recreation, awareness of physical self-perception, physical health of individuals, physical self, post natal depression, comfort during business travel, eating well, losing weight, movement, pain, regenerate and switch off, rest, safety issues, sleep, smoking, somatic awareness, and a physical practice to manage energy. These physical factors involved in being well appeared as symptoms showing up in the body:

And now I am not even smoking. And I did not have any purpose and the reason why I should stop smoking before I joined this particular coaching forum.

(Organisation 2, Coachee 1)

Wellbeing also appeared as physical health in the coaching conversation:

> *…one executive for the past two years, that has brain cancer, so I would see that as a well-being issue: it has been quite challenging to kind of manage the complexity of the accept the self, and moving in and out of the executive team between chemotherapy and then taking a role again in the organization and working with the complexities of moving in and out of the chemotherapy. Where the executive coaching really focused every time really in assisting the executive's re-entry into the organization, to focus on role taking again and manage the complexity of quite a serious disease or illness, while working.*
>
> *(Organisation 3, Coach 2)*

The process that the coach describes is that of an individual (coach) helping another (coachee) to alleviate suffering (in this case physical suffering) and move toward wellbeing. Similar stories were voiced in the data such as coaching facilitating the improvement of physical and emotional distress, with this having an effect in the workplace by improving behaviour, confidence and way of being.

Positive physical health was described in the dataset as a *desired* quality of wellbeing required for the production of business goals. This was particularly prevalent for coaches, but was also described by other 'categories' of interviewees. Its opposite was described in the negative as disengagement, burnout, distress and disease, all having an adverse effect on the advancement of business.

> *Your lifestyle? Is it conducive to wellness? So if you are an executive let's say at xxx, because I do coach at xxx, so if your priority is just simply to get the deal but you are not measuring the cost to your relationship, to your health and you are on a burn out, for me that is not wellness. Wellness would say certainly be successful in your workplace however with all these other factors considered, even their diet I have noted is not supporting…*

because they are eating on the run, with no consideration, it is just fill that and go. It is not sustainable so it is going to catch up with them, absolutely. So I wouldn't write a diet plan for any of my clients but I would just get them to take responsibility to look, to see this is what they are doing.

(Organisation 1, Coach 1)

…if you are in a state of well-being then there is energy and with energy comes along the capability and possibility of engagement, and without that people withdraw, so the opposite of well-being – so disengaging, burnout and distress. All the bad stuff. And actually disease, it does lead to extreme disease.

(Organisation 3, Coach 1)

Also being aware you know, there are times when you know that your wellbeing is not right, but if you are aware of it, you can do something to change it around. You can get sickness where you don't have energy today but the trick is all with me: if I come in here I should be able to do my job even if personally and privately I am not okay.

(Organisation 2, Coachee 1)

The three quotes above illustrate the importance of being physically well to be effective in the workplace. The latter two quotes point to a subject mentioned in the data linked to physical health – energy. This came up as physical energy to get the job done and meet goals, and as the quotes illustrate, energy was perceived as motivation and vigor.

Interviewees cited self-awareness of one's physical self as being of considerable importance. This awareness of one's own body was encouraged by coaching. Physical wellbeing was also described in terms of positive somatic awareness or intelligence, again in the service of constructive business:

> *Okay, of which how I feel about myself is quite key to how I stand up and give a speech, and the awareness that I have around my body. And that I feel good about it. No matter what it looks like, do I feel good about it? So the relationship that I have with my body. So there will always be that physical or somatic aspect that is one of the outcomes. Whether it is to be in an exercise program that will alleviate stress and give you more energy, whether it will be embarking on healthy eating – because execs don't eat well and they have a number of reasons or excuses why they don't. So the thing is to get them to eat better and regularly, because of the wellbeing, it comes with that.*
>
> *(Organisation 2, Coach 1)*

This quote refers to two different components of the individual's physical wellbeing – awareness of oneself and promoting one's own wellbeing. The individual is identified as an executive. The dataset taken as a whole showed the executive's physical wellbeing concerns being dealt with by coaching, while the collective's physical wellbeing concerns being dealt with by the EAP or wellness programme. Strictly speaking, while the boundaries were not always definitive, this was a clear trend:

> *Organisation 2 [the purpose of coaching] definitely is leadership development and I think their overall outcome, even if they don't articulate it, is that they want, they are looking for organizational health by investing in their executive or leadership groups to bring about change.*
>
> *(Organisation 2, Coach 1)*

The word 'health' was used intuitively to substitute 'wellbeing'. This took place in a number of forms: physical health, organisation health and healthy teams were all concepts conveyed by the interviewees. This was considered over the board, by all three categories of respondents in all three organisations. Again, coaches were particularly observant of this. This coach summed up the language issue

in organisations in general with regards to wellbeing in coaching, and offers an alternative word:

> *So maybe the language doesn't exist at a corporate level to talk about it, but certainly it would be equated to health.*
>
> *(Organisation 2, Coach 1)*

The word 'health' was used spontaneously by interviewees to discuss their thoughts and ideas relating to physical wellbeing.

4.11.4 *Stress related to wellbeing and coaching*

Almost every interviewee mentioned stress in some way or form. It was discussed by coach, coachee and HR practitioner alike, both as an independent phenomenon and in terms of a subject in coaching conversations about wellbeing.

The following patterns emerged: the various parts that make up stress, the causes of stress, the results of stress and stress in the context of the organisation as well as in the context of the business coaching conversation. All interviewees viewed stress as negative and nobody tried to define stress, although it was perceived to be on the opposite end of the continuum to wellbeing:

> *…and if we are taking stress as the opposite of well-being then I have seen it…*
>
> *(Organisation 3, Coach 1)*

Stress in the context of the organisation was voiced mainly as the organisation being a cause of stress, but also appeared as how the organisation responds to personal and organisational stressors via wellness programmes and EAPs.

The data showed beyond question that work challenges and demands impacted wellbeing as this phenomenon called 'stress':

So in order to keep your job you have got to run bloody hard, and it is too stressful. So people go home from work, they can't go home at 5 o'clock, that is not acceptable to businesses.

(Organisation 3, Coach 1)

…you will always have something that you have got to do that is going to be stressful; it is never going to be stress-free – no job is I don't believe…

(Organisation 1, Coachee 2)

…stress and well-being, burnout in organizations, burnout in general – that it is really a dangerous thing that I see happening to people, like everywhere Laura, not just in organizations, but the world is going too fast and people are balancing 30 things in their heads at once. It is not healthy. I see or if people talk to me, and lots of people… I would say most people talk to me about some kind of stress and well-being…

(Organisation 3, Coach 1)

The latter quote illustrates how stress appears in the coaching conversation, linked to job pressures as well as environmental features such as the fast-paced, demanding context in which individuals operate.

Stress was also referred to differently depending on the rank of the target in the organisation, for example, for the generic staff base, stressors were commented on as mainly practical points both inside and outside of the organisation: getting to work safely or safety issues due to operating equipment. An association between wellbeing and seniority was mentioned: the more senior, the better the wellbeing, while the more junior staff would be more stressed, but have better resilience to deal with this stress:

And also Laura the level that people are at in an organization makes a massive difference to the well-being because (and this is also very well researched on stress) – the more control you have

over your own life, the easier life gets: there is always somebody, whether an MD answering to shareholders, there is always somebody out there that you have to deal with, nobody is completely an island, but the more junior you are in an organization the more stressful it is.

(Organisation 3, Coach 1)

The causes of stress – both organisational and personal – that were mentioned in the dataset, could be listed as follows: lack of passion, fears such as public speaking, stresses at home and in the workplace affecting each other, bereavement, dealing with complex relationships within the organisation and assertion of self and ideas onto an established team in the organisation:

Well why do we get stressed? Because no. 1 we are probably not doing what we are passionate about, so it feels like work…

(Organisation 1, Coach 2)

I think it is the stresses that come with every day, so if we are looking in our organization you know, the majority of people that come to work, it is stressful getting to work: you are up very early, it is taxis, numerous taxis, you have to be at work at a certain time, otherwise …it is quite a punitive environment.

(Organisation 1, HR Practitioner)

With these causes of stress affecting the wellbeing of the individual and the organisation, the theme of 'stress and the organisation' was prevalent and can be seen from two perspectives according to the data: firstly, stress impacts performance at work and performance at work impacts wellbeing. This appeared to be a circular feedback mechanism.

… you have got to give up the time to train the people to have the time and it was just going through that cycle of realizing I just can't do it anymore, and to start letting go so I can move on, because I had to play in the reeds and not where I should have been, and

that for me did place me under a huge amount of stress, and my health suffered.

(Organisation 1, Coachee 2)

And secondly, stress was viewed very much as part of organisational culture:

So I think it is also you know, executive wellness would be in a better state if people relaxed or understood that the world of work is changing and I think SA can be quite archaic in terms of working from 8 to 5, sitting at a desk – it doesn't mean you are doing anything. So I certainly prescribe to a more output driven sort of working week than I do to a being in the office 24/7. And certain people do need to be in the office you know, during those working times, but for an executive they don't…

(Organisation 1, HR Practitioner)

The results of stress emergent from the data were referred to as physiological issues – sleeplessness, bad diet, no exercise – which cause physical ill health. The interviewees who spoke about stress extrapolated this as having negative repercussions for performance at work:

... been through a stressful situation and that manifesting itself physically in its various forms, because it causes maybe lack of sleep but then that has its own implications…

(Organisation 1, Coach 1)

Stress also resulted in psychological problems – depression, apathy and disengagement:

I have seen people bomb out with stress, as a coach … I have seen people actually quit their jobs and when you get to a point of severe stress then there is always full apathy and disengagement. I have seen people end up with therapists because they can't pass that stage of taking care of themselves.

