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Perceptions of The Value of Leadership Coaching by MBA Students at Wits Business School

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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

Wits Business School, Johannesburg

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ABSTRACT

The world of business is rapidly changing, and for the business and management education to keep up, it is imperative to lead the change. In order to adapt to the business world of changes, Wits Business School (WBS) have designed the new Master of Business Administration (MBA) curriculum, with a view to develop and grow value-based leaders with the requisite skills to positively impact society. Forming an integral part of the MBA curricula is the Leadership Development Program, which includes a Leadership Development workshop and four leadership coaching sessions. These teaching and learning tools were engaged as an endeavour to empower the students to take ownership of their own development and foster their reflective practice and engagement. In their roles as leaders, the MBA students also face challenges in balancing their studies and work lives. With no source of reference, it is difficult to assess the value of leadership coaching from the coached WBS MBA students' perspective.

The research sought to explore the MBA students' perceptions of the value gained from the leadership coaching component in their curricula. This study used a qualitative research methodology approach. Semi-structured questionnaires were used during individual interviews with twelve MBA students who have undergone coaching offered as part of the leadership development programme prescribed in their curricula. The transcripts of the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis, and several themes were derived at.

What was apparent from the findings, was that the intervention benefited the MBA students into catapulting their development as effective leaders through introspection and self-awareness. From the leadership styles addressed in the coaching sessions, the findings led to a clear transformation between reactive and defensive forms of leaders. Effective leadership was also evident in the extent of the impact of leadership with the co-created space between the leader and the follower defined by "the self and others". The study's findings also showed that coaching helped to evoke self-awareness in managing the balancing act, not only between studies and work, but in

their personal lives as well. The study recommended that a proper briefing process and structure of the program in a way incorporates feedback loop. The study further recommended proper allocation of coaches, and that the length period of the coaching program be extended to cover the duration of the MBA program. The coaching program need to be structured in a way that it incorporated frameworks that assist in determining effective strategies to enable coping with work and study conflicts. Further studies could look into the role of self-development in leadership coaching and assessing the work-study-personal lives balance.

Keywords: *MBA Curricula, Leadership Development Programme, Leadership Coaching*

DECLARATION

In terms of Rule G9.8 of the Wits University's Faculty of Commerce, Law & Management Rules and Syllabus (2021), I, Motsei Choabi, declare that this Research Report is my own, unaided work. I submit it for the Degree of Master of Management at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I did not submit it before for any degree programme or examination at any other University. The research ethics protocol number is WBS/13A17418791.

Motsei Choabi 

Name Signature

Signed at Johannesburg

On the 4th day of June 2021

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to Wits Business School, the Leadership Development Programme and MBA students.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude goes to my God who has taken me thus far.

To my supervisor, Dr Rajohane Matshedisho, I am humbled and appreciative of your support, guidance and expertise shared. Thank you sincerely for relentlessly helping me reach my goal.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

LDEV	Leadership Development Programme
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MMBEC	Master of Management in the field of Business and Executive Coaching
WBS	Wits Business School

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In this chapter, an introduction is provided to inform the background and development of leadership coaching in Business Schools. The chapter includes the purpose of the study, the context of the study, the main research question and sub-questions to provide direction in the process of inquiry and exploration. Also included are the research objectives and research aim, followed by justification of the significance of the study and delimitations of the study. To further enlighten the reader, the definitions of important terms used throughout the report, are provided. The chapter concludes by outlining the existing assumptions.

1.2 Purpose of the study

This qualitative study sought to explore the MBA students' perceptions of the value of a leadership coaching component in their curricula. The focus of this research was only on Wits Business School MBA students, coached during 2017 and 2019 academic periods. The students were from four MBA cohorts, namely Full-time, Block Release, Part- time Weekdays and Part-time Saturdays.

1.3 Context of the study

To give context to the study, this section provides an overview of the role played by leadership coaching in Business Schools. The focus then moves to giving background on the Leadership Development Program offered at Wits Business School (WBS), which encompasses leadership coaching as a component. The leadership coaching serves both as an intervention that supports MBA in their development as effective leaders, and as a supporting mechanism in helping the MBA students manage the balance between their studies and professional lives.

A role played by Business Schools offering Master of Business Administration programs is pivotal in delivering appropriate educated business executives and developing managerial responsibility (Louw, Bosch, & Venter, 2001). To develop leaders, Caza, Brower, and Wayne (2015) suggested the integration of traditional business disciplines with experiential learning and incorporation of soft skills development in Business Schools. The one-on-one coaching sessions were found to be the relative import of soft skills (Steiner, Dixon, & Watson, 2018).

To refocus attention to leadership and interpersonal skills, Wits Business School uses a combination of cutting-edge theory and practical application in its MBA curricula to develop the students with skills needed to be great managers or leaders in Africa and globally ("Wits Business School," 2019). The practical application includes the Leadership Development Program, endeavoured to use a variety of teaching and learning tools to empower students to take ownership of their own development and foster their reflective practice and engagement. Leadership coaching as the core practice enlisted in the program, has appeared to be a crucial characteristic for up-skilling, developing, growing and transforming the discerning executive into better leaders. Reekie (2019) attests that coaching can be seen as a supporting framework that allows the students to deal with constructive feedback, providing reflective time and space, facilitating self-awareness and self-insight, and encouraging the student to confidently face new challenges. By empowering the students to own the responsibility, enhancing their capacity to exercise leadership effectively and responsibly, the coaching intervention also aims to support and help maintain balance in their studies and work lives. A personal structured plan is devised to bring about intentional personal change in developing the students as effective leaders, and improve performance (Reekie, 2019; Viedge, 2019).

The Wits Business School (WBS) leadership coaching initiative among Wits Business School MBA students was introduced in 2016. According to Christierson (2016), the design around coaching sessions were more of transformational, developmental, evolutionary, person centred and humanistic, and to provide students with reflection space. Mezirow describes transformative learning as critical reflection on life

experiences, with a potential of resulting in the creation, transformation and elaboration of meaning of schemes (Imel, 1998). This is depicted in his theory of transformative learning which demonstrates how adult learners transform through life and explains the positive changes that may be brought by education in their lives (Mezirow, 1997).

This qualitative study sought to explore the MBA students' perceptions of the value of leadership coaching component in their curricula.

1.4 Research problem

Leadership coaching, which is increasingly being used in academic institutions, has been rated to be beneficial (Steiner et al., 2018). In addition, it is said to have potential to yield positive results on a long term basis (Cheesebrough, Bronzert, & Frazier-De La Torre, 2020). The WBS Leadership coaching started in 2016, and on an annual basis 300 students go through the programme. To re-establish the intents and purpose of the Leadership Programme, a review and an evaluation process is annually conducted. Due to ethical concerns, the academic individual conducting this programme was not at liberty to share any information from the evaluation reports, as no consent had been obtained from the students. With no information to refer to, it is difficult to assess the true benefits of the leadership coaching from the coached WBS MBA students' perspective. This qualitative study explored the perceptions of the MBA students coached between 2017 and 2019 academic years. The students were from four MBA cohorts, namely Full-time, Block Release and Part-time Weekday and Part-time Saturday.

1.5 Research question

A question posed in this research is "What are the Wits MBA students' perceptions of the value of leadership coaching component in their curriculum?"

1.5.1 Research sub-questions

- What styles of leadership are addressed in the coaching sessions?

- How do coaching sessions create awareness of balancing the students' studies and professional lives?

1.6 Research objectives

To address the research problem, the study objectives set out to discover what MBA students found useful in the leadership coaching program.

1.7 Research aim

Driven by the research question, "What are the WBS MBA students' perceptions of the value of leadership coaching?" The aim was to show that value cannot be separated from the timing of the leadership coaching. The timing of when the leadership coaching is placed in the curricula, and how the pacing thereof might enhance the value of leadership coaching.

1.8 Significance of the study

Research on value of coaching is still emerging. A study conducted by Steiner et al. (2018) reported the majority of students to have rated coaching to be of significant value, but little remains known about coaching as a support function for helping students manage the inter role conflicts (Le Roux, 2018). The study was worth pursuing, as it helped lay a foundation for an enriching dialogue that will yield generation of ideas from the perceptions of MBA students from the different cohorts, on the value of leadership coaching.

With no information available to assess the value of leadership coaching from the coached WBS MBA students' perspective, this research will inform the MBA academic program that teach management and leadership skills, of the role played by leadership coaching in the development of MBA students as effective leaders. The ideas developed and information gained will prove useful for leadership development interventions and future coaching in academic institutions. Recommendations from the findings will enable the business schools, MBA academic program and the coaching practitioners to improve on the existing leadership program in order to make the development intervention a more valuable approach. The data gathered from this research will be published and made available, as a contribution to the existing knowledge on the role played by leadership coaching in the development of MBA students as effective leaders.

1.9 Delimitations of the study

This research focus was on perceptions of value of leadership coaching by WBS MBA students. The study was limited to a new group of students who were coached during 2017 and 2019, from the Fulltime, Block Release, Part-time weekday evenings and Part-time Saturday class attendance options. Not part of the study were the students who participated in a study conducted prior, and or students who engaged in peer coaching. Also excluded from the study are the MBA students who had less than three years managerial experience at the time of admission into the programme.

1.10 Definition of terms

Pertinent to this research are the following definitions:

Executive Coaching is a relationship process between a professional coach and a (coachee) executive with the purpose of enhancing change in the coachee's behaviour

through learning and self-awareness, ultimately impacting on the individual and organisation's success (Joo, 2005).

Leadership Coaching according to Harper (2012) facilitates change that positively impacts on a leader of an organisation's personal growth, performance and particular skills development.

Leadership development can be thought of as "an integration strategy by helping people understand how to relate to others, coordinate their efforts, build commitments, and develop extended social networks by applying self-understanding to social and organisational imperatives" (Dalakoura, 2010, p. 438).

1.11 Assumptions

The assumptions were such that:

- Firstly, that the students in this study who were in the development stage of being effective leaders, did not possess either the self-knowledge or authenticity deemed necessary for leadership.

- Secondly, the leadership intervention supported the needs of the coachees in balancing their work and study roles.

1.12 Structure of the report

The chapter began with outlining the purpose of the study and the context of the study by providing the background and development of leadership coaching in Business Schools in general, and specifically on WBS. Included in the chapter is the main research question and related sub-questions, to give direction in the inquiry and exploration process. The research objectives and research aims are also included, followed by justification of the significance of the study and delimitations of the study. To clarify and help the reader

understand, the definitions of important terms pertinent to this research are provided. The chapter concludes by outlining the existing assumptions.

The key concepts in the literature review which informs this study are elaborated in Chapter 2. This chapter outlines the conceptual framework that guides the context of the research study. Lastly, the chapter contextualises the value of leadership coaching concept in MBA students.

Chapter 3 which is the research methodology section outlines the overall research design methods adopted, the data collection methods followed and tools used to analyse data are detailed. The motivation for engaging these chosen methods is also provided.

Chapter 4 is for presenting the research findings. The chapter is guided by the propositions and key themes emanating from the thematic analysis.

In Chapter 5 the results on the findings are discussed together with the literature review and comparison with the findings.

Chapter 6 which is the final chapter, provides conclusion and makes recommendations to the teaching academics and coaching practitioners based on the findings. Also suggested is how the limitations of the study give rise to potential research.

Followed in Chapter 6 is the list of References and Appendices. Contained in the Appendices is The Research Instrument, Research Permission Letter, Participant Information Sheet, Interview Consent Form, the Research Ethics clearance certificate, List of Codes and Themes, and the Consistency table.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the existing literature is consulted to provide background and insights on the leadership coaching and effective leadership themes. The chapter begins with the conceptual framework used for this research study. The discussion on leadership coaching, its definition and the link between the value of leadership coaching and the development of effective leadership follows next. The focus is on awareness created in identifying own leadership styles in the section that follows. In the final section, literature review on leadership coaching as a supporting mechanism to help students manage balance, is explored.

From the varying and numerous benefits of leadership coaching on MBA students reported were self-awareness (Crossan, Mazutis, Seijts, & Gandz, 2013; Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016), introspection (Crossan et al., 2013; Lawrence, Dunn, & Weisfeld-Spolter, 2018; Showry & Manasa, 2014; Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016), reflection (Lawrence et al., 2018; Mistry & Hule, 2015), self-development (Smits, 2010; Waddock & Lozano, 2013), feedback (Boyatzis, 2008; Luft & Ingham, 1961; Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016) effective leadership development and awareness in identifying own leadership styles (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014; Peláez Zuberbuhler, Salanova, & Martínez, 2020), and awareness in managing balance between work and study roles (George, Sims, McLean, & Mayer, 2007; Le Roux, 2018).

2.2 Conceptual framework

The context in which the research study takes place on the perceptions of value of leadership coaching by MBA students at WBS is indicated in the conceptual framework in Figure 1. To help understand executive coaching, the framework inspired partly by Wanberg, Welsh & Hezlett as cited in (Gray, 2015; Joo, 2005) is presented. Forming the

basis of the framework are outcomes to three questions focusing on the relationship between antecedents, the coaching process, the distal and proximal outcomes. “The first question being, what are the antecedents of positive outcomes in executive coaching? The second question being, what is the process through which executive coaching leads to positive outcomes? The final question being, what outcomes might executive coaching achieve” (Gray, 2015, p. 28)? The relationship between coach and coachee characteristics, together with the client or organisational support, forms the basis of the antecedents of positive outcomes in executive coaching. The process through which executive coaching leads to positive outcomes is central to the conceptual framework. Constituted in the coach and the coachee relationship, feedback receptivity, and the coaching approach. Proximal and distal conceptualizes the outcomes of leadership coaching. Included in the proximal benefits of coaching is learning and self-awareness, while individual and organizational success are the distal outcomes of executive coaching (Joo, 2005).

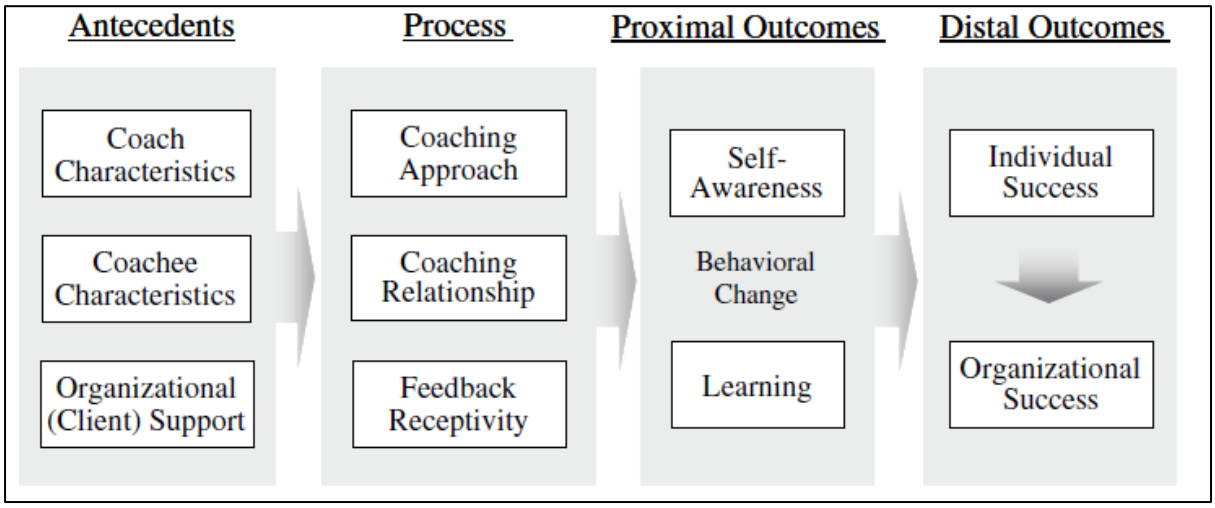


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for Successful Executive Coaching (Gray, 2015, p. 28; Joo, 2005, p. 476)

For the purposes of this study, quality is defined in terms of student leadership development as effective leaders, and coaching as a supporting mechanism for managing work and study balance. Contained within the broader conceptual framework above,

using a four-stage comparative method, a model of the value contribution of leadership coaching on student learning and development as effective leaders was adopted.

2.3 Leadership Coaching in Business Schools

Though the most commonly used term is “executive coaching”, coaching of leaders is referred to by a few studies as “leadership coaching”. A widely practiced leadership development intervention, its unique features are found in how it addresses leadership development programs traditional challenge and attention paid to the organisations and its leaders’ needs (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014).

The rapidly changing global setting has raised the level of perception and expectation from an MBA qualified manager, and a huge amount of responsibility is put on the business school (Zahid, Naeem, Ahmad, & Rehman, 2013). Continuous changing and updating the MBA program curricula are iterated solutions to meet the expectations of business graduates (Zahid et al., 2013). A study by Pfeffer and Fong cited in (Butler, Johnson, & Forbes, 2008), found inconsistencies between the relevance of what business schools teach against the ability to succeed in the real business world. To correct this deficiency, they suggested that an MBA’s purpose should be about empowering students with the business knowledge and assisting in career advancements through leadership coaching behaviours. This notion of maintaining balance between the practical skills offered by Leadership Development Programmes and the theory-based learning focus on academic and research approach found support from (Bennis & O'toole, 2005).