(Organisation 3, Coach 1)

The organisation was referred to as facilitating positive physical solutions or practical solutions via an EAP for the greater staff compliment. The following are means used by the organisation in order to help staff deal with stress: providing facilities for the generic staff base such as activities, chill-out areas, healthy food, financial assistance, counselling, and daily transport to and from work:

> *I think it is the stresses that come with every day, so if we are looking in our organization you know, the majority of people that come to work, it is stressful getting to work: …it is quite a punitive environment. … So I mean it is all of those and having a wellness provider is just one element of what we do, it is providing suitable transport, making sure that we operate in environments that are easily accessible and that are safe to work in.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, HR Practitioner)*

On the other hand, stress in terms of the executives was mentioned as focussed on the individual and solutions were more sophisticated and personal. These are geared less towards physical solutions and more towards intangible support mechanisms. For example, executives were encouraged by the organisation to relax more, harness the technology at their disposal to work from home and were provided with personalised assistance services, while this was not mentioned at all for the generic staff base:

> *… before, we would relocate people ourselves and it was very haphazard, you know the person really had to drive it themselves; we have now gone and outsourced that to xxx, and yes, it costs, but the whole process is far less stressful and it is a pleasant experience and you know when we relocate people we want them to have a great experience so they know they have made the right decision.*

(Organisation 1, HR Practitioner)

Coaching was seen as a coping mechanism for dealing with stress, with the individual and organisation taking responsibility for both physical and mental health:

> *…however in the work space let's create an environment where we handle your stress better. So there is less impact on you. So you need to delegate here, it sounds simple but people really don't see it. Delegate here, not measure yourself by whether this gets done on time, that is not the… you don't die. Get perspective here, do the best you can with what you have got and don't over-commit and upwardly communicate more effectively. Say no to various parties too. These types of things, to reduce the personal impact of stress.*
>
> *(Organisation 1, Coach 1)*

The quote above illustrates the coaching dialogue as a vehicle to establish perspective for coachees in managing their own stress by managing work commitments effectively. Furthermore, coaching was seen as an opportunity to reflect on triggers causing stress and create a self-awareness around it:

> *We did deal with stress, that is why I am saying that it also pertained to my life style, and she would want me to identify things that would make me feel under pressure, for example, and then we would go a bit deeper, what triggers that.*
>
> *(Organisation 2, Coachee 1)*

> *…but their wellbeing could impact their ability to grow, their ability to operate functionally in their current role, it could be the thing that is holding them back in terms of their… So stress and anxiety could be another thing that could show up in wellbeing…*
>
> *(Organisation 2, Coach 2)*

As indicated by the last quote, stress was perceived as an inhibitor of learning and growth. So beyond using coaching as a coping mechanism, the reduction of stress was seen as important to operating functionally and developing in the organisation. The coaching perspective of issues such as conflict and operating functionally was that of a learning opportunity rather than having the issues create stress.

4.12 Summary of the results

This chapter described the results obtained from the data reporting the interviewee's perceptions of the nature of wellbeing, of coaching experiences taken from their particular viewpoint of the business coaching intervention, and finally their reading of the role that wellbeing plays in coaching from this perspective.

Themes emergent from the data were ordered around these three constructs that make up the research title. The researcher attempted to present the content of the dataset in an organised and coherent fashion using a constructivist approach. Emergent patterns and trends were clustered into themes. Reporting themes was influenced by the researcher's view of the dataset as a coherent whole, as per the interpretative approach described in Chapter 3.

A birds-eye-view of the findings emergent from the data is as follows:

Table 2: Birds-eye-view of themes

Term-switching between wellbeing and wellness
General switching of terms
Wellbeing associated with wellness programmes
A 'well' culture
Wellbeing is holistic and multidimensional
The parts that make up wellbeing are interrelated
Wellbeing is subjective
A characteristic of wellbeing is congruence
Perceptions of coaching in organisations in South Africa
Location of coaching in the organisation
Positive vs negative perceptions of the coaching experience
Coaching for leadership development
The role that wellbeing plays in coaching
Wellbeing as an outcome of coaching
Themes articulating wellbeing in coaching conversations
Engagement related to wellbeing and coaching
Happiness related to wellbeing and coaching
The physical dimensions of wellbeing related to coaching
Stress related to wellbeing and coaching

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss and explain the results obtained from the data in reference to the literature review. It is structured in the same format as the previous chapter, because the discussion emerges from the data.

Each theme found in Chapter 4 will be discussed and will then be contrasted to the results of the literature review. Conclusive remarks will follow, with observations on each theme:

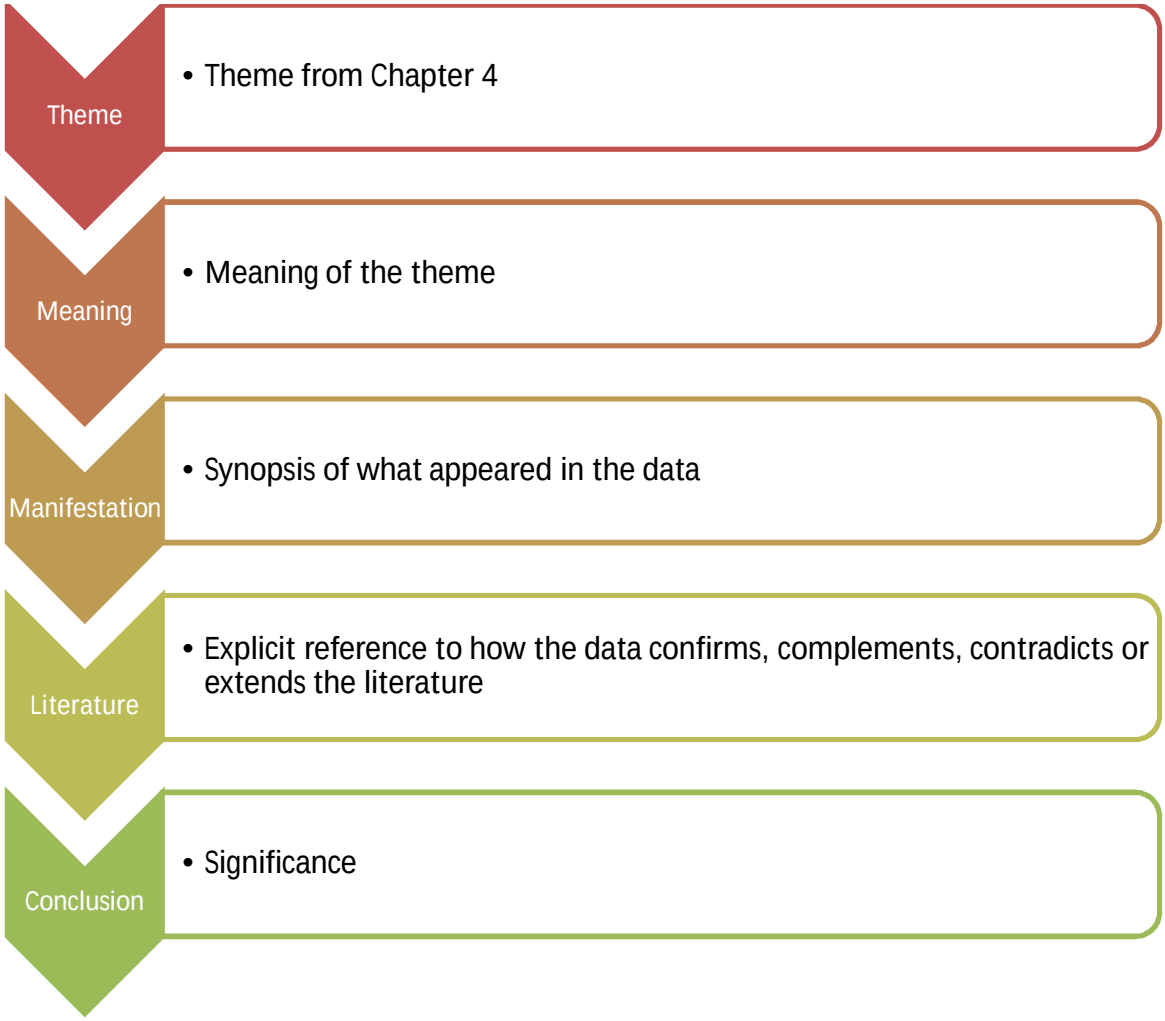

Figure 5: Structure of Chapter 5

The findings described in Chapter 4 generally confirmed or complemented the literature review.

5.2 'Wellbeing' or 'wellness'?

This subsection discusses the substitution one term for the other. The data yielded a conspicuous phenomenon regarding the construct of wellbeing: all the respondents exchanged the words 'wellbeing' and 'wellness' without being consciously aware of doing so. This occurred in three ways in the interviews – as a general oversight, equating wellbeing with wellness programmes and associating wellbeing with a well workplace culture. This semantic overlap occurred over all 'categories' of interviewees. In the literature wellbeing (well-being) was used interchangeably with wellness, although to a lesser extent in the literature than what appeared in the dataset in practice. So the data reflects similar term-switching to the theory. This will be examined in more detail following the three ways that wellbeing and wellness were swapped in the data in the three subsections below.

5.2.1 *General switching of terms*

Semantic differences and similarities refer to the meaning of the words 'wellbeing' and 'wellness'. The data found that the two terms were used interchangeably to signify the same thing. The majority of the journal articles used to inform the review, used the word 'wellbeing / well-being' in their title. While the articles use 'well-being' in their title, some of the older ones use both terms interchangeably in their contents to indicate the same concept (Ryff & Singer, 1998; Ryan & Deci, 2002).

Only one article was found with a single paragraph comparing the differences in meaning between the two words. This was an article reviewing 'wellness literature' (Miller & Foster, 2010). It observed that the terms 'health, 'wellness'

and ‘well-being’ are used inconsistently, with different connotations in different papers by stating:

> In general, the literature does not definitively separate ‘health’, ‘well-being’ and ‘wellness’, but rather applies them collectively to various aspects of human development, practice and experience from both an internal and external perspective (Miller &Foster, 2010; p. 7).

Wellness and wellbeing considered, the word ‘health’ was used additionally by interviewees to substitute ‘wellbeing’. Physical health, organisation health and healthy teams were all concepts conveyed by the interviewees when talking about wellbeing. A similar phenomenon therefore occurred in the data as the literature, illustrating that the meanings of the two words are the same, unless otherwise specified by an author.

5.2.2 *Wellbeing equated with wellness programmes*

The data showed that wellbeing was immediately associated with wellness programmes, especially by HR practitioners. In the companies where interviews were conducted, comprehensive wellness programmes (Parks & Steelman, 2008) are in place, rather than just fitness orientated programmes. These organisations provide facilities to encourage physical fitness and to support childcare, plus education on important issues such as HIV. The data supported the literature that found wellbeing to be an outcome of wellness programmes (Altchiler & Motta, 1994; Daley & Parfitt, 1996). In the organisations where interviewing took place, the individuals employed in organisations make the association between wellbeing and wellness programmes as if it is natural and obvious. In view of this occurring regularly, it is possible that wellbeing is connected to wellness programmes because of the organisational fabric that binds management and wellbeing theory with practice.

The literature review referred to the promotion of job satisfaction and the reduction of absenteeism by way of EAPs (Daley & Parfitt, 1996; Parks & Steelman, 2008). The data findings mention that HR Practitioners are aware of this link and that measurement occurs, but they did not explicitly articulate their views of the link between EAPs and job satisfaction or absenteeism. Parks and Steelman (2008) states that wellness programmes were furthermore put in place to develop high-functioning employees, but this research report found this to be the domain of other HR functions, like leadership development departments. The data determined that coaching is a part of the leadership development and human capital development functions of the human resource department.

5.2.3 *A 'well' culture*

In reference to wellbeing in the workplace interviewees made the association to workplace culture. Mention was made of a 'well' culture in general, but also to a 'family', 'fun' and 'caring' culture. These descriptors seemed to create a meeting point between wellbeing and wellness, blurring the boundaries between the two concepts. Interviewees mentioned that they felt that the organisation had confidence in them and cared for them.

Wellbeing plus organisational culture was not thoroughly investigated in the literature review as it is beyond the scope of the current study. The fact that it came up spontaneously in interviews complements the discussion around the positive association between participation in wellness programmes and job satisfaction (Daley & Parfitt, 1996; Parks & Steelman, 2008). This is where the presence of EAPs creates the positive impacts on organisational culture, demonstrating that the organisation values, cares for and supports its employees (Daley & Parfitt, 1996; Parks & Steelman, 2008). Interviewees stated that they felt valued by their organisations, but did not explicitly mention whether this was because they were sent on a coaching or wellness

programme. The data therefore only complements the literature, but does not confirm it.

Looking at all three ways that the term-swapping occurred, both the data and the literature illustrate no clear distinction in meaning between wellbeing and wellness in the workplace. This signifies that in reading this report or other published research on the subject, the terms are interchangeable, carry the same meaning and indicate the same concept, unless otherwise specified.

5.3 Wellbeing is holistic and multidimensional

The construct of wellbeing can be described as a composite of various components that characterise its meaning. In the data, interviewees defined wellbeing as holistic and multidimensional both directly and indirectly: when making reference to one aspect of wellbeing, they linked it to a second or multiple aspects. Furthermore they referred to the dimensions of wellbeing as dynamic. Various authors in the literature reviewed depicted wellbeing as dynamic (Fredrick & Ryan, 1997; Ryan & Deci, 2001) and multidimensional (Dunn, 1959; Frederickson, 2013; Keyes, 2002; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Ryff & Singer, 1998). Hence, the findings supported the literature, asserting that wellbeing is not a static, one-dimensional notion.

Furthermore, viewing the dataset and findings as a whole, interviewees did not divorce the aspects that they perceived to make up wellbeing from their context, with interviewees repeatedly referring to the relationship of the individual's wellbeing to the organisation. Two 'categories' of wellbeing were therefore found – the wellbeing of the individual and that of the organisation – and these were discovered to be connected:

a. Individual wellbeing came up in the data as the individual's attitude, frame of reference, self-perception, consciousness and way of being.

b. The organisation's wellbeing came up in the data as flu injections and testing, doubling of turnover, relationships, performance management, culture and the measurement of wellbeing.

The link between individual wellbeing and organisational wellbeing that emerged in the data could be found in the theory, stating that employee assistance programmes (EAPs) strengthen employee's views of their employer's concern for their wellbeing (Daley & Parfitt, 1996; Parks & Steelman, 2008). This highlights the importance of the relationship between the individual and the organisation.

These points demonstrate that the individual's wellbeing is holistic and multidimensional, and in addition the individual is related to a wider contextual structure and the relationship between the two is also perceived as holistic and multidimensional if it is to be considered as 'being well'.

5.4 The parts that make up wellbeing are interrelated

The various dimensions that make up wellbeing relate to each other, both in examining wellbeing independently, as well as contextualising wellbeing in the workplace. The data elicited evidence that the various aspects making up wellbeing, as stated by the interviewees, were also connected to each other. These were aspects spoken about from an individual's perspective as being interrelated and included the individual's physical self, self-awareness, values, perspective, mind, body and heart. However, these aspects were also connected externally to the organisational context in which the individuals operate.

This notion of inter-relatedness has appeared in wellbeing literature since Dunn (1959) who defined wellbeing as a complex condition made up of overlapping levels. Other authors also observe that the two viewpoints of wellbeing – eudaimonic and hedonic – overlap and complement each other (Ryan & Deci,

2001; Frederickson, 2013) and have formulated the concept of 'human flourishing' (Keyes, 2002), which is a comprehensive combination of the two.

The literature review took a theoretical view on how different formulations of wellbeing are interrelated, but also how wellbeing and stress are related and wellbeing and physical and emotional health are related in the workplace (Colligan & Higgins, 2005; Faragher, Cass & Cooper, 2005; Sieberhagen, Rothmann & Pienaar, 2009). The data demonstrated this phenomenon of interrelatedness in relation to workplace issues and not in general terms, possibly because of the contextualisation of this study of wellbeing in the workplace and the data sample. The data therefore complemented the broader theory on wellbeing, but remained grounded in the organisational context, confirming the interrelation between wellbeing, workplace stress and physical and emotional health.

5.5 Wellbeing is subjective

This subsection explores wellbeing as a personal, unique experience, feeling or perception of oneself – a subjective way of being. In the data, interviewees responded to the question of defining wellbeing with subjective views. Each interviewee's answer was different and the researcher could not frame a simplified formula of their overall conceptions of the construct.

Ryan and Deci (2001) characterised wellbeing as idiosyncratic and culturally specific. The subjective nature of wellbeing was presented in the literature with the concepts of subjective wellbeing (SWB) (Diener, 2000; Diener, Sandvik & Pavot, 1991; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Waterman, 1993) and subjective vitality (Frederick & Ryan, 1997). SWB refers to happiness, and is made up of life satisfaction, which is a cognition, and positive mood, which is an emotion (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Argyle & Martin, 1991) with wellbeing based on individual values rather than personality traits (Oishi, Diener, Lucas & Suh, 1999). Subjective vitality describes having energy, feeling alive and enthusiastic, influenced by physical and psychological factors (Frederick & Ryan, 1997).

In the dataset, wellbeing was observed as being dependent on personal values and activities, but also as changing and evolving over time. These personal values and activities were described over an extensive range of topics, illustrating the peculiarity of wellbeing from person-to-person. The data elicited subjective descriptions of wellbeing from the field – explanations of wellbeing in practice and applied to the workplace. Interviewees did not attempt to theorise about the subjective nature of wellbeing. The data therefore extends the theory discussed in the literature review – while the literature review discusses wellbeing's subjective nature conceptually, the data presents the real-world practicalities of this.

The researcher therefore had to examine each conceptualisation of wellbeing in the data on a case-by-case basis, revealing that the patterns that emerged had to be supported by similar but not exact ideas and perceptions from interviewee to interviewee. This is important because the picture that emerged was intricate and views of the same theme were personal with subtle differences.

5.6 A characteristic of wellbeing is congruence

This section looks at how congruence describes the harmony between the parts that constitute wellbeing as a whole. This was one of the qualities attributed to wellbeing by interviewees. The data elicited instances of congruence in two broad ways: congruence within the individual self and congruence between the individual and organisation. Congruent connection had to be present in order for wellbeing to be present.

In terms of the individual, the data demonstrated that congruence means that one has a sense of purpose, acts on statements, has the ability to self-observe and can experience a state of flow within oneself in the workplace. This state of positive connection with oneself goes as far back as the root of the word 'eudaimonia', with *daimon* meaning 'true self' (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff, 1989; Waterman, 1993). Mention of the employee experiencing a state of 'flow' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; 1988) in their work refers to having a positive

connection to oneself. Experiencing congruence as flow is described by Waterman (1993) as ‘personal expressiveness’ (PE) which conveys living authentically with oneself. The data therefore complements the literature.

The data also showed that the individual employee had to be in congruent connection with the organisation, meaning an alignment of values between the individual and organisation is important as well as having compatible relationships with other members of the organisation and technical skills such as managing oneself in the workplace. Interviewees said that when employees are in a state of wellbeing, then they have energy and the possibility of engagement in their organisations.

As discussed in the literature, wellbeing was seen as a positive state (Dunn, 1959; Ryff & Singer, 1998). The literature describes congruence as an *outcome* of conditions that facilitate and enhance human functioning in the spheres that individuals operate in – including the workplace (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Frederick, 1997; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). These conditions satisfy human needs – especially autonomy, competence and relatedness (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999), leading to wellbeing. The data therefore reflects the literature.

Self-congruence and congruence with the organisation is therefore a central theme in characterising wellbeing for the individual in the workplace. Being congruent has positive connotations and being positively congruent supports being well.

5.7 Perceptions of coaching

This section explores how the findings in the data on perceptions of coaching mainly complemented and confirmed the contents of the literature review. Here, coaching is looked at in isolation – as its own construct without complicating it with the added construct of wellbeing.

5.7.1 *'Location' of coaching in the organisation*

This refers to the area where coaching is positioned in organisations. The data showed that coaching is a part of the human resource effort under leadership development or organisational development. Coaching is offered to the individual at senior level and not to junior managers or operational staff. Wellness programmes or EAPs, on the other hand, were shown to be offered to the general workforce. These were also available to senior staff, but appeared in the data as being driven by executives, rather than being used by them. So it became evident that coaching is a specialised intervention offered to an exclusive few.

The literature review stated that coaching targets are high-potential managers, executives and leaders, as well as junior managers, expatriates and problem employees (Stout-Rostron, 2012). The interviewees were all high-potential managers, executives and leaders, but no junior managers or expatriates receiving coaching were interviewed, and as far as the researcher knows, no problem employees. The data differed from the literature in that junior managers did not appear as candidates for external coaches, although in one organisation where interviews took place they were part of an internal coaching programme.

When relating their coaching experiences as well as their perceptions of wellbeing, interviewees continually referred to the organisation. Coaching was initiated by the organisation to improve and develop executives and high-potential managers, but coachees were also interviewed in the capacity of their role in the organisation, so it was inevitably part of the discussion. According to the literature, coaching cannot be seen in isolation as a purely individual experience: it originates and affects the organisation as a whole (Huffington, 2006; Joo, 2005; Kahn, 2011; Passmore, 2007; Stern, 2004; Stout-Rostron, 2009). The data confirmed the theory.

Following on from this, coaching was related to the individual coachee's experience of the organisation in which they operate – its politics, its belief and

support of individual executives and its demands on them. The literature affirmed that the purpose of the coaching programmes is to provide a regulated way for the organisations to strengthen relationships with their employees while concurrently increasing their effectiveness (Sherman & Freas, 2004). This idea of strengthening relationships between organisations and individuals through coaching was reflected indirectly in the data. Although few coachees explicitly articulated the organisation's belief in them, the notion that individuals were sent on coaching programmes indicated an implicit confidence and robust relationship between entities.

Interviewees who reported positive progress in their personal development crediting the coaching they experienced, also reported that their performance and efficiency produced positive results for their organisation's goals and needs. In the literature, coaching is thought to be most successful when all parties involved agree on explicit goals that legitimately further their own interests as well as those of the collective (Sherman & Freas, 2004). The goal of business coaching is to support success in the organisation by influencing the actions of individual coachees (Kahn, 2011). Coaching theory states that coaching is individualised to the coachee's needs, but also integrates organisational objectives (Sherman & Freas, 2004; Stern, 2004). This was confirmed by the data, which showed that objectives set in coaching legitimately furthered the interests of both the individual coachees and their sponsoring organisation.

This means that business coaching for the individual employee who operates within an organisation takes both 'parties' into account even though the coaching is directed at the individual, and that the individual and organisation cannot be seen as separate entities.