.

Despite the emergence of recent growth in executive coaching in Business Schools, Feldman and Lankau (2005) attests that the students engaged in coaching are not a true representation of a typical coaching program. The potential difference in coaching provided within the context of a MBA leadership development program` and the coaching provided for executives for achieving organisational objectives purposes, is linked to the different settings between the education institution and workplace setting (Christierson, 2016).

Participation in events such as workshops or seminars are deemed unlikely areas of developing leadership, the so-called white space, could just be the reason there is development taking place (Day, Fleenor, Atwater, Sturm, & McKee, 2014). To enhance the reputation and quality of a coaching program (Steiner et al., 2018), WBS MBA students' coaching begins with a full day long Leadership Development Workshop. Outlined in the workshop are the benefits of coaching, together with the discussions around the inter-relationships between coaching, mentoring, training, counselling and consulting. Topics related to the students experiences, both organisational and personal are evaluated using experiential learning component such as oral responses to a case study or peer role play (Christierson, 2016).

According to Carter, cited in (Bower & DSL, 2012), to achieve value from leadership coaching, it is imperative that before the coaching process begins, clear leadership coaching objectives are established. Once the objectives have been defined, they need to be effectively communicated and messaged in the coaching program. Partnership also needs to be established and maintained between client and coach.

WBS MBA Leadership Development Program consists of a series of four one-on-one coaching sessions as depicted in Table 1. For leadership development purposes, several coaching sessions are engaged with (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014).

The detailed and systematic coaching process takes the coachee through self-discovery of their motivational drives, needs and process mapping of how to achieve the desired goals. With the intention to set the tone for the meeting, executive coaching roles need to be clarified, that is whether the primary function of the coaching is for developing skill, enhancing performance, or development (Witherspoon, White, & Randall, 1997). The process unfolds with the coachee being assisted to determine specific goals and objectives of which they will be accountable for. Through assignments, discussions and feedback, the coaching sessions teaches ways of approaching challenges. The final

session concludes with an evaluation by both coachee and coach on the training and facilitation progress.

Table 1: WBS MBA students coaching experience (Christierson, 2016, p. 97)

Session one	Session two	Session three	Session four
Encourage your client to tell you his or her 'short autobiographical story'. Motivation for doing the MBA? How is the course going? Leadership style impact: insights and reflections; trying out new styles? Development goals arising out of the feedback received in the leadership workshop. other development goals? Remind your coaching client to complete questions in the authentic self section in the IMPRT for next session.	Learning at WBS and 'at work' in the past two weeks. Developmental goals: progress made since the last session. Leadership style impact: new insights? Success with extending range of styles where appropriate? Discuss authentic self section of the IMPRT. Remind your coaching client to complete the spiritual self and pleasure-seeking self sections in the IMPRT for next time.	Learning at WBS and 'at work' in the past two weeks. Development goals: progress since last session? Leadership style impact: new insights? Discuss the spiritual self and pleasure-seeking self sections of the IMPRT. Remind students to complete the last three questions in the IMPRT for the fourth and last session.	Discuss the student's answers to last three questions of the IMPRT What have you and your client gained from the coaching sessions? Appropriate goodbyes and thank yous.

Spaces that assist students with leadership and help them understand what they are doing alongside others, define high quality programs. These refer to practices which advocate positive change in their students through inclusivity, empowerment, being ethical, purposeful, and process-oriented leadership (Eich, 2008).

2.4 Value of leadership coaching

A range of views have been shared by various authors about benefits of coaching practices. An interesting analogy raised in Bower and DSL (2012) is that having a workable formula, choosing a phenomenal coach and following outstanding coaching practices might be key components, but not to be mistaken as what derives value in leadership coaching. A view taken by Lawrence et al. (2018), on the other hand, is that tangible and intangible outcomes of coaching such as positive effect on performance, and skills, well-being, and goal directed self-regulation, are what determines value in leadership coaching. Findings by Steiner et al. (2018) and Cheesebrough et al. (2020),

lean more on coaching as a means of providing value or having potential to yield positive results in the long term. The reference to long-term benefits provided to students in educational settings, are in the making of career, management and professional decisions. These benefits were reported as self-awareness, goal setting and prioritisation, job search, leadership effectiveness in a team context, interpersonal communications and lastly cross cultural adjustments (Steiner et al., 2018).

2.5 Effective leadership

A coaching relationship with the specific purpose of facilitating an individual into becoming a more effective leader is broadly defined by leadership coaching (Ely et al., 2010). The disciplines activities likely to impact one's ability to effectively lead according to Smits (2010) are, improved specific knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs). A study by Waddock and Lozano cited in (Lawrence et al., 2018) however, calls for a move beyond these set of skills, competencies and knowledge, to more of an opportunity to experience, aspire, value and interact with people.

Complementary viewpoints have been shared by various authors which pertain to ensuring developing future leaders and the leadership development field. On the one hand, Lawrence et al. (2018) acknowledge business schools as lead role players in MBA students programs. Ladegard and Gjerde (2014), on the other hand, recommend that validated measures be used to evaluate the leadership development initiatives, not only on completion of the program, but before and after the initiative.

To a certain degree, Avolio and Hannah (2008) and Riggio (2008) share the same sentiment over consideration that needs to be given to alignment of developmental readiness of individuals and development interventions for the greater success in leadership development efforts. Their indifferences, however, lie where Riggio (2008) maintains that to warrant success in leadership development efforts, and alignment of leadership, careful consideration need be given to individuals' readiness, desire to learn, development needs and capacity to develop into better leaders. Disagreement raised by

Avolio and Hannah (2008), is that not too high a degree of alignment should be factored into accelerating leadership development for organisations to maximise benefits.

Given the nature of the MBA Programme and the composition of students in various levels of managerial and executive leadership roles, a number of factors affect perception of the value of their experience and qualification. Whether they have achieved their learnings in becoming effective managers and the overall benefits gained, is implicit in their perception of the value of coaching (Sutherland & Carmichael, 2005).

Crossan et al. (2013) suggest that capabilities in self-awareness and reflection are what effective leaders need. In his contribution, Lawrence et al. (2018) added that leadership coaching accelerate MBA students' potential in leadership development.

2.5.1 **Authentic leadership**

Several authors have put forward the concept of authentic leadership and its related characteristics. The proposed characteristics refer to, amongst others, are self-awareness and transformational leadership (Eigel & Kuhnert, 2005). Qualities of a leader's character are generally seen in the authentic self (Sparrowe, 2005). What lies between own values and that which an organisation's leader should demonstrate, is a true test of authenticity.

According to Lee (2003), influencing acts which authentic leaders need to self-develop are grounded in self-awareness, confidence, creativity, empowerment, motivation and engagement with others. Pech (2013) further adds that knowing oneself better, and remaining true to self, gains credibility. From this it can be deduced that self-awareness is a key element linking values to understanding in leadership development for authenticity (Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016).

2.5.1.1 Reflection

Like in most coaching models, the increase of self-awareness, understanding of performance affecting behaviours, and stimulating reflection are the resultant factor of feedback and development planning, which ultimately influence and foster the desire to change (Carey, Philippon, & Cummings, 2011).

The conceptual model in Figure 2 depicts the integrative approach to developing leaders' potential, based on the context and framing of the present educational approach to teaching leadership (Lawrence et al., 2018).



Figure 2: Conceptual model: Developing the leader within through assessment, self-awareness, reflection and coaching (Lawrence et al., 2018, p. 637)

Cited by (Nesbit, 2012), a representation of the four stages in reflective analysis proposed by Daudelin is displayed in Figure 3. The model gives a clear account of the analysis process triggered by a challenging event or behaviour and the descriptions of stages involved. In the quest for clarity, an analysis of what and why there were such happenings, and what could have led to the reactions that takes place. The evaluation

stage involves reviewing the implications this trigger could have in the leader's development. At this stage, judgements are made from the insights drawn from the coaching engagement. This final stage defines or evaluates what needs to be done for the leaders' development (Nesbit, 2012).

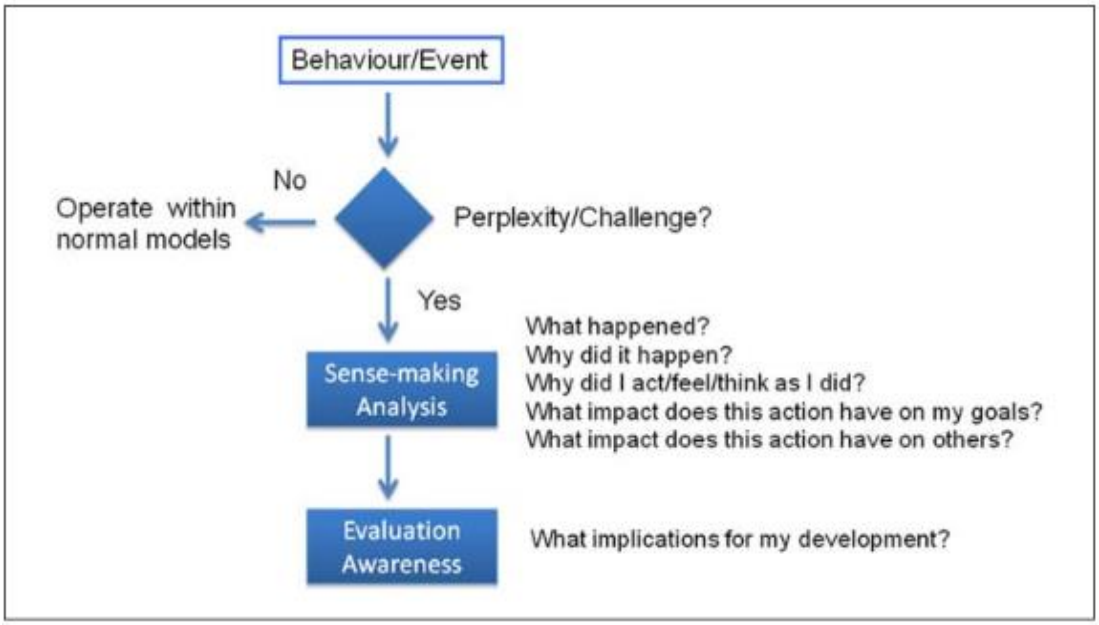


Figure 3: Reflective process by Daudelin cited by (Nesbit, 2012, p. 211)

2.5.1.2 Self development

Based on Mezirow's theory of perspective transformation, the use of transformative learning has also been found in reference to the general phenomenon for people's ways of changing dramatically (Hoggan & Chad, 2016). These changes refer to a resultant of processes brought about by the person's experiences, conceptualisation and interaction with the world.

Desire to change is at the heart of development in leadership, and for a person to change, they need to know what they want to maintain. A good sense of who you are, and having a clear set of goals, creates a blueprint for effective personal leadership development (Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016).

Assisting individuals to attain that next level of development are the positives found in coaching (Steiner et al., 2018). This is achieved by incorporating the Personal Leadership Development Plans in their coaching engagement. These tailored plans which can be in the form of journals, help students explore and establish clear and specific goals in greater depth and required steps to achieve the goals. Through self-analysis, insightful material is provided on how students view meaning and purpose of their development (Sutton, McFarland, Sanchez, & Vuyovich, 2012). By this, a sense of accountability and responsibility is instilled in a student. The ultimate hope is that the advancement of skills learnt for self-development will carry over into their lifetime learning (Brock, Roebuck, & Barrow, 2006).

2.5.1.3 Feedback

Change is the driving force behind development. Acknowledging own discrepancies and receiving accurate feedback from others motivates highly for change (Boyatzis, 2008). Being able to maintain clear sense of self during significant change, creates effective leadership development (Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016). Encompassed in the sense of self are ways in which learners experience change in self and in relation to others (Hoggan & Chad, 2016).

A profound articulation of new learnings about oneself, and in relation to others is found in Johari's Window Model by (Luft & Ingham, 1961). Based on four areas of focus, this feedback model represents information on experience, views, knowledge, feelings, intentions, motivations, skills in a person and in relation to groups. Figure 4 illustrates the four perceptions of the model, namely the area known to self and others, the hidden area that is known only to self but not to others, thirdly, the blind spot, which refers to information that others know of self, and finally details unknown to both self and others (Luft & Ingham, 1961).

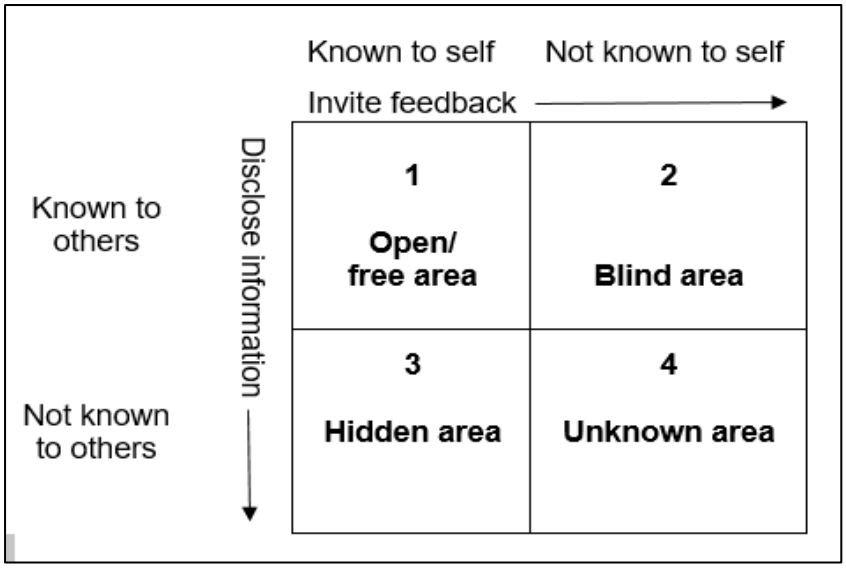


Figure 4: The Johari Window Model (Luft & Ingham, 1961, p. 1)

The sense of self encompasses ways in which the learners experience significant change in self and in relation to others, their sense of responsibility and social accountability, how they perceive life's meaning and purpose, and the ultimate change in their personality (Hoggan & Chad, 2016).

2.6 Awareness in identifying own leadership style

Campion (2018) maintains that a clear measure of effective leadership, is the ability to identify and understand one's own leadership style. Leadership coaching can be seen as a space for personal and practical journey. Figure 5 displays the personal and practical needs to be developed in order to create a personally distinctive and organisational attuned leadership style.



Figure 5: The personal and the practical journey (Lee, 2003, p. 17)

Gaining awareness and insight is deemed important for helping managers initiate changes which are important in their personal development coaching journey. The personal factors that need developing include identifying own aspirational goals, values examination, identification of feeling, doing, and thinking patterns in habits, and understanding how the history impacts unconsciously.

New behaviours on the other hand, are an explicit translation of practical implications of new learnings (Lee, 2003). The new behaviours include, exerting authority and influence through conflict management, relationship management, forming collaborations and networks, development and motivation of others, and understanding the potential contribution in the organisation.

Proposition 1

The proposition formed from the above study is that leadership coaching as a teaching and learning strategy, has value into developing an MBA student who is already at the top of their fields by empowering them into becoming an effective leader (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014; Steiner et al., 2018)

2.7 Leadership coaching as a support mechanism

According to Day et al. (2014), the difference between leadership development and management lies in the fact that developing leaders is geared towards building capacity in anticipation of unprecedented challenges. As alluded by Lyons (2000), leadership holds key to adapting in uncertain environment and creating value in the modern organisation. Leading a balanced life is a greatest challenge in the leader's life, and it takes discipline to be able to integrate personal and professional elements (George et al., 2007). More so for MBA students who are working professionals and faced with challenges of juggling between work and study roles. Aiming at deepened self-awareness, a supportive, one-on-one coaching partnership can help guide and develop the overall leader effectiveness of the coachee (Le Roux, 2018).

A key catalyst in affording guidance and a form of inspiration and support mechanism (Redshaw, 2000), coaching from a leadership perspective, could just be the management competency required to enhance the value of the qualification for leaders and managers. Lyons (2000) firmly believes that coaching aligned with development towards success leads to leadership. He goes on further to state that where leadership was already in existence, it could be reinforced, and hidden potential could be unlocked by coaching.

At the beginning of a relationship with a business school, students find themselves on a steep learning curve. A huge amount of time is demanded from these part-time or full-time attendance students to work through the different assessments, while trying to secure a balance with work demands. Little is known about the support coaching offers in helping students manage role conflicts, so much so, Le Roux (2018) has highly criticised academic interventions, for not supporting these working students enough to maintain the balance needed. With the inevitable conflicting changes in students' lives, there is a continuous need to resell the value of MBA programs (Gregg & Stewart, 2013). To address the conflicts arising from the students efforts, while ensuring a positive throughput rate in the allocated time of studies, a need for a safe and supportive space is met by coaching intervention (Le Roux, 2018; Lyons, 2000). A coaching intervention

that is able to provide a safe, and welcoming space for a coachee to be free to explore own weaknesses in an effort to improve or address balance conflicts during studies, maps the success of a coaching intervention (Hunt & Weintraub, 1999, 2004)

Coaching related activities that offers learning support, can be set within limited time limits (Hunt & Weintraub, 2004). Relationships that contribute to helping, supporting and guiding individuals through emergent moments, help sustain desired change and provide a sense of identity for individuals (Boyatzis, 2008). Derived from “Kocs”, a village in Hungary, coaching was a means of transporting passengers to their destination in a wheeled carriage, koczi (Stern, 2004). Having travelled many uses over the centuries, executive coaching has evolved to mean simply carrying an executive from one development level to the other (Stern, 2004).