5.7.2 *Positive and negative perceptions of the coaching experience*

Two clear categories of coaching experience emerged from the data: positive and negative perceptions of coaching. All the coaching experiences, whether positive or negative, provided data on both coaching and on wellbeing.

Most of the interviewees' perceptions of coaching were positive, both in terms of their own experience and their observations of others. Words such as 'benefit' and 'improvement' appeared consistently in all groups of interviewees. Positive results from coaching were cited, among others, in conflict resolution, behaviour in the workplace, communication, confidence, leadership development, leading discussions, lobbying for support of influencers, performance, self-awareness, self-mastery, wellbeing, work-life balance and improvement of workflow.

The literature formulates coaching as an intervention to improve performance, management style, communication ability, conflict resolution and work-life balance (Stout-Rostron, 2012), improve self-awareness and meaning-making (Cavanagh, 2006). Coaching theory states that the process facilitates leaders to develop leadership competencies, adjust to new roles, regulate unproductive behaviour, develop positive practices and outlooks, engage better, work better in teams, align to collective goals, plan business and personal strategies, make succession possible and adjust to organisational transformation (Joo, 2005; Sherman & Freas, 2004; Stern, 2004; Stout-Rostron, 2012).

The data therefore complemented, overlapped and offered parallels to the literature. The general trend in both the data and the literature is positive – coaching is seen as a constructive, affirmative developmental tool.

5.7.3 *Coaching for leadership development*

The research sample only contained coachees in leadership positions, so coaching for leadership development emerged spontaneously. The researcher had no control over rank of coachee interviewed, and only asked to interview people who had been coached by external coaches. Coaching was found to be

located in the leadership development departments of the organisations interviewed. Coaching was only offered to individuals in leadership positions, so a sample of leaders was inevitable.

The dataset surfaced a number of particular developmental and facilitation areas for coaching leaders. These were conveyed by all three categories of interviewee: providing support, optimising and transitioning roles, dealing with complexity, being more effective, creating self-awareness, personal leadership issues, developing positive behaviours, developing leadership potential and competencies.

The theory cited coaching as an intervention assisting the coachee to operate better as an individual and leader in an organisation (Kilburg, 1996), and is seen as an individualised leadership intervention (Stern, 2004). Coaching leaders is also seen as a behavioural change tool, impacting transformation and transactional styles in leadership (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). The literature review distinguished the following developmental areas for coaching leaders: intra- and inter-personal self-awareness, self-expression, awareness of the complexity of the leadership role, engagement, coherence, resourcefulness, locus of control and self-actualisation values (Cilliers, 2011). The data consequently complemented the literature, using similar terms and comparable descriptors in explaining coaching's role of developing leaders.

Another pattern to come out of the data was coaching as a leadership development tool was that of coaching as a safe, reflective space. Coachees described coaching as an opportunity to have time for reflection pertaining to their responsibilities as leaders, their actions, decisions and their impact on people, which eventually influences financial results. The coachees interviewed associated the coaching process with the opportunity to reflect on the outcomes of their various organisations: coaching and reflection benefit business objectives. The literature sees the coaching space as an opportunity for reflection in order to expand awareness, address limitations and notice the outcome of behaviour and actions (Cavanagh, 2006). The focus of coaching

leaders is to optimise business performance and align personal to collective values, in order to produce improved business results for organisations (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Kahn, 2011; Sherman & Freas, 2004; Wasylyshyn, 2003). The data therefore confirmed the literature in terms of self-reflection, supported it by acknowledging the role of the organisation, and complemented it by articulating gain to the organisation.

The data also demonstrated the upshot that coaching had on leaders to employ a coaching style learned through their coaching experience on managing their staff better and conducting their interpersonal relationships in the workplace. According to the literature, approximating the coaching mechanism itself, the coachee goes from being directive and solving problems for her team to facilitating their self-directed learning (Grant, 2001). Hence the data corroborated the theory.

5.8 Perceptions on the relationship between wellbeing and coaching

This section explores the coaching-wellbeing construct emergent from the data in terms of the literature. The data found wellbeing to be an outcome for coaching conversations. ‘Legitimate’ business-related issues were considered goals on the coaching agenda. This was a clear distinction. The rest of this chapter discusses how the findings generally confirm and complement the literature’s view of this wellbeing-outcome / ‘legitimate’ business-goal distinction.

Furthermore, the section explores the four main descriptors of wellbeing that emerged from interviews: these were engagement, happiness, health and stress. Interviewees used these themes to describe or substitute the word ‘wellbeing’ when recalling their business coaching experiences. The final portion of this chapter explores this with reference to theory.

5.8.1 *Wellbeing as an outcome on the coaching agenda*

The data found that wellbeing was seen as an unintended and / or unarticulated outcome of the coaching conversation. The fact that wellbeing is present in the coaching conversation was undisputed and unquestioned by the interviewees. Interviewees indicated that 'legitimate' business-related issues were always the goal of coaching conversations and programmes, but that their physical and emotional health and stress levels improved as a result of coaching, as well as their engagement in the workplace and efficiency at attaining organisational objectives. These organisational foci are goal-specific and in the data wellbeing was described as being the by-product of improving or developing them through coaching. Coaching for wellbeing is therefore resultant from the coaching intervention and / or assumed within coaching conversations. It is not a primary, articulated goal on the agenda. A coach does not coach actively for wellbeing, but coaching for wellbeing happens inadvertently.

A limited amount of literature was found linking wellbeing and coaching, but nonetheless the narrow body of literature positions workplace wellbeing as an outcome of business coaching rather than a goal (Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009). The focus of business coaching is to improve work efficiencies and behaviour, in order to generate business results for companies and align employees with organisational values (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Kahn, 2011; Sherman & Freas, 2004; Wasylyshyn, 2003). A study conducted by Grant, Curtayne and Burton (2009) found that coaching interventions focussed on goals aligned with the organisation's leadership objectives, but that enhanced wellbeing, increased resilience and reduced depression and stress were all outcomes of the process. The data reproduced this phenomenon – even though 'hard' issues were the focus of the coachee and sponsoring organisation, enhanced wellbeing was perceived as a resultant by-product.

The data extracted the views and experiences of the individuals interviewed on the role that wellbeing played in coaching. These are discussed below in detail, lead by the literature.

5.8.2 *Goal attainment*

Grant et al. (2009) suggested that goal attainment could be a reason that improvement was found in the wellbeing of coachees. As well as improved wellbeing, participants' experienced increased self-acceptance and confidence as a result of their coaching experience, as well as reduced depression and stress. This was related to increased workplace wellbeing (Grant et al., 2009). All categories of respondents reported that they had achieved or facilitated achievement of business-related goals through coaching, and furthermore reported that self-fulfilment and achievement resulted in a better sense wellbeing. This confirmed the literature, that the realisation of goals improves wellbeing. The data also complemented the literature reviewed, viewing coaching as an empowering tool, rather than a directive device to get to those goals.

5.8.3 *Goal-striving, wellbeing and coaching*

The literature described goal-*striving*, wellbeing and coaching as being connected to each other (Sheldon, Kasser, Smith & Share, 2002). Goal-striving is the movement away from an existing state to "a desired reference value" (Sheldon et al., 2002; p. 6). The proactive process of possessing and advancing towards goals is associated with enhanced psychosocial wellbeing and vitality. Goals represent the individual's actions to develop and find meaning (Sheldon et al., 2002). Goal-setting within a coaching framework improves both goal-striving and subjective and psychological wellbeing (Green et al., 2006).

Wellbeing and goals were associated with each other in the dataset: 'hard' issues were seen as legitimate goals of the business coaching conversation, while wellbeing was seen as an outcome of these conversations. Coaching was seen as a goal-orientated process enabling individuals to develop and transform themselves. Wellbeing was described as stemming from the coaching space by allowing for agency, choice-making, self-awareness and autonomy in terms of reaching goals. Wellbeing was improved by committing to a coaching

engagement and undergoing this goal-orientated process. The data therefore confirmed the literature, that the act of striving for goals increases wellbeing.

The data therefore confirms the literature vis-à-vis both the achievement of goals and endeavouring towards them.

The data also demonstrated that wellbeing is a part of progress in the coaching process. Acknowledging wellbeing creates a foundation to move from one stage in the coaching process to another. Wellbeing was described as a necessary component before growth and development conversations could take place, and a requirement for producing business-related goals. This added to the literature on goal-striving and attainment.

5.8.4 *Self-determination Theory*

Self-determination theory (SDT) looks at the conditions that facilitate and improve human functioning in the various areas (such as work) in which they operate. Numerous aspects of mental health and development are enhanced when psychological needs are satisfied (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Frederick, 1997). These needs are competence, autonomy and relatedness (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). SDT theorises that autonomy, competence and relatedness are essential for eudaimonic wellbeing or self-realisation (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Proponents of self-determination theory (SDT) propose that only self-sanctioned goals will enhance wellbeing. The pursuit of goals autonomously predicts wellbeing outcomes (Ryan & Deci, 2000 as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2001).

As per the data, coaching is a mode of cultivating and fostering positive development and growth, using self-generated goals. Coaching was seen as allowing coachees agency to motivate their own developmental areas and identify competencies to focus on and as promoting self-awareness and encouraging autonomy to achieve goals. Goal striving and attainment in the data was shown to confirm the literature, and furthermore the data that emerged also complemented Sheldon and Elliot's (1999) proposition of human need

satisfaction. The data on wellbeing and coaching supplements the theory that autonomy, competence and relatedness are necessary for eudaimonic wellbeing. This is discussed in more detail below, looking at each human need independently.

5.8.4.1 Competence

Competence refers to aptitude and capability, and could be considered for individuals functioning in the workplace (Ryan & Deci, 2000; Ryan & Frederick, 1997; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Interviewees conveyed coaching as an opportunity to develop self-generated business-related goals in order to improve competencies and capabilities in the workplace. The coachees interviewed confirmed that they experienced an improvement in their competencies due to their coaching experience, and that while enhancing competencies was the overt goal, their wellbeing improved as a result.

5.8.4.2 Autonomy

Autonomy refers to self-reliance and independence. In the literature review, autonomy was described as self-concordance. This is the notion that behaving authentically promotes psychological growth and fulfilment. Self-concordant goals fulfil basic needs and align the authentic self and core values (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Individuals who put more sustained effort into goals that are self-concordant are more likely to attain these goals. These individuals then feel a greater sense of wellbeing – both in positive affect and life satisfaction – from their achievement (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Coaching is a development tool employed to determine and reach a set of mutually developed goals driven by the coachee in relationship with a coach (Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009).