Proposition 2

The second proposition formed from the above study is that the support obtained to maintain work-study balance is directly linked to the value of leadership coaching (Le Roux, 2018; Lyons, 2000; Redshaw, 2000; Rogers, 2004, 2012).

2.8 Conclusion

With the purpose of examining the perceptions of value derived from leadership coaching by MBA students, the key concepts in the literature review which informs this study are elaborated in this chapter.

The literature review first outlined the conceptual framework encompassed in the study. The literature on the background of leadership coaching was provided next. The section of the literature review that followed gave an account of the value of leadership coaching. The literature review on developing capacity to exercise leadership effectively was explored next. The contribution of leadership coaching on the MBA student’s creating awareness in identifying own leadership styles followed. The final section concluded with

exploring literature on leadership coaching as a supporting mechanism in maintaining balance between studies and work.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes methods in a qualitative study of understanding the MBA student's perception of leadership coaching. The chapter starts with a recap of the purpose of the study and research questions that the study seeks to answer. An explanation to the selection of the qualitative approach follows next. Also included in the chapter is an account on the sample selection, collection of data, methods of data analysis methods, together with ethical and trustworthiness consideration. The final section of the chapter looks at measures to be taken to mitigate against the possible limitations to the study.

The study's purpose was to explore the students' perceptions of the value of leadership coaching which they participated in, as part of their MBA curricula. Guiding this inquiry is the main research question: "What are the Wits MBA students' perceptions of the value of leadership coaching component in their curriculum?" The following two sub-questions support the main research question:

- What styles of leadership are addressed in the coaching sessions?

- How do coaching sessions create awareness in balancing the students' studies and professional lives?

To address the research question and cited literature arising from the propositions put forward, the qualitative method was used in this research.

3.1 Research approach

The qualitative approach was chosen for this study to clarify the nature of the problem to be solved, as it is generally less structured. The logical choice behind this approach was based on its ability to enable drawing of correct inferences to answer the why and what questions posed to the participants (Wahyuni, 2012). The qualitative approach was used

as it is deemed ideal for studying individuals' perceptions and interpretations defining their coaching engagement (Crowley, 1994) thereby enabling to further explore their motivations, behaviour, desires and needs (Tustin, Ligthelm, Martins, & Van Wyk, 2005). As opposed to the generalisation approach, this study gives preference to interacting and dialoguing with the students in order to gain their perceptions (Wahyuni, 2012).

The focus of qualitative research is on the meanings attributed to an experience by the students. The meanings are then interpreted by the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and data analysis. Reflected in the collective meanings attributed to the participants experience are the themes developed from the qualitative research (Kamal, 2019).

To convey the outcomes of the study, words instead of numbers are used in qualitative research. Taking the form of rich descriptions, words are used to convey the participants experience of a phenomenon. The multiple forms in which the rich descriptions are produced, include either or a combination of the sources, interviews, field notes, quotes from documents, and excerpts from videotapes (Kamal, 2019). The rich descriptions of perceptions of value from the participants interviews was incorporated in this study.

Underpinning this inquiry is the constructivist assumptions. Each of the following paragraphs include key and general research assumptions made by the constructivist worldview.

In the constructivist view, an understanding of the world we live and work is sought. Multiple and varied meanings directed at certain things and objects are developed (Creswell & Poth, 2016). The intent of the research as such relies on the view of the students of the situation being studied. The data in this study was gathered directly from MBA students who participated in the leadership coaching, while also in professional roles, thus experiencing effective leadership learning potential.

The second assumption of the constructivist view is that meanings are constructed by individuals as they engage and gain exposure to the world (Merriam & Grenier, 2019). Semi-structured interviews were therefore used, incorporating in-depth and probing questions to allow for open ended responses.

Thirdly, the constructivist view is that individuals construct meanings through their views, opinions, interpretation and perceptions formed from their experiences, (Merriam & Grenier, 2019) leading the researcher to adopt an exploratory approach.

3.2 **Research design**

The two layered study design attempts were to achieve the aims and objectives of the study, namely to explore MBA students' perceptions on value of leadership coaching on their development as effective leaders and as a support mechanism to help them balance their study and professional lives. The exploratory study design adopted involved in-depth interviews with twelve MBA students, coached during 2017 and 2019 academic years. The anticipated length of the relatively semi-structured interview session was thirty minutes, and the interviews ranged from twenty to thirty-seven minutes. Several key questions were engaged to allow the interviewer to pursue ideas and the interviewee to diverge (Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). Semi-structured questions were used to probe for greater insight and detail in the one-on-one focus with the students, thereby linking specific responses directly to an individual (Tustin et al., 2005). The disadvantages are that the data generated by the qualitative research are in most cases difficult to quantify (Tustin et al., 2005).

The following section details the criteria followed in selecting the population and sample for this study.

3.3 Population and sample

Based on wanting to understand and explore, the study students were therefore selected from which information could be gained. For purposeful sampling, the decisions were based on three considerations. First is the decision taken on the select study sample, second the sample size to be studied, and thirdly the sampling form to be used (Creswell & Poth, 2016).

3.3.1 Population

A group from which the sample was drawn consists of 900 MBA students, coached during 2017 and 2019 academic periods. The population included students from different cohorts, namely Fulltime, Modular or Block Release intake, Part-time offering weekday evenings and Saturday attendance options. The different intakes attracted students still seeking employ, to students holding high echelon positions in their organisation, wishing to obtain a management qualification.

3.3.2 Sample and sampling method

For this study, twelve samples were used for data collection. The participants were from four MBA cohorts, namely Full-time, Block Release and Part-time Weekday evenings and Part-time Saturdays. From across a selection of different racial groups, a combination of female and male participants was selected. The subjects were MBA students coached during 2017 and 2019 academic years. Further attributes qualifying them for the study were that they must have participated in coaching sessions under the auspices of the Leadership Development Programme, and had a minimum period of three years managerial experience, at the time of study. No MBA candidates falling outside 2017 and 2019 years of being coached were used for the study. The sample consisted of students who had either successfully graduated, or in the final stages of completing their qualification. The university database files were utilised to randomly draw samples.

The driving factor for this research was to explore individual's perceptions. According to Marshall (1996), consideration needs to be given to a sample that is adequate and appropriate enough to respond to research questions. For this study, the sample range was kept at twelve to avoid the interviewer from being overwhelmed with data (Robinson, 2014).

Using the convenience sample method, selection involved subjects accessible from the existing university file records. Convenient cases of those matching criteria were located from the student database (Robinson, 2014). Those meeting the criteria were emailed invitations for their participation in the research. Online interviews were arranged with the selected, on a first come, first served basis responses, until the sample size quotient of 12 was reached (Robinson, 2014).

The disadvantage of a small sample size is its ability to generalise the results (Tustin et al., 2005). In order to gain the students perceptions, the study gives preference to interaction and dialogue. (Wahyuni, 2012).

A compiled profile structure of the participants is illustrated in Table 2. The profile information indicates class attendance option, gender, designation, years of managerial experience and age groups. From a sample of twelve students, the gender distribution consisted of 4 males and 8 females, the years of managerial experience of the twelve students in this study ranged from three to nine years. The youngest of the participants was 29 years, with the eldest at over 38 years of age.

Table 2: Profile of participants

Unit of analysis	Age (years)	Gender	Total years of work experience	Position at enrolment	Current Position	Year of enrolment	Cohort	Progress status	Race
Participant 1	43	Female	7	Risk Manager	Head of Risk & Compliance	2017	Part Time Saturday	Completed 2018	Black
Participant 2	35	Male	4	Manager	Program Manager	2018	Part Time Saturday	Completed 2019	Black
Participant 3	29	Female	3	Implementation Coach	Recruitment Manager/Exec Assistant	2019	Part Time Saturday	Completed 2020	Black
Participant 4	33	Female	9	Speech therapist and Lecturer	Speech therapist and Lecturer	2019	Block Release	Final year	Indian
Participant 5	31	Male	7	Technical director	Technical Director	2019	Part Time Weekday	Final year	Indian
Participant 6	36	Female	8	Research Manager	Marketing Specialist	2018	Part Time Weekday	Completed 2020	Black

Unit of analysis	Age (years)	Gender	Total years of work experience	Position at enrolment	Current Position	Year of enrolment	Cohort	Progress status	Race
Participant 7	37	Male	3	Business Development Manager	Business Development Lead	2017	Part Time Saturday	Completed 2018	Black
Participant 8	48	Female	5	Client Service Manager	Client Services Manager	2019	Part Time Weekday	Final year	Black
Participant 9	37	Female	8	Project Development Manager	Project Development Manager	2019	Fulltime	Completed 2020	Black
Participant 10	32	Female	6	Transactional Sales Manager, Industrial Sector	Transactional Sales Manager	2017	Part Time Saturday	Graduated	Black
Participant 11	42	Male	8	Operational Risk Head: Private Banking	Operational Risk Head – Fraud/Crime	2018	Fulltime	Completed 2019	White
Participant 12	47	Female	14	Programme Manager	Executive Education Manager	2017	Part Time Saturday	Completed 2020	Indian

Sourcing the participants entailed sending an email with a letter introducing the interviewer and clearly articulating the aims and the research purpose, in appendix E. Also highlighted in the letter were terms and conditions of the interview and the data to be collected. The participants were asked for their consent to take part in the research interviews, and assured of anonymity protection as advised by Robinson (2014).

3.4 The research instrument

To collect information that will resolve the research problem, the qualitative questionnaire was designed based on the research questions and response options (Tustin et al., 2005). Proven to have captured the essence of the student's coaching experiences, the open ended questions in a study from Steiner et al. (2018) was incorporated in the questionnaire for this study. The conjoint questionnaire involved semi-structured questioning aspects, to make provision for open ended responses. A hybrid of open ended and probing questions were used to gain deeper understanding on the topic, (Wahyuni, 2012). In order to enable the interviewer to pursue detailed responses and ideas, several key depth questions were engaged (Gill et al., 2008). To explore core themes, ideas and unexpected thoughts arising out of the interview, follow-up questions were developed (Wahyuni, 2012).

To address the research questions, the questionnaire aid had each a research theme encompassing the following points:

i. **Attributes** of the coaching program designed to contribute to the student leadership development
ii. **Actions** involved with the coaching intervention
iii. **Outcomes -** How and in what ways were the student's leadership development enhanced as a result of the program attributes and actions?

To check the questions against any wording that might lead to predetermined response, a peer with surmountable experience in conducting interviews was sourced as an observer as guided by Wahyuni (2012). The participants were informed of the presence of an observer at commencement of the interview and confidentiality was emphasised with the observer.

In alignment with the research questions, literature and theoretical framework, illustrated in Appendix A is a copy of the questionnaire aid used in this study. With the perceptions of value driving the nature and flow of questions, the qualitative questionnaire included four sections. In section one, the questionnaire depicts the biographical data, while the second section addresses coaching program attributes, actions engaged in the program in the third section, and the last section solicits the value found in the coaching engagement as the coaching outcome.

3.5 Data collection methods

This section describes and justifies methods, processes and resources engaged in collecting data for this study. The qualitative research data was collected and analysed by the researcher, and not through a statistical program or a survey.

To afford the participants flexibility in sharing their stories, experiences and perceptions from their coaching sessions, in-depth interviews were facilitated (Tustin et al., 2005; Wahyuni, 2012). The online recordings which formed the integral part of the data analysis, were transcribed after the interviews and the data was later analysed. The analysis process followed an interactive process of back-and-forth movements of data and codes comparison.

3.6 Procedure for data collection

One-on-one Interviews were conducted to obtain information and ideas from the participants about their experiences (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In adherence to health risk

measures implemented by the declared Covid 19 pandemic on 12 March 2020 (Ciotti et al., 2020), students were invited to participate in one-on-one online discussion. Virtual meetings were conducted using digital collaboration tools rather than person to person, due to lockdown restrictions.

An email request with an attached letter as in Appendix E, was sent to twelve potential participants to establish availability or willingness to participate in a thirty-minute online session. Two samples from the 2017 MBA Block Release class were found to have gone through peer coaching experience instead of one-on-one coaching. To make up for this incorrect sample which was excluded from participation in the study, further additions were made to the list of select participants (Tustin et al., 2005). Minor problems were encountered from non-responses or unavailability of selected participants. An alternate list was drawn from the database and a schedule of interviews offering alternative dates and times was presented to the participants to indicate their best suitable option.

Prior to data collection, a mock interview using a pre-test interview schedule was piloted on two students (Wiid & Diggines, 2009). The students used for the pilot study consisted of a male black Financial Analyst student, with eleven years managerial experience from the 2019 fulltime class, and a female white Managing Director with three years managerial experience from the 2017 part-time class. The objective was to establish if the interview schedule is clear and understandable, and if the questionnaire is conversational and had a natural flow. The results of the pilot research were not included in the study. Slight changes to expressions or words were incorporated to the questionnaire (Gill et al., 2008).

Permission to record was requested, and the interviewer typed notes during each interview to capture ideas, thoughts and observations from the interview. After conclusion of each interview, debriefing with the observer took place, followed by editing of the completed questionnaire. This ensured that answers to all the questions have been captured (Tustin et al., 2005). Recordings were transcribed using Atlas ti transcription software. To ensure accuracy, the interviewer verified transcriptions of the recorded interviews from MS Streams and Atlas ti against the typed notes (Wahyuni, 2012).

The following section details the criteria followed in selecting the population and sample for this study.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

Detailed in this section are the decisions and actions taken against the preparation and organisation of data (Creswell & Poth, 2016). For proper management of the qualitative text data, transcript copies, interview notes and online video recordings have been stored on a computer with limited access only to the interviewer (Wahyuni, 2012).

In order to protect against bias and provide a permanent record of what was said and not, two text conversion software were used to transcribe interview audio into typed text (Gill et al., 2008). MS Streams and the Atlas ti software featuring an audio text editor, transcribed and offered flexible exports.

Due to the sensitivity around disclosing identifications, and for ethics consideration, the unique coding, Participant (P1) was used for data analysis (Wahyuni, 2012). Names of the students were replaced with pseudonyms to preserve confidentiality.

From the study's theoretical framework, the thematic analysis research principles and techniques were adopted in this report. The thematic method is defined as an identifying method, which analyses and reports patterns from data (Clarke & Braun, 2017). The detailed inductive research analysis method allowed common themes and concepts to be derived from the gathered information. An active role was played by the researcher in the identification and selection of these themes or patterns through the whole data set process analysis. For Clarke and Braun (2013), conducting thematic analysis involves a six-phase framework, depicted in Table 3.

Table 3: Thematic analysis framework

Stage	Process
Step 1	Become familiar with the data
Step 2	Generate initial codes
Step 3	Search for themes
Step 4	Review themes
Step 5	Define themes
Step 6	Write-up

The transcription phase involves immersing and familiarising oneself with the data, taking notes of any potential patterns and points of interest (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The data was interpreted, coded and categorised into themes which are a reflection of the students' perceptions. The preconceived patterns or relationships were noted, constantly analysed and compared. The data analysis process for this study employed the following approach:

i. After each interview was completed, the data was organised and filed. Data collected from each student was read through, in order to familiarise with the student. The next step included transcription of the interview recordings to provide an easily accessible and analysed data set. Transcriptions on both Atlas ti software and MS Streams were compared against one another, and any missing information was incorporated into one final draft.

ii. As the second step, codes were generated from field notes and the interview transcripts in this study. Word processing coding format was used, and line by line coding from each transcript was transferred into an Ms Word document.

iii. In the third step, statements conveying the same meaning were grouped together. In the case of outlier themes, these were categorised according to the nearest

matching content relevance. The number of times a specific code appeared was noted using the student number as reference.

iv. The fourth step involved translating coded sections into categories. This step involved extensive cross tabulation, with codes undergoing manipulation to test various interpretation of data. Not all information was used, the information which was not used will be discarded (Creswell & Poth, 2016). For categorisation, elements of the study's conceptual model (content, process and outcome) were used as organising principles.

v. Following next, themes were translated from categories. Both pre-empted and emerging themes where revised and after a thorough analysis, six themes with sub-themes were consolidated. Uncovered in the first two themes was introspection and self-awareness, which were the focal points. The themes which related to the process were self-development and feedback and learnings. Catalogued in the last two themes were effective leadership traits which also encompassed empowerment of others and lastly, managing balance effectively.

vi. Referred to "making sense of the data" (Creswell & Poth, 2016, p. 154), the interpretation of data involved was guided by intuition, impressions and insights gained. Careful to not lose focus of the research question and sub-questions, it took a back-and-forth process of review and revision to finalise the themes.

Consistency between the research components characterise a good research report. It is imperative to present a report which bears clear alignment of the various research components (Newman & Covrig, 2013). To ensure coherence, Consistency Table 4 is used to illustrate the research questions and propositions alignment with collecting and analysing data.