The data viewed autonomy as part of the coaching methodology – that a coach through a sponsoring organisation facilitates a coachee to develop his or her own agenda and goals. The words agency, autonomy, self-generation, self-

correction, self-observation and self-integration were examples of terms used to describe aspects of self-concordance. Self-concordance was also described in the data as having a sense of purpose and being congruent within oneself, but also with the workplace – having a positive relationship to work and aligned values to the organisation. Self-concordance was furthermore mentioned in terms of leadership competencies and being integrated with, or authentic to, oneself.

The data showed that self-concordance was a significant notion present in the data. Interviewees expressed that coaching developed this capacity to be autonomous and self-concordant. While enhancing agency, autonomy, self-generation, self-correction, self-observation and self-integration which may be overt goals in the coaching agenda, wellbeing improved as a consequence of having these goals. The data therefore confirms this theoretical point of view.

5.8.4.3 Relatedness

Relatedness refers to positive relationships in the workplace. The data illustrated that relationships were associated with wellbeing for individuals and their connection to the organisation. Relationships were seen as an important ingredient for team-work, both within executive-level and with subordinates, and furthermore enhanced the culture of the organisation. Relationships were perceived as an invaluable part of organisational life, including those with a social leaning, occurring both inside and outside the organisation. Both kinds of relationship were seen as working in favour of improving business. Emotional attachments between individuals in the workplace were reported to go beyond the scope of work, supporting the delivery of work-related goals.

In terms of coaching, interviewees believed that a positive relationship between coach and coachee is important to the success of the coaching endeavour. Coaching was viewed as supporting relationships and communication within

organisations and between individuals, and engendering more successful approaches to interaction.

Wellbeing is influenced by the satisfaction of human needs, one of which is relatedness (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). A reason that interviewees felt that wellbeing was an outcome of coaching, could be because their sense of relatedness to their co-workers and organisation improved due to their coaching experience. The data therefore complemented the literature.

Attachment and relatedness are important themes that came out of the literature elsewhere as well: coaching is informed by attachment theory which originates from the field of psychology (Argyle & Martin, 1991; Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryff & Singer, 2000) and coaching itself is an exercise in relatedness (Kahn, 2011). Establishing a trusting relationship between coach and coachee ensures the success of the intervention (Boyatzis, Smith & Beveridge, 2012). The data supported this by emphasising the importance of the relationship between coach and coachee.

Attachment and relatedness are described as significant for wellbeing due to job satisfaction being dependent on relationships (A. Sousa-Poza & A.A. Sousa-Poza, 2000). Furthermore stress was found to affect interpersonal relations (Sieberhagen et al., 2009; Colligan & Higgins, 2005). These two theoretical points were not corroborated overtly in the data.

5.9 In the coaching conversation, wellbeing is about engagement

This subsection clarifies how engagement in the workplace describes the commitment between the individual and the company where he or she works and how this played a role in the coaching-wellbeing question.

In the data, engagement came up as a theme in describing wellbeing and a topic of discussion in coaching conversations where the outcome was a better

sense of wellbeing. Engagement possibly came about as a theme because of its contextualisation in organisational life. Engagement emerged in the data as desiring and wanting to connect with work, family and all the aspects that make up human existence. In terms of the individual's engagement with the workplace itself, it was described in the data as being a function of having energy and that the opposite of engagement is physical and mental ill-health. The individual's connection to the workplace was described as not engaged, engaged or highly engaged – a scale of sorts – but also as encompassing the two sides of the human experience – cognitive and emotional engagement to work. Fundamentally, engagement was related positively to wellbeing – with high engagement being associated with an elevated sense of wellbeing.

In the literature, psychological wellbeing (PWB) is defined as being engaged with life's existential challenges (Govindji & Linley, 2007). This relates to the individual's engagement with himself. Eudaimonic wellbeing is achieved when people live in accordance with their deepest values and are completely engaged in their activities (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Fundamentally, a basic relationship of positive engagement equals positive wellbeing, exists in the literature. The data supports this and demonstrates the mechanism out in practice.

The data described engagement in the workplace as a feeling of relatedness, as well as placing an emphasis on having the ability as well as wanting and desiring to engage. Importance placed on wanting and desiring to engage was described in the literature as 'self-sanctioning' (Ryan & Deci, 2001) and having the ability to engage, as a 'competence' (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). The literature presented the theory of 'self-concordant motivation' which is rooted in Self-determination Theory (SDT). This focuses on the individual's personal goals fulfilling basic needs – autonomy, competence and relatedness (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999) – and aligning with one's authentic self and core values (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon & Houser-Marko, 2001). Eudaimonic wellbeing is a result (Ryan & Deci 2000; Ryan & Frederick, 1997;

Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). Engagement is therefore significant for the individual's wellbeing in the workplace, particularly his eudaimonic wellbeing, or living with a sense of meaning, actualising potential and functioning optimally (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The data confirmed that engaging with oneself and the organisation in which one operates brings about an increased sense of meaning and wellbeing.

5.10 Happiness related to wellbeing and coaching

Wellbeing literature traditionally divides the construct into two categories: hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. Hedonic wellbeing refers to the colloquial 'happiness' and views wellbeing on a pleasure-pain continuum. Eudaimonic wellbeing refers to one's sense of meaning and actualising one's potential, defining wellbeing in terms of personal functionality (Keyes et al., 2002; Ryan & Deci, 200; Waterman, 1993).

In practice, when reading the data, this split was found to be artificial. This reflects the literature that considers wellbeing a positive multidimensional phenomenon (Ryff & Singer, 1998) that incorporates both aspects of wellbeing: while each tradition is distinct they have common characteristics with each other (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2008). In the literature, hedonic wellbeing refers to happiness. The subsections to follow illustrate how the data confirms this. Furthermore, in the data, when interviewees referred to their happiness, they referred to it in 'eudaimonic terms'. This will also be demonstrated.

5.10.1 *Hedonic wellbeing*

Happiness refers to a personal sense of contentment or pleasure. The interviews elicited spontaneous data about happiness. Wellbeing and happiness were two constructs that were unconsciously put into the same category by the people interviewed, although happiness did not have the same connection to wellbeing each time it was mentioned. The theme of happiness was therefore also subjective and idiosyncratic. In general, wellbeing emerged in the data as

the individual being happy to go to work in his organisation. This appeared as a natural proclivity for happiness, as happiness in 'life' affecting work and vice versa, and in terms of the individual's engagement in the organisation.

In the literature reviewed, happiness falls into the 'hedonic' category of wellbeing theory. Most research into hedonic psychology assesses subjective wellbeing (SWB) (Ryan & Deci, 2001). SWB is the term used to signify the colloquial 'happiness', and comprises of "life satisfaction, the presence of positive mood, and the absence of negative mood" (Diener & Lucas, 1999 as cited in Ryan & Deci, 2001, p.144). In other words, attaining pleasure and avoiding pain (Kahneman & Krueger, 2006; Waterman, 1993). The experience of more positive emotions and less negative emotions indicate psychological wellbeing (Diener, Sandvik & Pavot, 1991). The data supported this with interviewees referring to personal happiness in the workplace, positive emotions related to work and feeling satisfied with work, as indicative of their sense of wellbeing.

As mentioned above, happiness did not appear to have the same connection to wellbeing each time it was mentioned in the dataset. The relationship between the two was different each time they were referred to interchangeably, so the data showed that the connection was fluid and subjective. Only one of the interviewees actively grappled with her conception of wellbeing as being more substantial than 'happiness' in its purely hedonic sense. The literature stated that the scope of wellbeing is greater than hedonic experience and includes aspects of personal functionality (Ryan & Deci, 2001) such as resilience, attitude and patience. In fact, the literature questions the use of hedonic happiness to indicate wellbeing as it is highly personal and culturally specific (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

Although only one interviewee openly questioned the hedonic conceptualisation of wellbeing, all the other interviewees offered eudaimonic perceptions of their happiness in terms of their experience and perceptions of the workplace. The hedonic characteristics of wellbeing have been discussed up to now, but

wellbeing also embraces aspects of both the hedonic and eudaimonic traditions (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2008). Examples in the data follow, led by the literature.

5.10.2 *Personal Expressiveness (PE)*

The data referred to employees feeling connected to and passionate about their work, as well as experiencing flow. In discussing stress as a theme, the data also elicited the notion that work is challenging and pressurised.

PE is the feeling of being intensely alive and existing in a state of authenticity and is the experience felt when people feel intrinsically motivated (Ryan & Deci, 2000), experience a state of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975, 1988), or have a peak experience (Maslow, 1964, 1968). It is associated with being challenged and striving which could negatively affect short-term positive affect. Hedonic enjoyment, on the other hand, is not associated with challenge and endeavour (Waterman, 1993). The data confirmed this with examples of happiness associated with work, job satisfaction, intrinsic motivation and the long-term commitment to the organisation.

5.10.3 *Positive mental functioning*

The data described the ‘happy employee’ as someone with a clear grasp of their job description, resourcefulness, a support structure, autonomy, boundary clarity and engagement, but also someone who felt a fulfillment of potential, a sense of opportunity in the company and a sense of pride.

Psychological wellbeing (PWB) is described as flourishing and realising one’s potential, and is defined by six dimensions of human actualisation (Ryff & Keyes, 1995). These are, “autonomy, personal growth, self-acceptance, life purpose, mastery and positive relatedness” (Ryff & Keyes, 1995; p. 720). Social relationships impact positive emotions and prevent distress (Argyle & Martin, 1991; Ryff & Singer, 2000).

Examples were found in the data that supported these six dimensions: positive relatedness and relationships with superiors, with team and self being spoken about by most of the interviewees. This was stated in conjunction with coaching and its effect on realising potential and managing relationships in order to flourish. Autonomy was mentioned in terms of job scope and competencies. Life purpose was discussed in terms of aligning personal and organisational values. Self-acceptance was referred to indirectly with the data eliciting examples of coachees growing in confidence and finding their own voices in the context of meetings and organisational dynamics. Personal growth and mastery were both cited in terms of the benefits of coaching. The data therefore complemented the literature reviewed.

5.10.4 *Self-determination theory (SDT)*

SDT sees wellbeing as life satisfaction and psychological health (Ryan & Deci, 2000), and revolves around self-realisation as the core in defining wellbeing. It takes a complementary approach, defining the meaning of self-actualisation as well as exploring how this can be achieved. The satisfaction of three fundamental psychological needs – autonomy, competence and relatedness – is essential to wellbeing (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 2001; Sheldon & Elliott, 1999). Personally meaningful goals are important vehicles for the satisfaction of psychological needs (Sheldon & Elliott, 1999).

The data yielded similar results to the ideas discussed in the literature. Interviewees continually referred to their growth due to coaching, and related this to an improved sense of wellbeing as a result. They referred to similar ideas to the terms used by theorists – self-actualisation and self-realisation were referred to as self-mastery and goal attainment. They deliberately articulated the link between achieving goals and personal happiness. The data therefore complemented the association made by the literature.

Furthermore, the data also found that happiness is increased through facilitating other people to achieve their goals. This finding extends the literature. As a

whole, data confirmed that business coaching improved emotional health and wellbeing.

5.11 The physical dimensions of wellbeing related to coaching

As indicated at the beginning of this chapter, wellbeing, wellness and health are found in the literature to be overlapping concepts with the terms being interchangeable with each other. This subsection looks at the theme of physical dimensions related to wellbeing and coaching due to a pattern that emerged about physical health, energy and awareness leading to a sense of being well.

References to physical health and symptomatic manifestations abounded in the data with particular reference to disengagement, burnout, distress and disease having a harmful effect on business. Burnout was prevalent in the data, but consideration was given to everything physical and health related from ADD to smoking. The literature stated that the association between physical health and wellbeing may exist, especially in negative terms (Ryan & Deci, 2001). This is because illness results in pain and displeasure, and may also present functional limitations, inhibiting potential for positive feelings (both physical and emotional) and life satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2001). These functional limitations were confirmed in the data with negative physical health obstructing work and resulting in poor performance.

Positive physical health was described as a desired quality in the dataset, especially for the production business goals. In the literature, defining health positively led to theory around flourishing, leading a meaningful life and having quality attachments. Embodying these eudaimonic dimensions yields a positive effect on health – wellbeing affects biology (Ryff & Singer, 2000). The data differed from the literature in this formulation – interviewees said that good health helped support business goals. The literature on the other hand viewed this the other way around – that living with purpose, having quality attachments and achieving goals affects biology positively. This was only mentioned by one

of the interviewees, whose health suffered as she had not yet optimised her role.

The physical aspects of wellbeing included interviewees remarking about energy. This came up as physical energy to perform and meet goals, but also as emotional energy in the form of motivation and vigor. Feeling alive and energetic is indicative of positive physical health and eudaimonic wellbeing (Frederick & Ryan, 1997). This describes being in a state of having energy available to oneself as well as the conscious experience of feeling positively alive and enthusiastic. Subjective vitality is a phenomenological indicator of personal wellbeing (Frederick & Ryan, 1997). The data therefore complements the literature in that presence of subjective vitality was discussed by the interviewees in their perceptions of their work, goals and experiences in the workplace.

Somatic awareness and self-awareness about physical health emerged as a topic in the dataset. Positive somatic awareness or intelligence – being aware of one's own body – could be seen to indicate subjective vitality, which describes the experience of feeling positively vital (Frederick & Ryan, 1997), but somatic awareness and consciousness about the body were not dominant themes in the literature. These ideas expressed in the data therefore extended the theory presented on wellbeing.

In terms of improving health, the data described the coaching process as the coach helping the coachee to alleviate physical or emotional suffering and move toward wellbeing in service of the workplace. Siegel's (1999, 2001, 2006) definition of interpersonal neurobiology refers to the understanding of human experience and development, with one human being helping another to move towards wellbeing by promoting the integrated flow between his relationships, his mind and his brain. The data complemented the literature by illustrating the process of coaches helping coachees achieve wellbeing by improving mechanisms within and outside of the individual.

The data supported notions found in the theory reviewed of wellbeing as positive physical health. Additionally, the data continually referred to positive physical health sustaining constructive business objectives. This shows the continual influence of organisational context in employee's wellbeing and their experience of business coaching.

5.12 Stress related to wellbeing and coaching

Stress is the response to a change in the physical or internal state of the individual due to challenging or threatening stressors (Lazarus, 1993). Stress is contextualised in South Africa as a health and safety issue, due to physical work taking priority over psychological and social stressors (Sieberhagen, Rothmann & Pienaar, 2009). This research report, on the other hand, looks at white collar workers as these are normally the targets for coaching by their organisations, so safety issues were assumed not to constitute wellbeing in this particular research report. This assumption on the part of the researcher was nonetheless supported by the data.

Almost every interviewee mentioned stress in some way: as a distinctive reality in the workplace, its causes and the results of experiencing it. Stress was cited as a phenomenon affecting the individual, and it was contextualised in the organisation as well as part of the discussion in the coaching conversation.

The literature explains stress as a process: a causal agent (an internal or external stressor) triggers the stress. The individual then evaluates whether the stressor is threatening or benign, then a coping processes is used to deal with the stressor and finally there is a stress reaction which has consequences on the mind and body (Lazarus, 1993). The data verified each component that makes up the process described by Lazarus (1993) but no data illustrated the process itself.

Generally the data identified the causal agent (Lazarus, 1993) as external – a person-organisation relationship, for example, fast-paced environments and the

pressure of retaining one's job. At the evaluation stage (Lazarus, 1993) the stressor – in this case the organisation – was seen by interviewees as threatening due to high demands and pressurised work cultures but was recognised as benign in offering EAPs and wellness initiatives to combat stressors. The coping stage (Lazarus, 1993) was illustrated by interviewees as manifesting physiological rather than cognitive consequences, such as lack of sleep or going to see health professionals to have a physical exam. Coaching was also revealed as an intervention to deal with the stressor. The data therefore supported the literature explored in Chapter 2. This is discussed in more detail below.

5.12.1 *The causes of stress*

The causes of stress in the data were harsh and dangerous social and economic climates, challenging job demands, rapidly changing technology influencing the flow of information and seniority in organisation affecting work control. Job strain describes work distress when job demands are high and employees have minor control over their work (Karasek, 1979). This was confirmed in the data. This is probably because job decision latitude (Karasek, 1979) in executives is high, and the research focuses on employees at this level. The data verified that executives have more control over their work and that the operational workforce has to deal with harsh and dangerous conditions. This means that organisations have to approach the wellbeing of these two groups of employees differently.

The organisation was seen by the interviewees as the main cause of stress – it only emerged as a negative phenomenon from the data. The data made no mention of eustress benefitting goal attainment, creating energy in challenging work environments and stimulating productivity and efficiency (Colligan & Higgins, 2005; Selye, 1976 as cited in Lazarus, 1993). The literature stated that in South Africa, work as a stressor is only seen in seen as negative, damaging and pathogenic (Sieberhagen, Rothmann & Pienaar, 2009). This probably

reflects a South African reality where stress is approached pathogenically and is managed as a cause of ill health, while eustress is not explored (Sieberhagen et al., 2009). The absence of mention in the data of eustress or the positive benefits of stress, can probably be seen as confirmation of the literature.

5.12.2 *The consequences of stress*

In the workplace, stress was observed by the interviewees to affect both the individual and the organisation. In the individual, it was seen as having both a psychological or physiological effect: interviewees mentioned stress causing burnout, depression, apathy and disengagement. The data also indicated that stress has negative physiological effects on a range of health issues. The literature stated that there is a relationship between daily stress and physical health, in the moment that the stress response happens, and also in the long term (De Longis, Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). The relationship between daily stress and physical health was mentioned in terms of long-term consequences (burnout, depression, apathy and disengagement) in the data, rather than symptoms or effects at the time of the stress response.

At an organisational level, stress was observed by interviewees to affect performance at work, personal growth and role-taking. It was furthermore viewed very much as part of organisational culture. The literature went into more detail than the data, discussing the impact on morale, interpersonal relations, medical aid expenses, production errors and accidents, labour turnover, productivity and absenteeism (Sieberhagen et al., 2009; Colligan & Higgins, 2005).

5.12.3 *Managing organisational stress*

The HR professionals interviewed were vocal about coping with stress, via both EAPs and company schemes, especially in terms of the operational workforce. The organisations examined, helped staff deal with stress by providing facilities to exercise or relax in, healthy food, financial assistance, counselling and

transport. The literature discussed EAPs as a facility for employees to flourish and take responsibility for their own wellbeing (Colligan & Higgins, 2005). The data therefore complemented the literature by enumerating the initiatives in place to facilitate thriving in the workplace.

In attempting to lessen negative stress, organisations viewed executives as individuals, rather than collectively applying an EAP solution over the board. Coping mechanisms for executives and leaders were conveyed as being more sophisticated and personal, geared less towards physical solutions. Coaching was seen as a useful intervention to deal with stress. Coaching was found to be offered to executives and not to the generic staff base. The literature discussed coaching as a method of reducing stress indirectly due to coaching assisting individuals to manage other work-related problems that are the cause of stress (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2006). The same study found coaching to be a resource for coping with stressful situations (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2006). Therefore the data confirmed the literature as coaching being a stress reduction and management mechanism.

In conclusion the data either confirmed or complemented the literature on stress and wellbeing and stress and coaching. This means that coping with stress is a definite part of coaching in the business coaching context.

5.13 Conclusion

The research question asked in this research report is ‘what role does wellbeing play in business coaching in South Africa?’. This subsection therefore brings together information from the three parts of the literature review and the data findings.

The purpose of this research is to understand if wellbeing has a role in business coaching interventions and if this is the case, to understand what this role is. Wellbeing was explored and was found to be a positive construct that is highly subjective. Conceptually it is an holistic, multidimensional and dynamic

phenomenon. The dimensions that make up the construct of wellbeing are interrelated and congruent with each other.

The findings confirm and supplement the literature that individual wellbeing certainly does have a role to play in coaching in organisations. This role is complex and fluid, and can be viewed from multiple perspectives both in theory and in practice.

Ultimately, the role of wellbeing in coaching was seen by both the theory and the data as being an outcome of a successful coaching engagement, rather than a goal on the agenda, or a topic articulated at all in the coaching conversation. The word 'wellbeing' is used rarely in conversation either by the coach, coachee or HR practitioners. Wellbeing is a result of coaching. Each interviewee defined wellbeing in their own unique way – broadly speaking, for some it was health, for others it was happiness and for yet others it was eudaimonic wellbeing. All categories of interviewees perceived their subjective formulation of wellbeing to be important to themselves.

A number of themes were found in the data that substituted or represented this unstated presence of wellbeing as an outcome. These were found to be engagement, happiness, health and stress. The research used wellbeing theory as a framework through which wellbeing as an outcome of business coaching could be viewed. Goal attainment, goal striving and Self-determination Theory (SDT) were used to investigate and understand the data. Coaching was found to be a goal striving and goal attainment tool, and the use of coaching to strive for and attain goals was found to result in increased wellbeing. Similarly, goals that are self-generated (a term from the data), self-concordant and self-determined (terms from the literature) were found to be significant factors to attaining goals as well as important devices used to ensure the success of coaching. Authenticity to oneself results in greater wellbeing.

The chapter therefore demonstrates that wellbeing was perceived by interviewees as an abstract construct with defining characteristics, but that out

in the workplace wellbeing is perceived as real issues such as engagement, happiness, health and stress. The literature was necessary to link these altogether to characterise wellbeing's role as an outcome in coaching conversations.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The purpose of this research is to understand if wellbeing plays a role in coaching, and if so, to understand the nature of the role. While substantial literature exists on coaching and wellbeing as independent concepts, only a small amount of literature is available on wellbeing and coaching together. Therefore, the benefit of the report is to sensitise (Knafl & Howard, 1984) the reader to the coaching-wellbeing topic. This chapter will therefore summarise major themes, discuss implications for practice and suggest future research (Knafl & Howard, 1984).