Table 4: Consistency table: research questions and propositions

RQ #	Research Question	Prop #	State Proposition
1.	What are the Wits MBA students' perceptions of the value of leadership coaching component in their curriculum	1	The value of leadership coaching as a teaching and learning strategy, is in developing an MBA student who is already at the top of their fields. For their learning and development and performance improvement, the students are empowered to take ownership and responsibility into becoming effective leaders. (R. Boyatzis & Saatcioglu, 2008; Crossan et al., 2013; Hunt & Weintraub, 2004; Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014; Lawrence et al., 2018; Palmer & Whybrow, 2014; Steiner et al., 2018; Witherspoon et al., 1997; Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016)
1.1	What styles of leadership are addressed in the coaching sessions?		Effective leadership is measured by clear understanding and identification of own leadership style (Campion, 2018)
1.2	How do coaching sessions create awareness of balancing the students' studies and professional lives?	2	Students are empowered to take ownership and responsibility into becoming effective leaders. Leadership coaching effectiveness is linked with the intervention as a supporting framework to maintain life balance (Hunt & Weintraub, 2004; Le Roux, 2018; Lyons, 2000; Redshaw, 2000)

3.8 Limitations of the study

- Due to the nature of the qualitative **methodology**, there is potential to express judgements based on personal value approach from which it deems difficult to draw any general conclusions collectively (Tustin et al., 2005). A skilled interviewer was sourced to oversee the interviewing process so as to avoid misinterpretation or misunderstanding by the interviewer, which could negatively affect the research results (Wiid & Diggines, 2009).

- The disadvantage to convenience sampling method is that though easily accessible with less effort and at least cost, this may result in poor quality data and lacks intellectual credibility (Marshall, 1996). Further qualitative studies across other universities will need to be conducted to ensure the representativeness and generalisability of the research findings.

- The critical limitations to the online platform was the missed opportunity to see full body movements and full facial expressions (Guercini, 2014).

- Disruptive network connections and background noises experienced during some of the interviews affected the study. Recordings from MS Teams, the transcriptions from Atlas ti software and MS Streams together with notes taken by the interviewer were used and compared to fill up any missing details. The disturbing behaviour during data collection was when some interviewees were not able to remember some of the details from their coaching experience. Despite some students wanting to refer to notes rather than speaking from the heart, other valuable information was still shared to the study (Anyan, 2013).

- In order to minimise biases from both researcher and the participant, the interviewing funnel approach was adopted by the researcher. The questions were presented in an unbiased manner, by gaining mutual trust and re-enhancing sense of rapport at the start of the interview. Relying on the relationships built with the MBA students as their

Programme Coordinator also enabled gaining access to the interviewee's private and intimate experiences (Anyan, 2013).

3.9 Trustworthiness

It is imperative for qualitative study to maintain a reputable standard by being believable and accurate (Eich, 2008). With its emphasis on uniqueness and contexts, qualitative research operation domain resides in producing credible knowledge and understanding (Wahyuni, 2012). The criteria that qualitative rigor of trustworthiness offers lies in whether the qualitative study have transferability, credibility, whether dependability has been established, and there is confirmability of the findings. As explained by Wahyuni (2012), validity deals with the accurate reflection of the social phenomenon, while validity deals with the measurement consistency.

Using semi-structured questions, one-on-one interviews with twelve MBA students were conducted. The in-depth interview sessions took twenty to thirty-seven minutes. From the first fieldwork exercise, it took a period of three months to have twelve developed set of field notes comprising of 112 pages.

The online interviews which included recordings with the consent of the students were conducted using MS Teams. To transcribe recordings into typed text, MS Streams transcription was first used, and to ensure transcript accuracy a more reliable transcription Atlas ti software was incorporated. The two transcriptions were used in conjunction with field notes from the researcher to compare against any discrepancies. The analysis process which took a period of four weeks followed an interactive process of back-and-forth movements of data and codes comparison.

3.9.1 Transferability

The rich description of the context, provided in the chapter section of sample selection, makes it possible to apply qualitative study in a different setting. With some setting

adjustments, the research findings drawn from this study can offer a fair amount of applicability into other different industry studies (Wahyuni, 2012). To enhance transferability, the context of the study in Chapter 1 provides a detailed explanation of research sites and characteristics of the organisation in this case study.

3.9.2 **Credibility**

To maximise the validity of the coding process, consideration was given to the careful selection of the case organisation. Expertise was sought amongst colleagues experienced in qualitative analysis of data, to help recognise accuracy in the interpretations of the students' experiences (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). A peer with surmountable experience in conducting interviews was sourced, to check the questions against any wording that might lead to predetermined responses. The peer debriefing was also useful in the themes analysis stage, where viable information was shared, which was initially overlooked by the researcher (Wahyuni, 2012).

3.9.3 **Dependability**

To help achieve and enhance dependability for future research, the detailed research design and process is provided. Although not necessarily targeted at obtaining the same results, the list of interview questions used to gather data is also provided to help achieve and enhance dependability for future research in a similar research framework, (Wahyuni, 2012).

3.9.4 **Confirmability**

To enhance confirmability of the findings, the records of students' transcripts and interview recordings have been carefully stored. In the case of an audit trail, these parts of the research working book will be availed to confirm that the results are a reflection of the students experiences and understandings and not the researcher's own preferences (Wahyuni, 2012).

3.10 Ethical considerations

To address any concerns which could have arisen from the students about information confidentiality and identification disclosure, pseudonyms have been used as identifiers. At commencement of the interview, the participants were informed of the presence of an observer. They were assured that the interview details will be held in confidence, and only disclosed with their consent.

Consent to use and disclose the name of the institution was sought and granted from the Head of School (see Appendix B). In adhering to the ethics clearance processes, following the title approval from the Post Graduate Committee, the new detailed WBS ethics form was submitted, and clearance from the Ethics Committee was obtained before beginning to collect data, as in Appendix E.

Conclusion

The research methodology was described in this chapter for the qualitative study investigating MBA students' perceptions of value of leadership coaching. Outlined in the chapter was the study's purpose and research question driving the study. The research approach followed. The overall research design methods adopted, the data collection methods and tools used to analyse data were detailed. An overview of the population and sample chosen was given. Details on the research instrument used was also provided and the procedure taken for data collection was also explained. The motivation for engaging these chosen methods has also been provided.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This section outlines and presents the research findings on MBA students' perceptions of the value of leadership coaching which formed part of their Leadership Development Programme. To gain an understanding of the students' perceptions, 12 semi-structured interviews were carried out with MBA students across the different cohorts, namely Fulltime, Part time and Block Release. In order to protect the identity of the students, the 12 interviews are reported as Participants 1 to 12. Using the actual words and expressions, the quotations from particular students were reported directly from their transcripts (Morrow, 2005). All the direct quotes from the transcripts are displayed in italics.

The purpose of the study is to explore the perceptions of value of leadership coaching by MBA students. The central question addressed by the study is: What are the WBS MBA students' perceptions of the value of leadership coaching component in their curriculum? The two related sub-questions that help to answer the main question are:

1. What styles of leadership are addressed in the coaching sessions?
2. How do coaching sessions create awareness in balancing the students' studies and professional lives?

The aim was to show that value cannot be separated from the timing of the leadership coaching. The timing of when the leadership coaching is placed in the curricula, and how the pacing thereof, might enhance the value of leadership coaching.

Seven themes were preconceived from the study. The link was first found between the first two themes, how MBA students understand self through

introspection and awareness. The third was self-development for effective development as leaders. Fourth was learnings derived from feedback received. The fifth theme was effective leadership traits which also encompassed "empowerment of others" theme. The sixth was effectively managing balance, and the seventh and final theme, was coaching ineffectiveness.

4.2 Findings pertaining to the WBS MBA students' perceptions of the value of leadership coaching component

4.2.1 Introspection

Described independently by two of the participants as an ability to look inwardly and tapping into aspirations, introspection was a common theme among five of the students, from the findings. The reporting indicated that leadership coaching as a soft skill learning tool was to focus on the person at a deeper introspection level. The participants also shared that the idea was to acknowledge, understand and improve on their weaker leadership capacities, by capitalising on their strong points. Participant 7 shared the following in response:

"It was mostly to give visibility around me as a person … we hardly focus on a person…a deeper introspection around who you are, where your shortcomings are, where your strong points are, and how you need to find balance between the two." (Participant 7)

4.2.2 Reflection space

Six of the participants articulated that, for them, having the space to reflect, engage and converse with someone about their coaching experiences was what the coaching offered. Participant 11 commented:

"In a safe space to sit and talk about the experience and whether it worked or not and whether there's anything learnings from it." (Participant 11)

Of the six, one participant's account of what reflection meant for him was that it was to have the space to reflect on important life matters. Reflection was described as time spent on taking account of important aspects of his life, and how everything will work out in the end:

"Sit back and take stock of what type of person I am and what I think I hold dear in my life and those I hold dear – and how that will translate post finishing MBA." (Participant 2)

Two of the six participants shared the same appreciation in having someone they could rely and count on for ideas. Someone that kept them accountable and instilled that sense of responsibility was what stood out from their coaching experience. One of the responses were:

"Having someone as a sounding board to discuss things with; Having a conversation with a friend rather than someone who is actually able to give you some really valuable experience." (Participant 5)

A different perspective shared by one of the students was that it served as both a coaching and mentoring space. She went further to add that the coaching programme grounded her, cemented on the positives, and offered her that space to reflect on her rights and wrongs. Amused at herself, she admitted, however that she might have gone to an extent of taking advantage of the coaching programme. According to participant 9,

"She allowed me to be myself a bit too much; I felt like I am almost abusing the coaching programme. I was starting to lose my own sense; served as both

coaching and mentoring; I want to reflect on what was going wrong and what was going right." (Participant 9)

4.2.3 **Self-development**

When it comes to leadership coaching and the students' development, the evidence points to taking ownership and responsibility for own performance improvement. Two of the responses shared were that the program helped fill self-development skills gaps. Whilst they were equipped and directed to knowledge path, some sense of responsibility was instilled, with some accountability to the goals initially set. For two of the twelve participants, this was attributed to the coaching program that both increased and created self-awareness, in order to achieve their developmental goals into becoming better and well-rounded leaders.

Three participants' interviews drew positive impressions held about their developmental goals having been attained. Two of the participants confirmed they had progressed into senior leadership roles whilst they were still going through the program.

For one participant, what was profound was being able to achieve what she envisioned goals beyond her achievement levels,

"I know I'm definitely not sitting where I thought I would be sitting at that time, so it is possible… Definitely with the coaching, she challenged me to think beyond the boundaries that I had put up for myself." (Participant 12)

Participant 8 articulated that one of the developmental areas was evident in their work ethic, which they remarked had changed drastically from their last performance review. The developed trait was to have trust in people around them to be able to produce desired results. The comment was,

“The other thing is letting go and trusting the people around me, allowing them to grow and that they can only to empower them and let go of some of the things that I may hold on to. I'm a driver. I drive for performance at the same time.” (Participant 8)

Participant 6 who admittedly shared the same trait of being a perfectionist, mentioned that her development in trusting others fully to execute tasks, was extended to remaining as a support and to set clear direction and provide all the guidance needed. The participant reported that other areas that were prominent in her developmental process were confidence gained, better communication skills, understanding how to approach others and general teamwork skills. In her contribution, the participant added,

“I have learnt that I’m not Superwoman…It's actually the communication, which is important as well…Encouraging people to make decisions. And I think the last thing we should have is about setting the direction…Ability to build trust, to lead by example.” (Participant 6)

As part of their development journey, four participants who initially struggled with enforcing people due to their rational nature, mentioned that they had since learnt to be forthright, and adopting a more deliberate and directness in their approach. Participant 5 mused,

“Am becoming more direct, an attribute I am learning and developing as part of my journey. I'm much more deliberate in the way I act - I've taken more of a leadership stance.” (Participant 5)

For one of the four participants, the developments noticeable in his instance, were confidence gained, and ability to engage others,

“A lot of people said that they could see that I am lot more confident and a lot more engaging, which I think is the thing that I struggled with and that maybe the whole MBA program in its totality, because I think you learn a lot about yourself, but the coaching definitely played a big part in that development.” (Participant 11)

What was important for another participant, was alignment of who they are, and what they want to be or need in the transformational process.

“I think the challenge is how to be confrontational and where necessary, even disciplinarian, but not lose who I am in that process. Well, to be able to align it to the person I want to be and the person that I am is a challenge.” (Participant 12)

4.2.4 **Developmental plans**

Self-assessment plans formed part of an approach that helped the students to focus on leadership development throughout their MBA program and beyond. The findings include responses from three participants who maintain that their sessions incorporated plans which assisted in their self-assessment. For one of the participant’s development plan, this entailed leadership skills sets that they would have identified as key skills to work on.

“The understanding was that we needed to do after having worked through the workbook and having put together the initial brief around our career management area, is to identify one or two topics of our leadership skill set that we want to work with and build a sort of development plan for it.” (Participant 11)

These goal setting homework activities also took the form of practical exercises which they had to work out in between sessions.

“Exercises or practical things to go and do between coaching sessions that forced me out of my comfort zone.” (Participant 11)

Uncomfortable as the exercises where, for two of the participants, there was a noticeable shift change in perspectives, which further helped them to learn further about themselves.

"What I walked away with is self-authorisation… that you don't have to be technically proficient in every single topic to engage the people on it." (Participant 11)

4.2.5 **Feedback**

Included as a source of measuring outcome was feedback and the learnings that came out of it. Six of the participants reported to have received feedback on their behavioural changes or developments.

According to one of the twelve participants, the feedback received has helped them to be more structured in their thinking, and most profound to give feedback to those they work with.

"One of the things was the ability to structure my thinking and actually give feedback to the people I'm dealing with." (Participant 2)

The findings also show four of the participants having not received any feedback from their coaching experiences. One of the participants who did not receive feedback, interjected,

"So, lot of the time, I mean, we just go down a path, discuss a little bit about our leadership, but there wasn't any sort of impactful feedback." (Participant 5)

4.2.6 **Learnings**

The learnings that came out of the coaching process were ability to trust others, developing and maintaining relationship with others and having good listening skills.

i) Trust

Recognised by two participants was the importance of entrusting others with responsibilities they otherwise would have preferred to carry out themselves. This also came with being able to let go of some of the inhibiting habits of holding on due to high expectations they generally have. Participant 8 admitted,

"Letting go of something that I may hold on to, and trusting the people around me." (Participant 8)

To the one participant, one profound realisation was to be able to see the effect that entrusting others had on her success as a leader,

"People start embracing you in the process once they start realising that you are trusting them more." (Participant 8)

ii) Relationship with others

Of the key learnings from six participants was collaboration and working with others. The six participants acknowledged that they needed to have better understanding and interaction with other people. The key elements highlighted in their responses, where acknowledging people around them, understanding other people's environments, the need to be considerate of other people, being tolerant of others, and being able to manage expectations.

Of the six participants, one highlighted an interesting aspect which had been influenced by her upbringing and that was not to maintain eye contact when engaging with older people as a sign of respect. She had come to terms with the change in behaviour, and is still in working progress.

"Need to work on looking at people in the eyes, to show some sort of interest." (Participant 3)

iii) Listening skills

One of the key learnings for two participants was adopting good listening skills. What was important for the first participant was opening up to what others have to say, while for the second participant, to inspect and ensure that she hears correctly what the other person is communicating and not making any assumptions.

"make sure that I am hearing what the person is actually saying … not making up something in my head." (Participant 4)

"I need to be more open to hear what people have to say." (Participant 8)

4.2.7 Effective leadership traits

The main purpose was to highlight the patterns of responses related to the perception of value of leadership coaching by MBA students, by identifying the styles of leadership which were addressed in the coaching sessions.

Two participants from this study felt that self-awareness was a way that leadership coaching creates the ability to pinpoint their own individual style of leadership, within the various types that exists. Shared by one of the participants,

the importance was to find balance in the leadership styles. The second participant expressed the need to constantly build and develop on the style of leadership one identified themselves with.

“The coaching was to highlight those types of leadership and see which one is best, and how you can improve.” (Participant 9)

i) Combination of leadership styles

A mix of leadership styles in this study emerged strongly in the findings as one of the identified styles. According to one participant’s realization, was that one could benefit at looking at other styles of leadership. Three participants described themselves as a mix or a combination of the various leadership style attributes. One of whom indicated that they were able to switch between the different leadership styles, namely motivational, coaching, mentorship, transformational and spiritual.

“I am a mixture of all the leaders - I managed to jump between all the leadership styles.” (Participant 4)

The second participant to consider themselves a mixture of leadership, mentioned that the process has been a learning curve. “It is all in the trust and setting clear direction for others to follow”, she said. The traits that the participant felt best described her, were amongst others, self-critique and a half-finisher who gets bored easily. In her comments she stated,

“I think I'm a mixed, right, so I definitely like being in control. I mean, what's happening and etc., but I guess because I also like to be over there, I let people take charge of things. Yeah. So, I think I trust people to run with something, but I must also still show some sort of a direction to say this is where we're going.” (Participant 3)

ii) Visionary leadership

The findings show that two participants regarded themselves as visionary leaders. One of the participants articulated his visionary leadership style based on ensuring the followers are clear and comfortable with the vision.