The discussion of the results confirmed that an association between wellbeing and coaching exists. The research question asks what role wellbeing plays in business executive coaching: this was clear from the results of the data and literature – wellbeing is never an articulated goal in the coaching agenda, but rather it certainly has a genuine presence and is considered an outcome or a by-product of the process.

The working definitions adopted at the beginning of this research report were broad terms used to describe the two critical constructs that make up the research question. These were wellbeing: a way of being; and coaching: an intervention. The two constructs are different in nature. One is an abstract, intangible concept while the other can be described as a tangible activity as reflected in Figure 6 below:

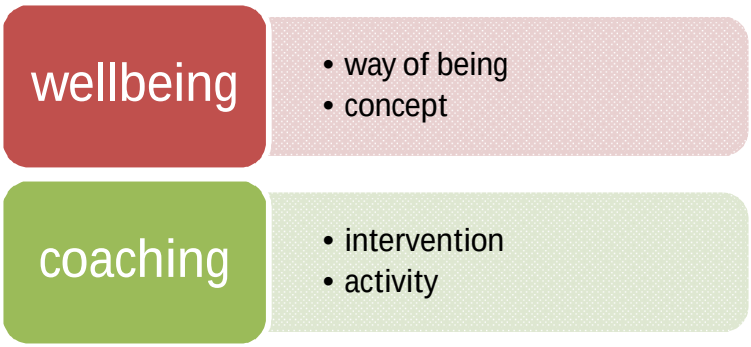

Figure 6: Wellbeing and coaching

While the two constructs are different in character, both were found to share similar attributes or what can be termed as 'functional similarity' (McKenna & Davis 2009):

1. Both are positive constructs;
2. While one is a process that takes place in space and time and the other is an abstract, intangibleconcept, both are dynamic notions;
3. Both are person-orientated.

With this in mind, these conclusive remarks will look at wellbeing and coaching as positive, dynamic, person-orientated constructs.

6.2 Conclusions of the study

The research report contextualised the study within the South African environment. South Africa is identified in the literature as a highly stressful milieu, and this was confirmed in the data. Similarly, the South African work environment was seen as demanding and challenging.

The literature asserted that the nature of business coaching is characterised by its connection to the organisation. This was confirmed in the data, with continual reference to the work setting and the background of the various coaching interventions. Wellbeing is also contextualised in the workplace and the literature discussed several perspectives of this with the data referring to the organisation as being both a positive and negative contributor to wellbeing. The

organisation was seen as jeopardising wellbeing due to the large influence of stress, but also seen as promoting wellbeing through wellness programmes, EAPs and coaching interventions.

6.2.1 *First research question*

The first research question asked was ‘what is wellbeing?’. Both the literature and the data reflected the complexity of the concept, its highly subjective nature and the multiplicity of dimensions that that it is made up of. The question of defining wellbeing is conceptual in nature, and the literature review highlighted key perspectives which were reflected in the data, showing the real life manifestation of the theory.

Wellbeing is examined and debated in the theory following two main traditions – hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. Wellbeing has the following characteristics: it is multidimensional, each dimension is interrelated and congruent with the others, and definitions of wellbeing are subjective and particular to cultural context. The data complemented these characteristics. In examining the data, the two overarching categories of hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing were not distinctive. Rather, wellbeing could be divided into a universal conception of what wellbeing is perceived to be, and then as a construct linked to the workplace. Wellbeing was seen as important to leaders and executives in order to support, drive and produce organisational goals.

6.2.2 *Second research question*

The second research question was ‘what is business coaching in South Africa?’ The data complemented and confirmed the current literature. Business coaching in South Africa is being practiced according to the norms set out in the theory, and although formal measurements are small in number, the self-reported benefits to both the individual and organisation are positive.

Business coaching was found to be offered to leaders, executives and high-potential managers. One organisation rolled out coaching to junior and middle managers, but this was on an internal coaching programme and these candidates were not offered external coaches. The research report only looked at organisations who offered external coaching. Coaching was offered as a leadership development initiative, so it could not be discussed under wellness programmes, but rather as a specialised intervention offered to a select minority stemming from the leadership development department of each organisation.

6.2.3 *Third research question*

The third research question was 'what is the role of wellbeing in business coaching in South Africa?' The limited quantity of literature available on the coaching-wellbeing issue referred to wellbeing as an outcome for coaching conversations, and did not define or explore wellbeing as a goal on the agenda. The data confirmed this point as wellbeing was seen by all interviewees as a positive outcome or result of coaching but only 'hard' business-related issues were considered legitimate business coaching goals. This was a clear distinction.

Wellbeing theory discussed eudaimonic wellbeing in terms of goals – striving for them, achieving them and having them concordant to individual values. Wellbeing is the resulting upshot of all three aspects of goal theory. Coaching is a goal-orientated activity, and the coaching theory that considered wellbeing directly, also found that goal-striving, goal-attainment and self-concordant goals resulted in wellbeing as an outcome of coaching. The research report therefore provides a general view of a broad range of topics concerning goals linked to the coaching-wellbeing topic. The rationale was to understand if there are in fact associations and what they could be. Experiencing coaching as a goal-orientated development intervention therefore results in improved wellbeing. The data confirmed that coaching resulted in improved happiness, health and wellbeing.

Wellbeing theory informing the research report described wellbeing interchangeably with wellness, happiness and health. The data surfaced four main themes that interviewees used to describe their perceptions of wellbeing in the business coaching conversation. These were engagement, happiness, health and stress. Interviewees used these constructs either to describe or substitute the word 'wellbeing'. Broadly speaking, positive engagement was equated to positive wellbeing, happiness was viewed both as hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing, negative health was linked to disengagement and misalignment of values in the workplace, and stress was always perceived as a negative influence on wellbeing. These four constructs were shown to be influenced positively by successful coaching.

The wellbeing of the generic, operational workforce in these large corporations where data collection took place, is supported by EAPs and wellness programmes. While these are available to leaders and executives, they are driven by them rather than used by them. With high performance and efficiency being expected of leaders and executives in the service of organisational objectives, coaching could be viewed as an effective tool to support, encourage and maintain wellbeing.

6.3 Implications and recommendations

The benefit of this research was to sensitise the reader to the role of wellbeing in coaching. This report is intended to be descriptive and is aimed at both academics and practitioners of coaching and / or wellbeing efforts. In this section specific implications will be identified for these readers with reference to the results presented in Chapter 5 of this research report.

Wellbeing is an outcome of business coaching. Academics and researchers of wellbeing and coaching will be interested in the theoretical considerations of this research report – how wellbeing's role in coaching is perceived in practice and how this complements the literature. Similarly students of coaching and

wellbeing may find it useful and relevant to gain an awareness of the topic. For coaches, this report adds to the growing body of coaching knowledge.

Due to the backdrop of the workplace and organisational life, this research will provide guidance to human resource practitioners concerned with the wellbeing of their staff. It may be useful to those considering the implementation of coaching programmes in their organisations, as well as assisting them to consider the unarticulated outcomes of structuring coaching programmes in their organisations. Furthermore it will present a supplementary perspective to coaches with which to view their coaching approach.

As wellbeing is an outcome of coaching, and not a goal of coaching, it does not minimise its presence or importance. That wellbeing is not articulated in coaching conversations – both those of the client briefing the coach and the 'actual' coach-coachee dialogue – similarly does not minimise its presence or importance. The South African organisational health, wellbeing and safety situation is unique. The challenge is to find the appropriate solutions to the challenges affecting the health and wellbeing of the South African workforce (Sieberhagen, Rothmann & Pienaar, 2009). Consequently, in viewing wellbeing in the context of the workplace, it may be feasible for HR Practitioners or coaching champions to consider coaching as strategically benefitting both the individual and the organisation. Similarly, it may be valuable to frame a strategic formulation of wellbeing to benefit individuals in organisations involved in coaching. A position of 'strategic wellbeing' could also benefit leaders and executives experiencing coaching initiatives and as well as the coaches facilitating them.

6.4 Suggestions for further research

The intended benefit of this research report was to sensitise the reader to the coaching-wellbeing topic. The report therefore asks more questions than it answers! This research report was broad and generalist. The role of wellbeing

in coaching could be examined in relation to a particular area of wellbeing theory in order to explore nuances and obtain specialised conclusions.

Recommendations for future qualitative research include the following:

6.4.1 Investigate whether any semantic distinction exists in the meaning of the words ‘wellbeing’ and ‘wellness’ in the organisational context.

6.4.2 Further investigations on wellbeing’s boundaries. How much should the matter of wellbeing form a part of the business coaching conversation?

6.4.3 Research considering whether wellbeing should be considered a legitimate goal of business coaching, and how this could be so.

6.4.4 The research report found that there were associations between wellbeing, goals and coaching. A specialist view, examining one particular theory of goals could be useful for coaching methodology related to wellbeing.

6.4.5 Explore the interpersonal neurobiology definition of wellbeing in terms of business coaching – again, using a specific definition of wellbeing, and focussing on this and coaching. In terms of improving health, the data described the coaching process as the coach helping the coachee to alleviate physical or emotional suffering and move toward wellbeing in service of the workplace. Siegel’s (1999; 2001; 2006) definition of interpersonal neurobiology refers to the understanding of human experience and development, with one human being helping another to move towards wellbeing by promoting the integrated flow between his relationships, his mind and his brain. The data complemented the literature by illustrating the process of coaches helping coachees achieve wellbeing by improving mechanisms within and outside of the individual. Brief mention in this research report does the subject no justice.

6.4.6 Investigate how eustress can be used in coaching to impact wellbeing in the workplace.

6.4.7 Explore work-life balance as a theme in the business coaching conversation and its outcome for wellbeing. Work-life balance came up

as a theme in the last interview analysed. This prompted the researcher to go back in the data and look for further instances of work-life balance as it did not seem to fit with the emerging picture. It was found not to be a disconfirmatory or contrasting theme (Biggerstaf & Thompson, 2008), but 'balance' in various forms was referred to indirectly by some interviewees. Work-life balance therefore may require study in future in terms of the coaching-wellbeing issue.

6.4.8 Explore the concept of self-awareness about the body (somatic intelligence) and coaching. Somatic awareness was discussed by some interviewees when illustrating their experience of coaching and wellbeing.

6.4.9 Studies investigating stress and physical health on job satisfaction and the impact of coaching.

6.4.10 The role of wellbeing in coaching elicited the issue of the connection between organisation and individual: both constructs place importance on the individual contextualised within the organisation. While the 'organisation' is not the focus of this research report, the research was contextualised within the organisation because it involves business coaching. The data related to the wellbeing and coaching, from the point of view of the individual, kept linking back to the organisation. There were instances in the data (not recorded in Chapter 4 due to the scope of the research) where the individual and organisation could not be de-contextualised from their environment (mention was made of technology and difficult economic times). Investigating the individual-organisation-environment relationship would provide a systemic view of the coaching-wellbeing issue.