"Sometimes as a leader I think about what needs to happen, team needs to understand what we are trying to get to, vision to be communicated clearly. Trying to get buy in, always have an expectation, they must be comfortable to report that it will not work, and try to convince, if people are not performing ability to tell them to assist with meeting expectations." (*Participant 2)*

For the other participant, visionary leadership is still an attribute they aspire for. The participant admitted that it is a developmental process, of which lots of changes still need to be made.

"I see myself as being a visionary leader, but because of my people skills and even in terms of how I work, there's a lot of adjustments that need to be done." (Participant 10)

iii) Coaching/Mentorship/Motivational/Spiritual leadership

Coaching style, as one of the identified leading styles, also encompass names such as mentorship, motivational and spiritual. Two participants described this least often used coaching style, as their leadership style. This was due to their passion in mentoring, motivating and encouraging others.

"Predominantly it's a coaching style. Um, I coach a lot and it also fits into sort of my personality and how I am a lot of leadership through sort of, you know, teamwork and that sort of thing." (Participant 5)

iv) Collaborative leadership

Collaborative leadership or working with others is the second of the ten styles to be identified within the study. From the twelve participants, one male reported their developed management style to be that of collaborative way of leading, which included connecting emotionally with their staff.

"So, I believe in collective leadership very strongly. I see myself as someone who is transformational leader, I look at people how I can help them grow and develop themselves. Nurturing element of leadership style. Collaborative individual." (Participant 11)

v) Democratic leadership

The democratic leadership style was the fourth style to be identified with by the participants. From the findings, it can be deduced that three participants had democratic style attributes. One of the three participants mentioned that it was due to their open nature of wanting to hear people talk, and taking particular interest in people and their development. This particular participant further reported to even had a people analysing trait, being picked from one of her psychometric test results, where they were asked if they were an industrial psychologist,

"Empathetic, democratic I'm just open. I want to hear people talk about what they want to implement and also when I help them." (Participant 1)

A male member from the three participants, declared that transforming into a democratic leader was part of his development into being an effective leader. He mentioned that some of the key learnings has been to extend himself with rigor and sternness, and not shy away from confronting issues. His desire is to be able

to articulate himself strong enough, without being cautious when he needs to see through tough conversations. His comments were,

“I have learnt that I am not an assertive person, I have to step of what I am. I am required to be a democratic leader, exercise authority, step comfortably without thinking twice” …I always think of the relationship after the tough conversation to a point where I don't extend myself in really articulating myself in a certain manner within it to have conversation. Right. So, for me that was a key learning to say, you know, I need to be able to distinguish between it being personal and business and not let the two, you know, cloud each other if there has to be a difficult conversation that needs to be had.” (Participant 7)

vi) Empathetic leadership

Being empathetic to others formed part of the leadership traits found in the participants. Of the eight female participants, three identified themselves as empathetic leaders. For one of the participants, this came as recognition that she is still a work in progress. Self-labelled as generally quite strict, and a high-performance driver, the participant stated that theirs were still a continuous journey, where they were learning to be considerate of others, by being open to listen, and ultimately treating others in a fair manner. The participant further stated the realisation that by trusting people more, they start to embrace you. The comments made by the participant were,

“I need to be able to be open and almost hear people so that I'm able to treat people in a fair way and be good when, you know, when you're strict, while you expect certain things and you expect a certain level of performance. But that doesn't mean that you need to be mean in any way. You need to be considerate of other people.” (Participant 8)

Of the two participants with attributes of mixed leadership styles, declared outright that she was not the most empathetic leaders. In contradiction with the typical stereotype expectations on women's tendency to adopt lesser of directive or autocratic style than men (Eagly & Johnson, 1990), she stated:

I'm definitely not the most empathetic leader and it's a problem when you see me and people just think you want to be sympathetic about everything and then they start testing your femaleness." (Participant 3)

vii) Servant leadership

This engagement style of leading emerged as one of the styles of leadership the students could identify with. The findings indicate that two participants had servant leadership traits. According to one of the participants, the biggest thrill they derive is from encouraging others to develop. Engaging with others even after their departure is a major fulfilment, she added on to say,

"So just within my team of being able to encourage development of my team and realizing that I actually thrive on that and I actually don't. I lose interest if I don't feel that my staff are doing self-development and it's been nice to actually see some of my staff who have left to continue to engage with me on a mentorship level, that is that has been quite nice." (Participant 12)

Resembling those of community leaderships in African villages, the attributes of servant leadership are categorised as functional and accompanying.

Driven by passion to help young girls back in her hometown, Participant 9 shared that what she probably needed was just a nudge in the positive direction. She disclosed in her statement,

"Positive push: In the process of helping young girls with education, access to information about HIV, tutoring, offering academic support to different mind." (Participant 9)

viii) Sympathetic

Declared herself as a mix of leadership, and not the most empathetic leader ever, the leadership traits for Participant 3 included sympathetic leadership. Raising a very interesting point, the participant felt that this attribute, which is mostly confused and mistaken, someone with this attribute could easily be taken advantage of:

"I think I am still sympathetic…We need to draw a line to be like to what level can you be sympathetic." (Participant 3)

ix) Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership that encompasses an element of empowerment to others was the leadership style to be identified with. Exhibiting traits of a transformational leader were Participant 6 and 11. Participant 11 mentioned that their transformational leadership traits arise from the fact that they are generally a nurturer at heart, and also because they like to see people develop from one position to the next. For participant 6, they believe in adding value in someone else life, and giving them all the support needed to succeed in next roles as part of a succession plan. Noticeably, the purpose is served in the level of confidence instilled in others, leading them to being equipped to be leaders. The participant stated,

Encouraging people to make decisions; setting direction; lead by example; ability to trust; relationship management; teamwork; working together; Like to empower people even in terms of how creative they are in asking questions or coming up

with presentations; make sure that someone owns that piece of work; I would like to ensure that the teams and run with their presentations and I just up in for support; Build confidence. So, I consciously try to make sure that I'm grooming to take over from me." (Participant 6)

x) Situational leadership

The findings from three participants indicated they ascribed to the flexible leadership traits, namely situational leadership. From articulation of two of the participants, leadership style needs to adjust to suit different and changing situations, depending on where one is at, and learning when the required reaction is needed to suit that particular situation.

"Learning about when different styles of leadership need to come in and when different, you know, when you need to change your leadership style to suit for different situations." (Participant 5)

"You can't be just one thing all the time because situations change and they require you to react or act in a manner that is an example." (Participant 7)

Findings showed a participant who ascribed to combination style, also have traits of a situational leader. Participant 9 mentioned the following as her approach:

'I'm more of a situational leader. I can be firm with elements of autocracy and if a situation requires, I'm slightly democratic. My preferred style is here is the way to go about it and let's go. It depends where I am and what is required of me." (Participant 9)

Conclusion regarding leadership styles addressed in the coaching sessions

There are commonalities in how the participants viewed the value of leadership coaching as a development tool into effective leaders. The exploration of improved self-awareness provided new insight in the way MBA students' leadership behaviours changed during the coaching process. As key components in the development of future leaders, introspection and reflection approaches provided an understanding on how the MBA students could be helped to grasp the nature of leadership. The importance of measuring outcome through feedback and learnings derived from the experience, was highlighted. Self-development coupled with the assessment process provided new inputs on continuous leadership development of MBA students.

The leadership coaching is a setting for providing a rich and learning environment in evoking authentic and effective leaders in MBA students. As managers who have achieved success in their careers, the MBA students' future development still requires change in perspective by tempering their leadership styles with greater awareness.

4.3 Findings pertaining to how coaching creates awareness in the students balancing studies and professional lives

In answering the second research sub-question, "How do coaching sessions create awareness of balancing the students' studies and professional lives", the objective is to depict the awareness that leadership coaching evoked into the students, to be able to manage the balancing act between studies and work conflicts.

Key to effective leadership is devising one's own coping mechanisms or maintaining balance between studies and work. The findings, however, show that the interviewed students held different impressions about leadership coaching having created awareness in them to develop own mechanisms to cope.

Two participants shared that it was through own introspection, and having the emotional intelligence or the maturity levels that led them to a place of balance between personal and professional lives. They stated that coaching is not meant to give anyone any answers, but to find answers in themselves through reflection and introspection. One of them responded further.

"You need to prioritise, no one is going to say that to you, but it comes with maturity of understanding just how your life works, what is important". (Participant 7)

Two other participants had a different take to how the leadership coaching could have been configured. Despite being able to come up with their own mechanisms, their thinking was leaning more towards leadership coaching that provided a more bespoke offer to provide students with clear frameworks or tools to cope. One of the participants had this to say,

"It was very informal and therefore it wasn't very I mean when I said to some extent is because it was structured so it wasn't like these are some of the tools that you can use to get it. So, it was almost a discussion. You know, it was almost a discussion to see what are you doing? And because of have you considered this? Have you considered that? If perhaps there could be some slightly different formal ways of dealing with or providing different tools or frameworks for one to help deal with the challenges and deadlines and the pressure, the challenges of just doing in school when you're working and you have families and other responsibilities." (Participant 8)

4.3.1 **Effectively managing balance**

While the findings show that some participants managed to cope well, the imbalance was found in other participants. For some, struggling to find balance was on the work front, while others in their studies and personal lives.

Between academic and work demands, the research found that three participants found academic commitments to be more challenging. The high levels of study demand related to assignment due dates or final assessments, fluctuate over the course of the academic period. Of the two participants who found workload difficult to manage, one mentioned that it got to an extent that they found themselves making a couple of mistakes along the way, due to challenges with meeting work deadlines.

"So, the first two years have been very challenging. And yes, I actually did drop the ball a couple of times, but at least we were able to pick up the balls."
(Participant 6)

Despite the difficulties experienced in maintaining balance between study and work-loads, five participants maintained that they endeavored to keep their studies up to date, and ensured that their work was always receiving precedence.

Two participants reported to be able to effectively manage their time more than their counterparts. The two participants from Block Release and Part-time Weekdays believed that they effectively coped, and did not find it hard to balance the two activities. This was as a result of their own personal circumstances and by adopting a range of coping strategies. Working long hours, for instance, was a normality which they coped with very well, even to an extent that one of the two students, said they found their coach annoying for trying to slow them down.

4.3.2 **Coping mechanisms**

In the awareness evoked by coaching, a range of remedial options emerged in an effort to create a balanced life approach. From the participant's responses adopted coping strategies are listed below:

i. Setting own pace

ii. Time boxing
iii. Prioritising
iv. Journaling
v. Time for self
vi. Staggered approach
vii. Finding time
viii. Moving time around
ix. Smart thinking
x. Stop and think
xi. Meditating

With the realisation that there is constant work and study clashes, a need for flexibility in the study programme emerged strongly through the interviews. Whilst undergoing the MBA program, three participants' roles, shifted and changed, adding even more responsibilities. The imbalance spill led the students to evaluate their attendance options in order to provide better balance between work and study life by taking advantage of the Program flexibility. To minimise their workload, the two students extended the Program to over the initial set period. This strategy also ensured that they **managed their pace.** The two participants' comments were,

And as a result, because of the lack of balance that I had, I had to stretch out my MBA. I didn't complete it in the two-year period. I actually made the decision that I'm going to cut it in pieces." (Participant 10)

MBA was delayed by one year simply because I moved into the new role and it's unfortunately not one of those roles that has an eight-to-five-time line, which is fine, but I think also resources wise, we are battling so and fortunately or unfortunately, I tend to take responsibility and accountability that goes beyond my job description, so to speak." (Participant 12)

Of the participants who found it manageable to balance her work load, despite struggling with balancing family life, her ultimate coping mechanism used was **time boxing.** This strategy, which obviously has proven to help her immensely in incorporating complete balance, the participant explained this as setting aside separate time during the day to plan their timetable.

"I coped quite well, I work a lot with time boxing, so that helped me a lot. I set aside so for example, during the day. So, this is what my timetable would look like. During the day I would do my day job either at the practice or either at the university depending on where I was. And then I come home from like five to six, I'd eat and train and then from six to 10 o'clock at night I do MBA." (Participant 4)

Two participants adopted **dedicating a day to themselves** as a coping strategy. As they elaborated, this strategy, which they use to dedicate time to nurture themselves, entailed blocking out diaries, for instance, "A day without any meetings", or "Friday is my day", or "Budget managing day" for instance. This, one of the participants claimed that it helps with taking stock with what they are working on as a person and not just deadlines.

Noted from two participants' responses from the Part-time Saturday class, the work-or-study dilemma was not a universal view. One of the participants went further to say that even if there was a clash between work and studies, she would not allow her work to be impacted by her studies. They both felt that stated that since work paid the bills, and the university did not, work took priority over studies. To this effect, they had to say,

"Probably the school side, on the work front, you work to pay for the bills, that took priority, had to find time to do my school stuff." (Participant 7)

“Ok, so work is work. Yes, you are in school and yes, they know you are in school, but at the end of the day, there’s an expectation…So I think that was the biggest thing for me.” (Participant 8)

Some participants were fortunate to have **flexible employers** who awarded them generous study leave. This flexibility awarded in time off from work helped alleviate the pressures off conflicts between work and study.

Two participants reported another way of alleviating work pressure that came with the learnings, is **working as a team** and trusting those that they work with. Also, by delegating some of their work, and providing basic support and guidance, while letting their co-workers take charge of things. One of the comments was,

“It is just about teamwork, about working together really and being able to work together to trust each other and to realize that something doesn't have to be perfect.” (Participant 6)

For other participants, having a strong support system allowed them to take a balanced approach to the conflicting roles. One participant acknowledged **support gained from family members**. In his response, he mentioned that it helped that their family members had a complete understanding and had accepted the associated changes that came with studying,

“I’m lucky to have strong support structures at home.” (Participant 5)

The study shows three participants from part-time and full-time studies managed to keep work and studies afloat. Even with managing to balance work and studies, their social life was neglected, personal time came at a sacrifice, and relations suffered major knocks.

For the participant who was a full-time student, it had been a choice of study, with the pre-notion that it would be easier to balance if they opted out of their jobs for the duration of their studies. His **personal life** was neglected regardless.

“I did the full-time program so it was easier to balance. And I did it for that reason, but it was hard to balance my personal life and the studying.” (Participant 11)

While Participant 5 was focused on maintaining balance on his work and studies, these choices came with **personal sacrifices**. It was clear that coaching played a role in aligning him into not neglecting his personal life aspects too much.

“My problem came was not about the balance with the amount of work. I neglected my personal life; I didn’t feel overwhelmed when I looked back in December. A coach would guide you to not fall into that trap of sacrificing too much. Because we are always pushing that your work and studies are up to date”. (Participant 5)

For one participant, the motive for pursuing MBA was for financial rewards. However, his perspectives where soon changed upon realization of what it took to go through the Program, with all the struggles it took to juggle all roles. In his response, he shared,

“I initially went in there thinking I want more money, I walked out with a totally different perspective, it stretched me to a different person, I saw it in the role. Things changed, that came with sacrifices of work, family, friends. That side took a knock. Really found a struggle.” (Participant 7)

Finding time was another mechanism devised by one of the participants. This meant making adjustments to how they did or planned their lives, taking a more disciplined approach which also meant making a lot of sacrifices. For Participant 10, who was from the Saturday cohort, she had to learn to schedule her study

time in the early hours of the morning, while the family was still asleep. She commented,

"I had to find time that I'm not taking away from everything else. So, I had to have the discipline in myself to wake up early, to get my school work done to read. And by the time the family wakes up around six o'clock, I've done what I needed. Because of those adjustments that I did two years ago, I'm still maintaining that now where I am very active in the morning." (Participant 10)

A **staggered approach** was another creative way of managing study demands. As mentioned by one participant, instead of trying to gather all at once as a group to work through, for instance, an assignment, the syndicate team members would come in and go during different times to allow everyone to work through their work allocation at times convenient for them, and the those remaining for longer or arriving later can then finalise the submission at hand. She commented,

We set aside a certain time where we know everybody will be together and some people can come in earlier and they will have some work that would fit into the group meeting. And that may be the people who stay later can then carry on with the finishing off and be able to adjust to that sort of set up where you're not forced to all be there from this time to this time in order to be productive, but be able to adapt to a staggered approach if necessary." (Participant 12)

One participant mentioned that using shared drives to pool material together, where everyone could have access and make any necessary corrections was another **smart way** of managing their time. Her response was,

So, we need to start thinking smart about how can we get things done. We've got that Google Drive with documents can be uploaded. You just have to sit one week, compile everything, but everybody needs to do their part." (Participant 10)

A critical reflection of one of the participants' own situations led her to a discovery that **ensuring that she makes it to all her appointments**, works well in preventing setbacks in her study schedules or work.

Keeping a track of things to do was one of the chosen ways of creating a more balanced life approach. One participant mentioned a valuable lesson learnt from her coach and that was **to track certain things** she would like to do in a note pad, a tool to which she still ascribes to this day.

When the participants were asked about how coaching created awareness in balancing studies, work and study loads, on the one spectrum, responses received were that how one prioritises work and study demands, is a personal choice. For three of the participants, the laid back and conversational side of coaching brought with insights and inspirations, for instance, how one could break goals into little steps and **prioritize.** Other various ways to manage their balance with study and work were reported as **meditating** and "**stop and think**".