6.4.11 Culture or "shared norms, values and assumptions" (Schein, 1996; p. 229) came up in the data with words like 'fun' and 'caring', but also as stress being a part of organisational culture and as a permeating element affecting all parts of the organisation and the individual worker's relationship to it. Organisational culture from a wellbeing perspective was perceived by the interviewees both in the positive and in the negative,

with punitive cultures geared at high performance and production within their organisations. According to the literature, the entire organisation can benefit from the cultural change fostered by coaching (Sherman & Freas, 2004). Therefore an exploration of culture on the coaching-wellbeing issue could be useful to the coaching discipline as well as to HR practitioners.

6.4.12 Investigate the operational mechanism between the individual and the organisation in terms of the coaching-wellbeing topic. The operational mechanism refers to a subtext in the data suggesting the lack of a positive organisational dynamic or the presence of a negative organisational dynamic which influences individual performance and engagement. This could be described as a feedback mechanism between the individual, his team and his organisation, and back again.

6.4.13 Explore the role of learning in the coaching-wellbeing issue. The data indicated a kind of 'feedback process' taking place: learnings from the coaching conversation would be transmitted from the coachee to his team, to the organisation and back again.

6.4.14 Research investigating the nature of outcomes versus the nature of goals in business coaching.

6.4.15 Research to understand what other issues, besides wellbeing, are unarticulated in coaching. This could be interesting in understanding the coaching subtext and provide more insight into the discipline.

6.4.16 Research on how HR Practitioners can apply this 'sensitisation' research report to structure their coaching interventions. This research describes the role of wellbeing in coaching, and it would be wonderful to make use of the findings.

6.4.17 Explore the formulation of a definition around 'strategic wellbeing'. Coaching is offered strategically as a leadership development intervention so a strategic formulation of wellbeing would be more beneficial to coaching theory and practice than a broad view of wellbeing theory, or a view that excludes alternative critical aspects of the construct. This could also create more awareness about the subject of

wellbeing and its role in coaching. The limited quantity of papers available describing wellbeing's relationship to coaching did not necessarily define wellbeing distinctively – wellbeing's meaning is assumed. A formulation of strategic wellbeing could provide business coaching with a functional standpoint on the construct.

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APPENDIX A: DISCUSSION GUIDES





Interview schedule coach

Name of participant	
Date, location and time	
Name of coaching practice	
Number of years working as a coach	
Coaching qualifications	
At what levels do you coach in organisations and in the organisation in question?	
Has your company done any research to the effectiveness of coaching in the organisation in	
Has your company done any research into the effectiveness of coaching in organisations in general?	

1. Please relate some background around your coaching practice.
2. Which models or frameworks do you make use of?
3. How does your coaching practice view the wellbeing of the coachees you work with?
4. In your experience in your work as a coach how would you define wellbeing? What are the parts that make up wellbeing?
5. How is wellbeing a component of your coaching agenda for a coachee that you engage with?
6. How is wellbeing a component of the organisation you engage with? How do you see wellbeing as being part of the agenda?
7. In your experience, have you come across any frameworks or models that work with business coaching and wellbeing? If so where?
8. In your experience as a business coach in the organisational context, how would you consider wellbeing as being useful or not useful to coaching?
9. How would you consider wellbeing to aid learning, self-awareness or self-generation in the leadership, developmental, performance and production goals of business coaching?
10. Are there any other issues which we have not covered about coaching or wellbeing on which you would like to make a comment?
11. What is your personal experience with coaching in context of wellbeing? Tell me a story.

Thank you for your time.



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Interview schedule coachee

Name of participant	
Date, location and time	
Name of company	
Position of participant in organisation (organisational chart?)	
Number of years working in current position	
Number of years working in this company	
Did you engage with an internal or external business coach?	
Are you aware of the approach, models or frameworks your coach has made use of?	
Do you think coaching has made you more effective in your company?	

1. Please relate some background around your experience of being coached.
2. In your experience of being coached, how have you found your general wellbeing tackled as part of the coaching conversation?
3. How has dealing with stress been a part of your coaching conversation?
4. How has dealing with you as a whole person been a part of your coaching journey?
5. How has dealing with you as a part of the system in which you function been a part of your coaching conversations?
6. How is wellbeing a component of your coaching agenda with your coach?
7. How is your wellbeing a goal of the organisation where you work? How do you see wellbeing as being part of the organisation's agenda?
8. How would you define wellbeing? What are the parts that make up wellbeing?
9. In your experience as a professional person, how is your wellbeing useful to your performance or engagement in the workplace?
10. How would you consider your wellbeing to aid learning, self-awareness or self-generation in the leadership, developmental, performance and production goals (or whatever they may be) of your business coaching journey?
11. Are there any other issues which we have not covered about coaching or wellbeing on which you would like to make a comment?
12. What is your personal experience with coaching in context of wellbeing? Tell me a story.

Thank you for your time.

Interview schedule HR practitioner

Name of participant	
Date, location and time	
Title	
Position of participant in organisation (organisational chart?)	
Number of years working in current position	
Number of years working as an HR manager / executive	
At what level is coaching used in the organisation?	
Do you employ internal or external business coaches as a part of your offering to staff?	
Which models or frameworks do the coaches you engage make use of?	
Which domain does your coaching offering function as a part of?	
Has your company done any research to the effectiveness of coaching in your company?	

1. Please relate some background around the human resource department at this company.
2. How does your company view the wellbeing of its human resources?
3. Has your company done any research on the impact of wellbeing on the bottom-line? Is this done in the context of a wellness programme?
4. In your experience, doing what you do everyday, and a part of an organisation yourself, how would you define wellbeing? What are the parts that make up wellbeing?
5. How is wellbeing a part of your coaching agenda for employee who you put on a coaching programme, or a coach whose services you engage?
6. Are there any other issues which we have not covered about coaching or wellbeing on which you would like to make a comment?
7. What is your personal experience with coaching in context of wellbeing?

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEWEE PRELIMINARY INFORMATION DOCUMENTS



The role of wellbeing in business coaching in South Africa

This document summarises the research currently being undertaken by **Laura-Ann Tomasella** in partial fulfilment of the research component of the *Masters of Management in Business and Executive Coaching* (MMBEC) offered by Wits Business School at the University of the Witwatersrand.

Purpose of the study

The study is built on the following assumptions: the first is that the research is conducted in the context of business or an organisation that operates for profit and/or for output of a product or service in the private sector, and the second is that the human resources of an organisation are a primary asset. With the wellbeing of that human resource asset being significant to the organisation's growth and profitability, coaching is one of the tools used to foster its development, performance and refinement.

Stress is a buzzword used frequently in South Africa due to contextual violence and crime, making the management and reduction of negative stress a broad societal issue. Within the organisational context, with coaching being directed at so-called "high achievers", coaches are in a position where they are dealing with people who are exposed to work pressures and hours that are highly stressful. Excessive stress over long periods of time is associated with physical

and mental health problems. While activities, like exercise, outside the workplace help alleviate stress, this often comes at the cost of scheduling, choosing priorities and having to decline activities that contribute to work-related goals.

The purpose of this research is to establish the nature of the role of wellbeing in business coaching. The aim of this is to provide coaches and the organisations in which they operate with data on whether wellbeing is an important issue to address, where it is addressed and how, and to further draw or decline parallels and connections between the two concepts in both the literature available and the outcomes in the real world.

Methodology

The goals of the research will be achieved through a review of academic studies on wellbeing as well as topics allied to it, together with the collection of primary empirical data in face-to-face interviews conducted with HR directors, employees who have been coached and the coaches who work within these organisations.

The interviews will be conducted in person by the researcher. Interviews will be recorded and transcribed, but the anonymity and confidentiality of respondents will be treated according to the University's code of ethical research practice.

Significance of the Study

The study will add to the body of business coaching knowledge available in the field, by identifying the nature of the role of wellbeing in coaching. It will also provide data on the current position of the South African coaching industry. The output of the study will provide guidance to a range of stakeholders, including HR practitioners and practitioners within the coaching industry.

Access to research findings

The research proposal covering the topic and methodology has been scrutinised by a Research Panel and the Ethics Committee at WBS, and approved. Once the research is complete, the final report will be submitted to Research Panel, and will then published as a research report in the public domain.

Strict anonymity of all participants at all stages of the research is pledged. All participants will receive a copy of the final report.

Kind regards

Laura-Ann Tomasella

Research Participants' Information Document

Name of researcher	**Laura-Ann Tomasella** **082 321 8928, tomasella@telkomsa.net**
Purpose of study	**The purpose of this study is to understand the role of wellbeing in business coaching in South Africa.**
Description of study	The research will consist of a literature review, fifteen interviews and an analysis of these interviews informed by the literature review.
What is involved and how long will it take?	Participants will be asked to be interviewed. Each will be asked if they are prepared to have a voice recording made of the interview and may decline to do so. The time required is approximately 45 minutes.
Why have you been asked to participate?	You have been asked to participate due to your experience as an HR practitioner within a South African organisation, a coach who operates (externally) for an organisation, or a coachee who has been coached for business purposes.
What will happen to the information given in the study?	The information will be held in a confidential manner while the work is being collated. Notes, transcripts and recordings will be kept restricted to the researcher. Names shall be changed in the final document submitted to the University. If you wish for a copy of the recording or the transcript, these can be provided to you.
What will be done with the results of the study?	The results of the interviews will be reported in the findings section of the research report. This will be done anonymously.
In what way will the study be beneficial and to whom?	It is hoped that this study will provide useful knowledge to executives, HR practitioners and coaches on the connection between wellbeing and coaching within organisations. It will also provide a sturdier backbone to coaching as a discipline by building a greater body of academic knowledge for the field.

Who has reviewed this study to ensure that it complies with all the requirements and ethical standards of the University?	The Ethics Committee at the University of the Witwatersrand have approved this research in proposal form and has granted permission for the research to commence.
Can permission be withdrawn having previously been granted?	Yes. All participants retain the right to have their contributions to the research withdrawn at any time prior to the submission of the document.
Can you refuse to answer any question?	Yes. The participant has the right to refuse to answer any question in the interview, and to end the interview at any time.

APPENDIX C: LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADD – Attention Deficit Disorder

EAP – Employee Assistance Programme

HR – Human Resources

IPA – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

ORSK – Occupational Relationship Systems at Work

PCC – Professional Coaching Course, Centre for Coaching

PCC – Professional Certified Coach, International Coach Federatio

PE – Personal expressiveness

PWB – psychological wellbeing

SDT – self-determination theory

SWB – subjective wellbeing

Unisa – University of South Africa

APPENDIX D: CD OF INTERVIEWS