The findings indicate that even though coaching evoked awareness in the students to develop their own coping mechanisms, there could have been students who were less proactive. An approach that encompassed a formal structure or framework is what these participants could benefit from, as suggested by Participant 8,

"If perhaps there could be some slightly different formal ways of dealing with or providing different tools or frameworks for one to help deal with the challenges and deadlines and the pressure, the challenges of just doing in school when you're working and you have families and other responsibilities." (Participant 8)

The results indicate that individuals' experience in work, study and personal interactions may be different depending on situations in which they place themselves. From the findings, it shows that the value of leadership coaching is

directly linked with the intervention as a supporting framework to maintain life balance.

4.3.3 **Coaching ineffectiveness**

Findings also show reporting that indicated that there had not been a proper briefing to the coaching program. Two participants could not articulate or remember what the briefing was about. The following was highlighted in one of the responses.

"I found that the briefing for this, it wasn't very good. I'm sorry to say because I didn't think that I had a very clear idea of what it needs to do with me, with my coach when I met her. So, there were a very sort of sheets and exercises that they wanted us to work towards, but there wasn't any clear direction given. And I felt that the coach as well, she didn't really have a clear idea of what was supposed to come out of the session. You know, so a lot of the times, it just felt there wasn't enough clarity around it." (Participant 5)

Findings from two participants show that there was a marred distinction between coaching, mentoring and career counselling. More time was reported to have been spent on mentoring than coaching in such instances.

Three of the twelve participants reported that the coaching intervention's full effects would have been felt if it had been scheduled earlier in the MBA Program. Their preference would have been early exposure on leadership coaching that could have better enhanced the coaching experience.

Four participants are of the view that the coaching should be extended over the period it was initially designed for, in order to gain full benefit. The timing and the limited number of sessions made it feel rushed, and most started treating it like a tick box exercise.

When asked about their perception on effective aspects of coaching, three participants' reports indicated dissatisfaction with the allocation of coach, to which they attributed to the mismatch that was apparent between coach and coaches. Five participants, however reported having a good coach as one of their highlights. Finding a good match between the coach and the coachee, and not just face matching as one of the students put it, is a good base for allocation of coaches. Three of the participants attributed a good match to shared commonalities in personality, professional backgrounds, experiences, interests, and culture between coach and the coachee. The location where each are based also played an important key to convenience and accessibility.

What was also apparent is that whilst some participants actually found that the sessions were all about outcome, and did not feel it was rehearsed or pre-fabricated, others felt like it was a scripted brief, for instance, one participant was unnerved by moments of silence in-between conversations, which left them wondering if the coach was at a loss of words, or was pondering on what to say next.

The responses from four participants revealed positive aspects from the coaching engagement. According to their statements, the coaching process served a motivational, encouraging and guidance purpose. Two participants also indicated that they were stretched and challenged beyond the limited boundaries that they had put up for themselves. One participant continued to say that the process was an eye opener in how she initially viewed her future,

"Challenged me to think beyond the boundaries I had put up for myself – opened my mind to possibilities. Was limited to how I viewed my future." (Participant 12)

4.4 **Conclusion**

This chapter presented findings from the analysis of the data. A presentation of the seven themes generated from the responses was given. The findings provide insights heightening awareness into value of leadership coaching as perceived by MBA students in their development as effective leaders. With the data collected from the participants the study, together with the derived codes and categories, an analysis on discovered patterns was done for each of the themes. The findings show the role played by leadership coaching in addressing different leadership styles, and the awareness created in their ability to manage the balance between work, study and personal live pressures through establishing coping mechanisms. In the findings it was also shown that certain reservations are held with regards to coaching effectiveness. The Program structure, timing and coach allocations emerged as the two important aspects which the participants felt needed to be reviewed. The following chapter discusses the findings by framing them with the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss and explain the results of the research findings on the perceptions of MBA students' value of leadership coaching which formed part of their curricula. Though leadership coaching benefited the MBA students into catapulting their development as effective leaders through introspection and self-awareness, fuller benefits are attributable to having a proper briefing and the timing of the coaching program spread out to cover the duration of the MBA Program. Value enhancement of the leadership coaching might also be found if there is a proper allocation of coaches and the coaching program be structured to incorporate frameworks that assist in determining effective strategies, to enable coping with work and study conflicts. The integration of the results that contributed to the propositions will be presented in relation to the literature review.

The purpose of the study was to explore the perceptions of value of leadership coaching by MBA students. The central question addressed by the study is: What are the WBS MBA students' perceptions of the value of leadership coaching component in their curriculum? The two related sub-questions that help answer the main question are:

1. What styles of leadership are addressed in the coaching sessions?
2. How do coaching sessions create awareness of balancing the students' studies and professional lives?

The research aim was to show that value cannot be separated from the timing of the leadership coaching, by discovering what MBA students found useful in the leadership coaching program.

The insights gained from the twelve interviewed MBA students from different cohorts coached during 2017 and 2019, form the basis of the study findings. Based on the twelve participants, two were from the Fulltime MBA class, six from the Part-time Saturday group, three from the Part-time weekday class, and one from the Block Release class. The ages of the participants ranged from 29 to 48 years, whilst their managerial level of employment is between three and nine years. The sample gender composition is eight females and four males. Nine of the participants have since completed their MBA qualification, while three are in their final stages of completion. At the time of the research interview, of the twelve participants, eight have since been promoted to higher levels of managerial roles.

Figure 6 illustrates the comparison of the original framework by Joo cited in (Gray, 2015) with the devised framework for this study. Literature supporting value of coaching, listed self-awareness, goal setting and prioritisation, job search leadership effectiveness in a team context, interpersonal communications and cross cultural adjustments as the positive outcomes of coaching (Steiner et al., 2018). Shown in the results of this study, the participants perceive value as a process influenced by various factors. These factors are, introspection, self-development, reflection space, feedback, learnings, effective leadership traits, awareness created in managing balance effectively and coaching ineffectiveness.

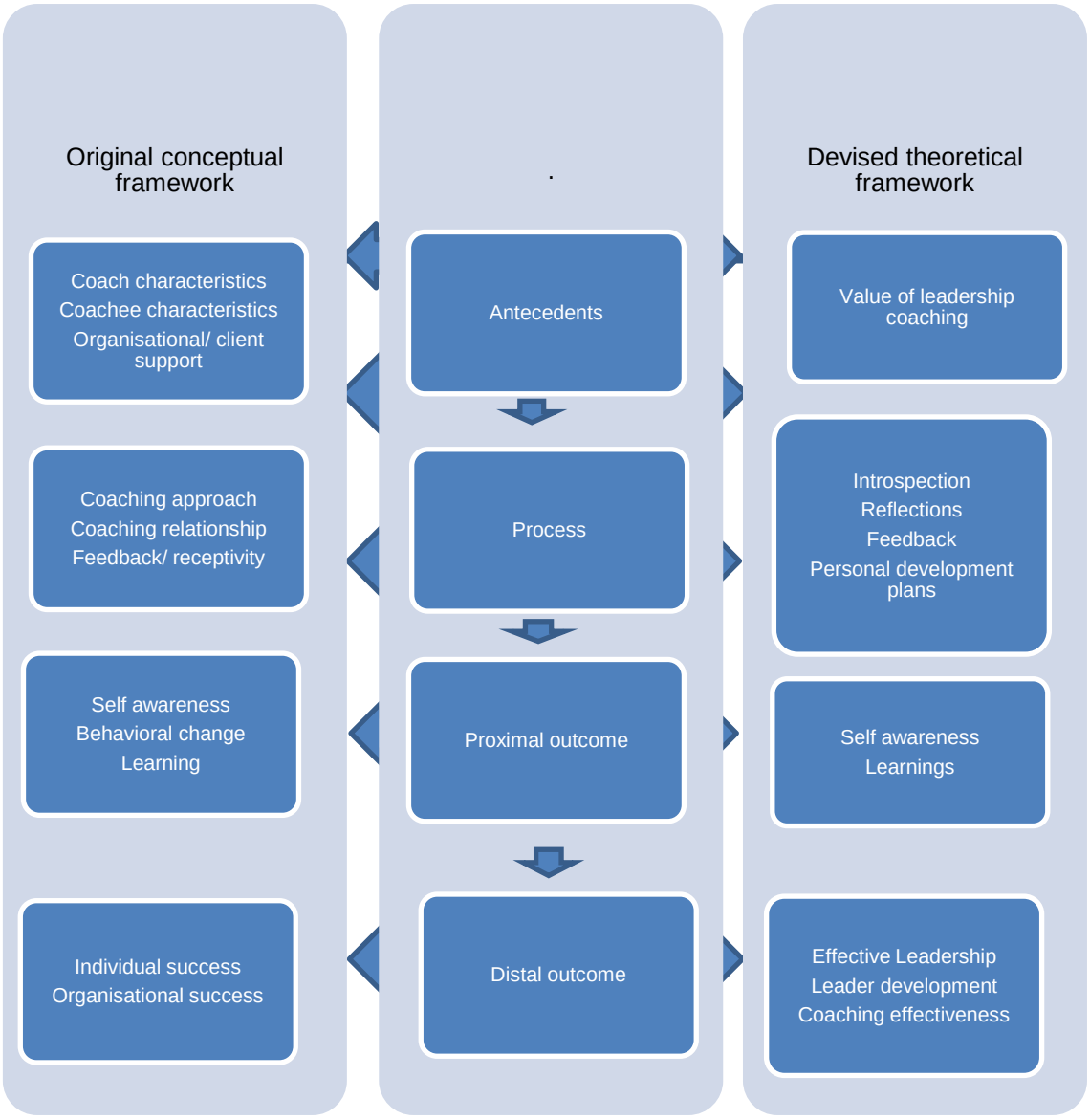


Figure 6: Comparison of the original conceptual framework (Joo, 2005) to devised theoretical framework

The antecedents of value of leadership coaching were investigated, by inquiring about *what* is it about the leadership coaching that contributed to perceptions on value of leadership coaching. Also investigated in the study is the process or *how* coaching intervention unfolded for MBA students, (1) introspection, (2) reflection space (3) self-development, and (4) feedback. Secondly, the study posed questions about the outcome of coaching, (5) learnings, (6) leadership

styles addressed in the coaching sessions and finally, (7) the awareness created in the MBA students, to be able to devise own coping mechanisms.

The proposition formed from the above study was that leadership coaching as a teaching and learning strategy, has value into developing an MBA student who is already at the top of their fields by empowering them into becoming an effective leader (Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014; Steiner et al., 2018)

Related to value of leadership coaching, the perceptions include discussions on the benefits and the ineffectiveness of coaching. The positive aspects of coaching include, introspection, awareness, space to self-reflect on own strengths and weaknesses, self-development into effective leaders, feedback and learnings. On the negative side, the discussions include perceptions on the ineffectiveness of coaching. A detailed discussion of the seven themes will now follow.

5.1.1 Benefits of leadership coaching

i) Introspection

Revealed in the findings is that leadership coaching as a teaching and learning strategy, has value in helping the students search, find and understand themselves better. Described as tapping into aspirations, introspection presented aha moments, giving clarity on study and personal balance, and how the realisation of self, contributed to development and growth. Viewed as an eye-opening experience, the finding was that through introspection, some of the perceptions changed from how the future was initially looked at, to shifting value on what mattered most in life. The initial purpose of pursuing the MBA degree, soon changed to the new realisation of shifting the view from financial advancement only, to personal development and growth. This finding seems to contradict the literature on emphasis placed on anticipating betterment of job

opportunities as a natural flow from attaining MBA degree by Piotrowski and Cox (2004) cited in (Evans, Gbadamosi, & Richardson, 2014). Further literature supports the notion that through a process of introspection and reflection, leaders can have true sense of self- awareness (Crossan et al., 2013; Lawrence et al., 2018; Showry & Manasa, 2014).

ii) **Self-awareness**

The findings indicate that the theme of self-awareness was significantly influenced by the students' perceptions of leadership coaching. Defined as most important capability for a leader, self-awareness as the proximal outcome of leadership coaching emerged from the results by three of the twelve participants. The participants recognised self-awareness as developing tool into better understanding of themselves, through acknowledging their weak points and cementing their strengths. Most importantly, the participants acknowledged that through self-actualisation they found balance of what worked for them, professionally and personally.

The concept of self-awareness is central to developing authentic leadership, which is said to be the key purpose to evoking more conscious awareness in managers. The self-awareness development traits exhibited in an authentic leader are the ability to recognise self-worth and capabilities, understand own strong and weak points and the ability to self-reflect (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). The literature supporting this view indicates that self-awareness is rated as one of the managerial capabilities pillars needed for effective and successful leadership. Cited as one of the most key competencies particularly for MBA students development as leaders, self-awareness has also been emphasised as a core leadership capacity in developing leadership (Lawrence et al., 2018). By self-analysis, the participants were able to identify their strong

points and areas of improvement. This view underpins the objectives and purpose of leadership coaching.

iii) **Reflection space**

Reflection space emerged as a key finding among six of the participants. The participants expressed how they appreciated reflection space that leadership coaching offered them to be able to share about what mattered most in their lives. The results show that from the participants who mentioned reflection, value of coaching was found in being awarded time with someone willing to share and give valuable account of their own experiences. Through the reflection process, the students were able to tap into some of their leadership aspects that needed structuring, and also gain knowledge from the discussions with the coach.

This finding resonate with the findings of Lee (2003), who stated that leadership coaching can be thought of as a space for providing personal and practical development, to create a distinctive personal and leadership that is attuned with the organisation. In (Hunt & Weintraub, 1999, 2004), it was found that coaching success is mapped by coaching environment that offers the coachee a safe space to be able to explore and improve on their weaknesses. The study by (Mistry & Hule, 2015) highlights reflection and re-examination of strengths, weak points and values as key attributes of an authentic leader. As a tool for learning and development, reflection and designed activities that assist students in making meaningful experiences, are used by high quality leadership programs (Eich, 2008). Being awarded with reflection space and provided with feedback, insight can be gained from other people's perception that will help to have better understanding of oneself. By gaining sense of self, learners can experience self-change as they are prompted to view their developmental needs realistically (Hoggan & Chad, 2016; Showry & Manasa, 2014).

iv) **Receiving and giving feedback**

The outcome of successful of coaching partly depends on the coachee's openness to feedback and willingness to change (Joo, 2005). Receiving feedback from others, on both positive and negative leadership aspects, is important for own development. The study revealed findings that, participants that received feedback, the noticable differences in their development include how their thinking had been reshaped to not only expect and receive feedback, but to give feedback to others as well.

The literature confirms that to acknowledge own discrepancies and receive accurate feedback from others highly motivates for change (Boyatzis, 2008; Hoggan & Chad, 2016; Luft & Ingham, 1961). The change can be experienced in self and in relation to others, perception of purpose and life's meaning fell short of what could have been valuable in assessing and challenging their ideals.

v) **Development of self**

At the heart of leadership development is desire to develop and change, and having a clear and specific set of gals, creates a blueprint for effective personal development. A study by Spence and Grant cited in (Bower & DSL, 2012) attests that attainment of goals which reflects on developing interest and core values has a positive impact on the person's well-being.

The findings revealed that the positivity of the coaching experience is attributed to evidence in the development of both professional and personal areas. Having been challenged to go beyond what they had initially limited themselves to, either professionally or personally, the coaching experience opened more possibilities of growth and development.

Smits (2010) in support of Waddock and Lozano (2013) stress the notion that to impact one's ability to lead effectively, the coaching program's focus role should be on enhancing students development of competencies, skills, knowledge and opportunities that further interaction with people. The individual's desire and readiness to learn in developing to greater leaders are what determines the success efforts in leadership development (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Riggio, 2008).

The work by Piotrowski and Cox cited in (Evans et al., 2014) emphasises that what specifically draws students to a business degree such as MBA, is the anticipation of the natural flow towards betterment of their job opportunities. Clearly articulated in the findings is that leadership coaching guided and motivated some students into progressing and attaining roles at senior leadership levels.

The other areas of development evident in the findings was from the students who learnt to relinquish their dominant side. The change in development included trusting others to be able to carry out duties without micromanaging, learning to work alongside others through team work. This also meant by being approachable to others, offering guidance and support and setting clear direction. The students' learnings came from being understanding of others, adopting good listening skills, constantly engaging with others and general inclusivity of others rather than relying on own abilities. Identified by several researchers in leadership as an important factor in leader effectiveness and leadership, trust at the core of the social leader-follower relationship, serves as a base for effective leadership (Stedham & Skaar, 2019). The findings revealed development areas in students who had to learn to assume direct approach in leading others. What was important for those who learnt to be deliberate and forthright, was to remain authentic, and not lose themselves in the process, by remaining true to themselves.

The research findings showed confidence mentioned from three different perspectives. The first two positions are that of dominant and reactionary leaders who found balance in their leadership roles, and the third is from a self- developed leader who believed in empowering others, boosting confidence in others to perform better and raising them to leadership level. Noted, the reflections arose from various internal beliefs which influence confidence. The internal beliefs shown in the findings to influence confidence are linked to self-doubt, self-trust and control beliefs.

Targeted to focus on leadership development throughout their MBA Program, the incorporation of assessments and development plans emerged in the findings. The findings show that to outline the developmental goals they needed to work towards, the assessments were brought to practice in two ways. The first was engaging students in written reflection activities such as journals, practical exercises or goal setting homework activities. The second engagement took the form of verbal reflections. The resultant to the engagement process meant taking the individuals out of their comfort zones, but also gave a different meaning to how they now viewed themselves. It emerged from the findings that the outcome from leadership development was on the participants learning and becoming purposeful with selves, being able to develop and achieve goals, and developing leadership frameworks meaningful to integrate their life and leadership improvements.

The literature which aligns with the finding on personal leadership development plans, maintains that defining and setting own goals and following up on learnings from the sessions, will ensure maximum benefit from the coaching experience. For leaders to be effective, own assessment and development of self is needed (Nicholls, 1994). Not only do these specifically goal attainment plans clarify goals, they also hold students accountable and responsible for their self-development, which hopefully will translate into their learning in future (Brock et al., 2006; Sutton et al., 2012).

5.1.2 **Ineffectiveness of coaching**

The importance of a proper briefing in a coaching programme is highlighted. Contradictory to the initial Leadership Workshop conducted at the onset of the coaching sessions, results show that there was no detailed orientation on the specifics of the coaching, no action plan or clear direction given on the outcome of the coaching program. It was interesting to find that generally the participants could not remember what the briefing of the coaching program was or bluntly state that there was never a briefing. Without outlining clear coaching expectations will render coaching ineffective (Brock et al., 2006). It is also shown in the results that there needs to be clear emphasis on coaching as an intervention. A lot of time the coaching sessions resembled more of mentoring and guidance counselling sessions, and this created confusion, on what was to be achieved in the end.

The results from four participants' reports indicate the dissatisfaction with the timing of the coaching program. Due to scheduling the coaching sessions towards the latter part of the MBA program, it made the sessions compact and hurried. Evident in the results is that due to the timing of the coaching program, the coaching sessions in one of the student's cases, were turned into guidance sessions for assisting with the research project. In order for coaching to be more valuable, there needed to be a balanced spread of sessions throughout the MBA program.

The results show that three participants were dissatisfied with the random allocation of coaches. The incompatibility between the coach and client was the main issue. In the literature by (Lee, Johnston, & Dougherty, 2000), compatibility between individuals lie within shared similarities in beliefs and values, and surpasses indifferences that may be found in their interpersonal style, background, skills and work habits. However, stemming from L. R. Stern (2004), the coach's knowledge, skills, and experience need to align to the goals of the

specific coaching situation. The author attests further that coaches need to be familiar with the industry and environmental factors. The results finding indicate that one of the coaches was not experienced and could not adapt to the client's industry, and that created a lot of frustration. A more deliberate and thought-out path could have been engaged in choosing coaches for individuals.

For extracting more value out of a coaching approach, the students need to be well oriented to a properly structured program, with a clear action plan. It is imperative that the timing of the program is balanced to extract maximum benefit of the coaching program, and that there is proper allocation of coaches to the different individuals.

5.2 Discussions on leadership styles addressed in the coaching sessions

An effective leader is measured by clear understanding of different leadership styles, and attributes which lead to making the most impact on self and others. To be considered an effective leader, amongst others, (Rausch, Elmuti, Minnis, & Abebe, 2005; Stedham & Skaar, 2019) lists contributory factors as emotional intelligence, empathy, vision, communication, and passion for improvement on a continuous basis.

The study pointed to a clear understanding and identification of the students' different leadership styles.

The students' ten identified leadership styles listed in Table 5, are namely, coaching and mentorship/ motivational/ spiritual, collaborative, combination, democratic, empathetic, servant leadership, situational, sympathetic, transformational and visionary leadership.

Table 5: Students leadership styles

Leadership style
Coaching and mentorship/motivational/spiritual
Collaborative
Combination
Democratic
Empathetic
Servant leadership
Situational
Sympathetic
Transformational
Visionary

The emerged factors from the results are encompassed by the head, heart and hands components of leadership styles.

Nicholl's model of the Head, heart and hands model clusters the characteristics of the various leadership styles. Table 6 illustrates the emerging leadership styles from the findings, clustered under this model.

Table 6: Leadership styles under components of the heart, head and hands model (Nicholls, 1994)

Head Strategic	Heart Inspirational	Hand Supervisory
• Visionary	• Coaching • Inspirational • motivational • Servant leadership • Empathetic • Sympathetic • Transformational	• Situational

5.2.1 Head, heart and hands components of leadership styles

Three key leadership styles were addressed in the leadership coaching, namely:

Head (strategic thinking). Providing strategic direction, instilling a sense of purpose

Hand (Getting things done). Implementing, delivering up to standard, managing performance expectations, culture, structure and systems)

Heart (Building and maintaining relationships). By treating people with respect and dignity, listening).

5.2.1.1 Head component of leadership style

Revealed in the findings is that visionary leaders are strategic thinkers who lead with **the head.** Leaders with visionary style provide strategic direction, instil a sense of purpose and engages people in an inspiring vision that uplifts them to

give their best. Two participants articulated that their identified style was based on their understanding that vision needs to be shared and clearly communicated.

This finding is supported by literature found in Lee (2003) and Westley and Mintzberg (1989). An authentic and visionary leader needs to be able to manage conflict, have effective communication skills, active listening skills, clear understanding of others and also have good relationship management skills. This makes it clear for employees to understand the importance of their contribution towards the organisation's vision, thereby increasing their commitment. By engaging others and incorporating their ideas into the vision, inspires confidence and can assist in gaining buy-in from the followers (Goleman, 2000).

5.2.1.2 The heart component of leadership style

The heart component of leadership style is aligned with inspirational leadership by treating others with respect and dignity and listening. From the findings, leaders who lead with the heart had empathetic, inspirational, motivational, sympathetic, servant leadership and transformational leadership attributes.

i) Empathetic leadership style

The results indicate that participants who understood their leadership behaviours and method to empathetic leadership style where more aligned with taking interest in what other people want to implement in their development and guiding them through the process. According to (Kock, Mayfield, Mayfield, Sexton, & De La Garza, 2019) empathetic leaders display understanding abilities and appreciation of other's experiences, while they also provide emotional support and sense of security (Long & Schultz, 1973; Mahsud, Yukl, & Prussia, 2010). Effective leaders are empathetic, through their awareness of own emotions and their ability to establish and maintain relationships resultant of synergy and community (Stedham & Skaar, 2019). By giving empathy, a powerful bond is

created between leaders and followers, which fosters innovation and increases job satisfaction (Bell & Hall Jr, 1954; Holt & Marques, 2012; Kock et al., 2019).

ii) Motivational/ coaching/ spiritual/ mentorship leadership

The results show that participants who had subsequently had previous coaching experience and or are in the coaching industry defined the motivational, coaching, mentorship and spiritual styles as their own methods of leading style. Suggested as one of the leadership styles to achieve best results, coaching is oriented towards developing others personal resources. It has increasingly been shown in research that being an effective coach form part of effective leadership (Peláez Zuberbuhler et al., 2020). Several authors also attest that these inspirational leadership approaches afford followers to transform into their best possible self, by developing skills that energise and lead to increased self-esteem, confidence and motivation. For empowerment to occur, leaders need to actively offer advice, support and provide resources to team members (Jacobs, 2015; Sosik & Jung, 2011).

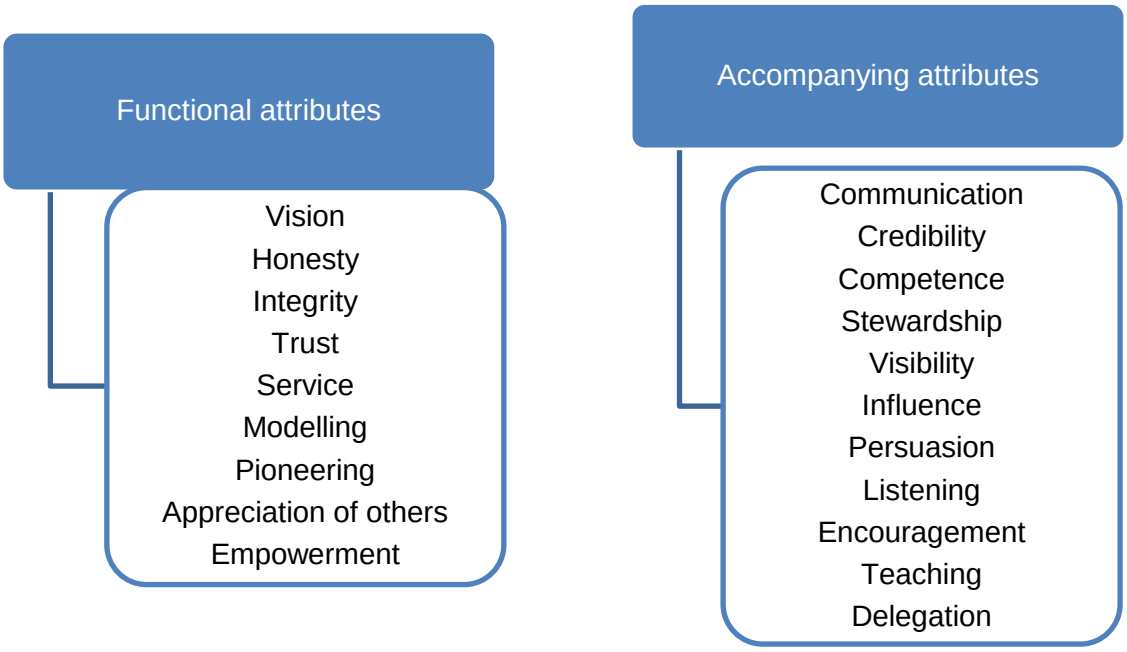
iii) Servant leadership

The results clearly indicate that participants with servant leadership style thrive on encouraging development and mentoring others. Authentic leaders do community service, and return to the places where they grew up. Looking after the needs of others in order to facilitate their development and growth, is what a servant leader understands and appreciate. All this is essential to their effectiveness as leaders, enabling them to sustain their authenticity (Bolger, 2014; George et al., 2007). Participants engaging in service, are affected in a sense that their strengths and passions are clarified. The desire for servant leadership and their leadership involvement in social causes is built as they understand their role in serving to make a difference (Eich, 2008). The literature

which best depicts the finding that servant leaders are inclined to serve rather than lead, is from Russel and Stone cited in (Ngambi, 2011).

Table 7 illustrates the functional attributes as vision, honesty, integrity trust, service, modelling, pioneering, appreciation of others and empowerment. The accompanying attributes are namely communication, credibility, competence, stewardship, visibility, influence, persuasion, listening, encouragement, teaching and delegation.

Table 7: Servant leadership attributes, Russel & Stone cited in (Ngambi, 2011, p. 16)



iv) Sympathetic leadership

Often confused with empathetic leadership, the disposition associated with sympathetic leadership is centred by taking the social position of the other person, relationships with the outside world and perceptual filters.

v) Transformational leadership

The view that was apparent to aligning with being transformational leaders, was from the nurturing aspect, value add, aiding and ensuring others succeed in their roles.

Literature by Nicholls (1994) supports the notion that leaders in a transforming leadership are engaging, as opposed to an authoritarian leadership style. Transformational leaders associate themselves with inspiring and influencing others to perform better and exceeding expectations (Carter, 2009; Ngambi, 2011). The importance of trust cannot be emphasised enough in order to understand leadership. With trust built, teamwork and cohesiveness are promoted. More trust has been said to be generated by transformational leaders more than transactional leaders (Stedham & Skaar, 2019). The literature on the topic of trust has been reported to be very scarce. Not much is known about trust and specific leader behaviours and leader effectiveness relationship (Stedham & Skaar, 2019).

vi) Empowerment of others

For an authentic leader, nothing fulfils and satisfies like achieving a worthy goal with a group of people, empowering them in the process and making the world a better place. An effective leader is secured in their own role to be able to believe in other's empowerment. It is clear from the findings that being equipped and prepared to empower others was an attribute for two of the participants. Providing proper guidance and support, equips and grooms others for leadership roles.

The empowerment of others' perspective is aligned with the findings of George et al. (2007) who attest that authentic leadership is not about own success or getting followers. Authentic leaders recognise that they need to inspire and empower those around them for the success of the organisation. This leadership

approach revolves around developing others through engagement, enablement, encouragement and general concern of their wellbeing, as opposed to using coercive authority and power (Hamid, 2018; Nicholls, 1994).

The literature by Carter (2009) further aligns with this finding by emphasising the benefits of effective leadership, include motivation of individuals to improve continuously by having confidence instilled through empowerment, guidance and continued supervision.

vii) Collaborative leadership

A result finding from participants with collaboration leadership style is they believe strongly in collective leadership. In his literature, Agbor (2008) is consistent with the perspective that effective leadership adopts a collaborative and shared leadership approach. This bottom-up approach which is the opposite of hierarchical and authoritative, allows employees to be flexible and creative in developing efficient and effective ways that help organisations implement innovation.

5.2.1.3 The hand component of leadership style

Leaders who fall under the hand component of leadership style are about implementation and delivering up to standard. The hand leadership style is also about empowering people and helping them grow beyond their current capability, by managing performance expectations, culture, structure and systems.

i) Situational leadership

The sense of relationship building with others through empowerment, involvement, thereby promoting culture of high performance is a distinguishing fact in agile leaders (Hamman & Spayd, 2015). It is evident from the findings that

different situations require that leaders adjust and react accordingly. It is important to adapt and learn when to apply different leadership styles in order to suit different situations.

Situational leadership, does not transcribe how others need to be influenced or led, as a matter of fact the readiness level of people to be led determines the appropriateness of the leadership style. Agility and adaptation to favourableness of the situation is demanded for this leadership approach (Ngambi, 2011). The preferred mindset applied is that of responsive as opposed to reactionary. Developing leaders to adapt to the environment uncertainties builds capacity to anticipate the unprecedented challenges, which ultimately create value in the modern organisation (Day et al., 2014; Lyons, 2000).

5.2.2 **Leadership positions**

From the listed leadership styles found in the study, three groups of leaders were detected that interrelated with one another. The groups were Self and Others and Defiant (dominant) and Compliant (passive). Figure 7 illustrates how the “Self” relates to the Defiant, and “Others” more aligned with Compliant.

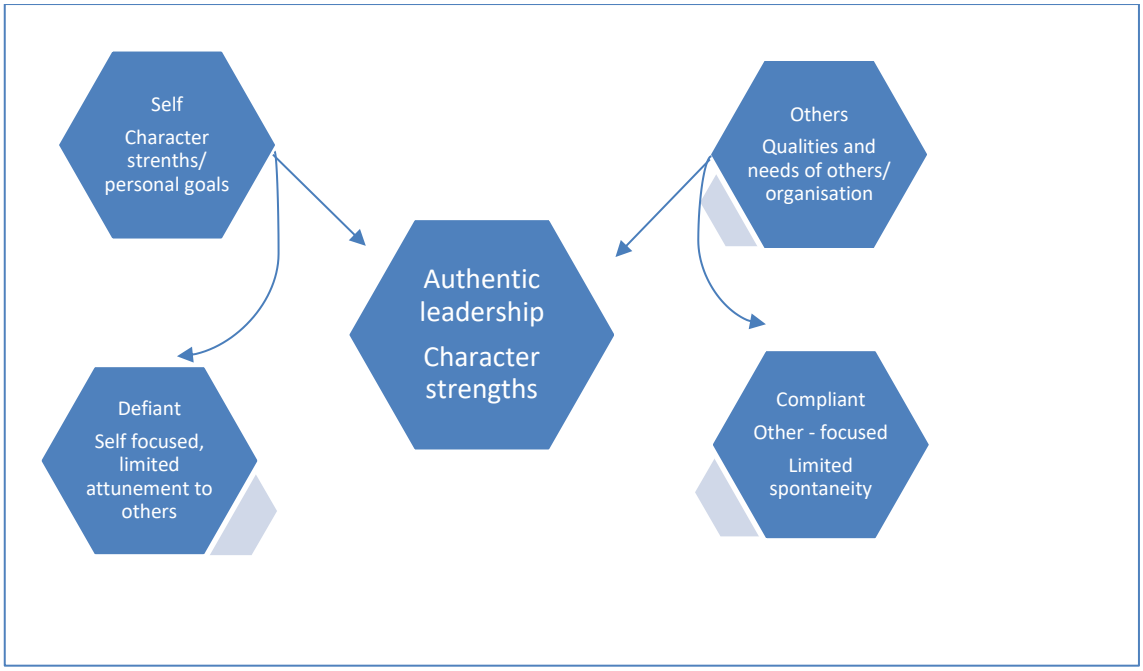


Figure 7: The three leadership positions (Lee & Roberts, 2010, p. 18)

The defiant leader, who initially adopts the dominant style, found space to relook and examine the need of controlling and micromanaging others. Through coaching, effective leadership has been attained by development of interpersonal, better communication and influencing skills. Evidence in this transition has been seen in the ability to trust others fully to perform duties well, by relinquishing control, less micromanaging and delegating to others, thereby leading to empowerment, development and motivating others, by providing clear direction and support, and most importantly, giving feedback.

The transformation in the compliant leader on the other hand was seen in gained confidence when confronting others, as opposed to the initial trait of shying away from addressing matters head on, by trying to fit in, thus inhibiting on their capacity for assertiveness (Bachkirova, Cox, & Clutterbuck, 2010)

Required of managers in effective leadership is to be adaptive to shifting approaches and different context, being in tune with others, having an understanding how to motivate and being sensitive to others' environment. The nature of leadership is such that the space co-created between the leader and the follower, the self and the other, is defined by the leaders' extent of impact (Lee & Roberts, 2010). For one of the participants with a democratic style, the results showed that through identifying their leadership style also meant going through a developmental phase to adopt a defiant reactive leadership style.

Effective democratic leaders believe in constructive participation. They achieve this by instilling a sense of inclusivity that aids quality deliberation and influence followers to be self-determined (Gastil, 1994).

5.2.3 **Combination of styles**

To be a leader worthy of following, it is key to be flexible rather than relying on one leadership style. A combination of leadership styles identifies with a mix of leadership traits. The findings show that the participants recognised being steadfast on perfection, but have since learnt to ease on being hard and critical on themselves. In their responses, they have also learnt to embrace teamwork, relinquish control, and trust others to perform and produce better results. The study contradicts with the typical stereotype expectations on women's tendency to adopt lesser of directive or autocratic style than men (Eagly & Johnson, 1990).

Conclusion regarding leadership styles addressed in the coaching sessions question

Common views were shared by the participants in terms of how they perceive the benefits of leadership coaching in their effective leadership development. The results show transition that transpired in the majority of the participants, which is evident in their leadership behavioural changes. Valuable insight was gained into

their awareness as shown in their ability to identify and define own leadership styles clustered under Nicholl's Head, Heart and Hand leadership model.

Defiant and compliant leadership are reactive or defensive forms of leadership styles which define authentic leadership. Transformation of compliant leaders takes shape when the initial style of avoiding addressing issues turns into being able to confront matters with confidence (Lee, 2003). Through the coaching intervention, the two groups of leaders, namely defiant and compliant were able to gain perspective into finding a balance in their underpinning leadership styles.

5.3 Discussions pertaining to awareness created in devising own coping mechanisms

Aligned with the finding on participants being able to develop own coping strategies to help them engage fully in their academic development is the literature by (Lyons, 2000; Redshaw, 2000). A coaching engagement that can create students' awareness in balancing studies and professional lives is highly emphasised.

The second proposition formed from the above study was that the support obtained to maintain work-study balance is directly linked to the value of leadership coaching (Le Roux, 2018; Lyons, 2000; Redshaw, 2000; Rogers, 2004, 2012).

5.3.1 Effectively managing balance

Effectively managing balance was the identified recurrent theme used to describe the phenomenon of MBA student's being able to find it in themselves to manage their study and workloads effectively. This ability to effectively manage balance, was attributed to having maturity to understand how one's life works and how to prioritise what is important.

Illustrated in Table 8 are the three domains evident in the students' imbalance.

For some of the participants, the imbalance was more evident on the work front, while for the others they struggled with balancing their studies and balancing personal lives.

Table 8: Work/study/personal life imbalance

Imbalance type
Coped well
Personal lives imbalance
Study imbalance
Work imbalance

The findings confirmed that the participants were overwhelmed by the workload in MBA studies, regardless of whether they were are from the Fulltime or Part-time Weekdays, Part-time Saturdays or Part-time Block Release classes. The general sense of difficulty was expressed in balancing the mix between work and meeting assessment deadlines, whilst to others, embracing a full social life as well.

Emerging from the responses, participants were able to find remedial options that they use to manage their balance and cope with ever demands of study and work-loads. However, the findings of this study also confirm that a leadership coaching that has coping tools or frameworks for participants is the most preferred. In support of this view is literature by (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2010) which states that coaching is a structured and focused process, that aims at achieving

a desirable and sustainable change to the benefit of the coachee and other stakeholders, using appropriate strategies, tools and techniques.

The results findings show that having confidence in managing their workload, meant not struggling to find balance between their work and studies. Nevertheless, it was shown in the findings that even for those participants who managed their balance, their personal life and or family life were affected.

Literature (Fowler, Hodgson, & Spours, 2001; Yum, Kember, & Siaw, 2005) acknowledge that individuals are different in how they manage work and study balance. With some struggling to cope, and others managing fine, they are affected differently by sources of demand. Depending on personality, individuals can manage and keep their family and work roles separate (Michel & Clark, 2013).

5.3.2 Awareness evoked in finding own coping mechanisms

Adopted in this research is the modified framework consisting of four domains namely work, self, social life and family, integrating the three coping mechanisms, sacrifice, support and the negotiation of arrangements developed by (Yum et al., 2005). An illustration of this integration of part-time study with work, family and social commitment is depicted in Table 9.

Table 9: The framework of the three coping mechanisms within the four domains of part-time students (Yum et al., 2005)

Mechanism	Domain			
	Self	Work	Family	Social
Sacrifice				
Support				
Negotiation of arrangements				

Support structure for authentic leaders may include colleagues, spouses, partners, families, friends and mentors. Leading a balanced life will need all these constituencies to be brought together (George et al., 2007).

5.3.2.1 Self-support

While undertaking MBA, three participants' job roles changed. With the new learning curve, and added new role responsibilities to make their study load manageable, the participants reviewed their Program structure and opted to extend the Program duration. The literature refers to advanced planning which takes different forms of making study and workload manageable (Yum et al., 2005). Characteristics of the support of the self is self-motivation or inherent determination to complete the qualification despite the odds.

5.3.2.2 Self negotiation

Two participants were found to have used self-negotiation, although one defined it as time boxing, and the other "dedicating a day to self". Both participants ascribed to dedicating time to plan their schedules, and re-arranging work or duties to different schedule pockets. This view is supported by literature on aspects of self-negotiation which include study schedule planning and creating dedicated study time slots (Yum et al., 2005). This of course means develop and establish changes in life patterns, in order to accommodate studying.

5.3.2.3 Work sacrifice

When it came to priorities, for others, work would take precedence over studies but not necessarily out of choice. While studies were more important for some to attain financial rewards, others were bound by work contractual obligations. The findings revealed two participants who viewed their studies to have less priority over their work commitments, as it was formally agreed that work would not be

impacted by studies. With little room for sacrifice in the work domain provided, students are willing to forgo their studies in lieu of their work commitments (Yum et al., 2005).

5.3.2.4 Work Support

Receiving support from work can make a difference in assisting one in managing balance. Support could stem from colleagues or the employer. Findings revealed the participant who was privileged enough to receive flexibility in time off work to attend to their studies. The literature on work support has relevance to this finding, indicating that employers support could be by allowing employees time off from work (Fowler et al., 2001; Kember, 1999).

Results show of having learnt the importance of teamwork. By learning to trust others with responsibility and delegating some of their work provided relief from the work pressures to be able to give studies a fair amount of attention.

5.3.2.5 Family sacrifice and Family support

One of the priorities that fight for MBA students' attention as adults is maintaining relationships. Findings show that the participants valued time with family, but have come to realise that with studying, these relationships came at a sacrifice. With their family's understanding and support, however, they have been able to navigate through the study pressures.

This view is supported by literature (George et al., 2007) constant awareness of staying grounded is important to authentic leaders, for instance spending time with friends and families. Much as it is hard for part-time students to sacrifice their work for study, there are limits to giving up family time. The support gained from family can provide some relief to the participants (Yum et al., 2005)

5.3.2.6 Social sacrifice

Pursuing an MBA degree while balancing work and studies can be challenging. With the added-on responsibility of maintaining a social life, that can even be more overbearing. The results finding show that participants who had reported to be able to manage their work and studies load, still experienced that their social life suffered. This is supported by the literature on coping mechanisms, where it states that having a strong support system from friends can provide coping mechanism to help confront work and study challenges (Maquiling, 2018).

5.3.2.7 Time management

Time management is crucial when studying and working. Managing time and being organised goes hand in hand. Confidence in time management skills, showed in being able to devise other mechanisms such as finding time, staggered approach, incorporating smart ways of doing things, for example using online platforms instead of meeting face to face, tracking down certain things, meditating and “stop and think”. **Finding time** meant making adjustments to how they did or planned their lives, taking a more disciplined approach which also meant making a lot of sacrifices.

5.4 Conclusion regarding awareness in being able to devise own coping mechanisms

The results helped in providing valuable insight, and the needed clarity on the value of leadership coaching in evoking awareness in managing the balance in their studies and professional lives. It is evident that individuals’ experience in work, study and personal interactions may be different depending on situations in which they place themselves. Maturity and confidence levels play a role in being able to find it within self or to be proactive to devise own coping mechanisms. Leadership coaching benefit not only with creating awareness in

the students to find balance in their work and study, but also in their personal lives. Three coping mechanisms, namely sacrifice, support and the negotiation of arrangements developed integrate work, self, social life and family domains. To maintain balance in their lives, an authentic leader need support from constituencies such as colleagues, families, friends and mentors. For the non-proactive and or less confident students, the coaching programme that incorporates frameworks can help determine feasible coping strategies that deal with work and study balance.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter is a summary of the main findings from the research, which provides specific recommendations to key stakeholders and offers suggestions for further research in this field. The chapter concludes with highlighting the limitations to the research.

The purpose the research was to explore the perceptions of value of leadership coaching by MBA students. Guided by the research question and supporting sub-questions, the study set out to identify the leadership styles addressed during the coaching process, and to explain the mechanisms used in the coaching sessions to create the awareness in balancing students studies and professional lives.

The aim was to show that value cannot be separated from the timing of the leadership coaching. The timing of when the leadership coaching is placed in the curricula, and how the pacing thereof, might enhance the value of leadership coaching. To address the research problem, the study objectives set out to discover what MBA students found useful in the leadership coaching program.

6.2 Conclusions regarding the leadership styles addressed during coaching

The purpose of the study is to explore the perceptions of value of coaching by MBA students. With no source of reference, it is difficult to assess the value of leadership coaching from the coached WBS MBA students' perspective.

The central question addressed by the study is: What are the WBS MBA students' perceptions of the value of leadership coaching component in their curriculum?

The first related sub-question that help answer the main question is;
What styles of leadership are addressed in the coaching sessions?

To explore to explore leadership development and the themes around the value of leadership coaching, the literature review was consulted. For this study, the qualitative research methodology approach was adopted. By means of semi-structured questionnaires, individual interviews were conducted with twelve MBA students who have undergone coaching offered as part of the leadership development program prescribed in their curricula. The transcripts of the interviews were analysed using inductive analysis methods, which produced seven themes on the MBA students' perceptions of value of leadership coaching.

The preconceived seven themes confirmed from the inductive analysis, are self-awareness, introspection, feedback, learnings, self-development, effective leadership development, managing balance and coaching effectiveness.

Without any doubt introspection was recognised as a soft skill learning tool that helped the MBA students conduct an assessment on themselves at a deeper inspection level. This process also allowed them to tap into real aspirations and being table to take stock of the relevant aspects in one's life. As it was clear that the situation did not offer any solutions or answers, having the emotional awareness and maturity contributed in the students being able to handle themselves professionally and personally.

One of the key findings was value placed on having a space for grounding the self, to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses, and to serve as a reminder for self-development. The presence of having someone to act as a sounding board,

that would also keep you accountable and instil some sense of responsibility was also the highlight for six of the participants.

- The other value placed was in the self-awareness created and developed by coaching as a learning tool to reach developmental goals as effective leaders.

- Being empowered to take ownership and responsibility for own performance was a key take-out for consciousness evoked in the students.

The benefit of self-development drew positive impressions, and was placed highly on being equipped with knowledge that helped fill the self-development skills gaps. Being challenged and taken out of comfort zones, through coaching, there was encouragement to progress further and beyond goals they would have initially set for themselves. Eight participants' roles had shifted since inception of their MBA studies, which saw to their careers being catapulted further.

- Future studies can include the role of self-development in leadership coaching on MBA students.

Receiving feedback was reported by six participants as an offering to learn more about oneself. The learnings that came from feedback received were the ability to structure their own thinking, and able to give feedback to others. Letting go of inhibiting traits and the ability to trust others with more responsibilities, came with learnings that when people feel they are being trusted, it makes embracing each other easier. Other feedback received was to have collaborations with others, and having better interactions by understanding people's environment in an effort to maintain good relationships. Having good listening skills was important feedback received by two students. What was important was opening up to what people have to say and ensuring that they are hearing correctly, without making any assumptions. Four of the participants, however, reported to have not received any impactful feedback or no feedback at all.

- Feedback from other stakeholders, such as co-workers and managers as a source of outcome measure on MBA students' development is probably an area of further research.

It is evident from the study that the participants benefited from leadership coaching. The value found includes awareness created in being able to define and develop own style of leadership from the leadership groups addressed in the coaching sessions. From all kinds of leadership styles that exist, coaching highlighted those relevant to an individual, and that resembled the best version of oneself. Leadership coaching also provided the students with awareness of a variety of leadership styles and learning when the different style/s need to change to suit different occasions.

Two forms of leadership styles, which were identified in the development of the students' leader effectiveness, defines authentic leadership. The leadership groups detected were defiant and compliant leadership which are reactive or defensive forms of leadership styles. Transformation of the two leadership styles was evident in the compliant leaders who are more aligned with "others" concept, with their developed ability to deal with matters head on, from the initial stance of avoiding to address issues. The transformation of a defiant leader who relates to "self", was seen in learning to trust others, by improved communication skills, embracing others, and being able to give feedback.

Most of the participants found value in leadership coaching. Those that related negative experiences benefitted in the end, as the goal for coaching was met eventually.

6.3 Conclusions regarding awareness created in developing own coping mechanism

With no source of reference, it is difficult to assess the value of leadership coaching from the coached WBS MBA students' perspective. The literature on leadership coaching as a supporting mechanism to help students manage balance was interrogated.

The research explored the MBA students' perceptions of the value gained from leadership coaching which was administered on them, and examined the coaching intervention that played a part in influencing these perceptions. This study used a qualitative research methodology approach. Semi-structured questionnaires were used during individual interviews with twelve MBA students who have undergone coaching offered as part of the leadership development programme prescribed in their curricula. The transcripts of the interviews were analysed using inductive and inductive analysis methods. The major themes discovered from the analysis were managing balance and .coaching effectiveness.

The central question addressed by the study is: What are the WBS MBA students' perceptions of the value of leadership coaching component in their curriculum? The second related sub-questions that help answer the main question is:

How do coaching sessions create awareness of balancing the students' studies and professional lives?

As the participants began and progressed through the MBA course, they found it to be an overwhelming and consistent deadline that stayed with them for a couple of months. Managing balance between work and studying proved to be a challenge for MBA students across the different cohorts. The participants from Fulltime studies who opted out of work in order to focus on studies, found it to be a struggle to incorporating social lives in their studies. It has also been shown that for the participants from the Part-time class who had initially claimed to be managing the workloads well, juggling personal lives was also a battle for them.

Progressing further in their career is inevitable for MBA students during the course of their studies. With more responsibilities that come with a new role, it proves difficult to be able to manage workload and studies.

Coaching has been instrumental in that, in the students' reflective space, awareness in managing balance was created. This helped with getting to a place where professional life and personal life were not in conflict. Maturity levels and emotional intelligence also contributed to how they were able to find and manage balance between the conflicting roles.

Considering other alternatives such as the flexibility offered by the MBA Program, is one of the days of self-support as a coping mechanism. By stretching the course for slightly longer, the participants have been able to pace themselves, and still manage to complete in time.

By keeping track or a schedule of what needs to be accomplished with regards to work and study is a helpful self-negotiation coping mechanism. Not forgetting to make provision for time with self, although that comes with effective management. It is also important to get breaks from the studies and work, by scheduling time off to spend time with family and friends, or to attend to personal life matters.

The use of shared drives in replacing syndicate meetings to collate information has also been helpful in that time wasted on travelling is saved, and assignments can be worked on by different syndicate members at the same time. It also helps to maintain focus on what needs to be done by sticking to a planned schedule and not missing any commitments. This eliminates any ripple effects of having missed one deadline. Changing habits such as waking up earlier than usual, helps those with small children to be able to get studies done in time to be able to tend to family matters. That way work study balance is maintained.

The support gained from family, friends or colleagues can make a huge difference in maintaining balance. The importance of asking for help and having conversations with the potential support structures can be seen in that the potential structures will then be able to understand what to expect with time taken up by studying. While it is a privilege to have an employer, who is generous to give time off for study purposes, it has been found that employers can be lenient when it comes to offer study leave.

- This paper proposes that balancing personal lives is another area that could also spark interest, and could be delved into.

Proactive individuals are action oriented. They are also persistent in implementing change successfully by searching for opportunities and taking initiative (Joo, 2005). It has been proven that the students who were proactive, were able to develop own coping mechanisms. Stemming from the above, it is clear that in order to help less proactive students develop skills and find effective strategies in dealing with their work-study roles, tools or frameworks need to be incorporated in leadership coaching. By convincing the academics to take a broader view of structuring programs differently, such an approach will be of benefit to the literature on leadership development.

- Incorporation of supporting tools and frameworks in coaching for MBA students is another area of research interest.

This research extends knowledge on the fact that leadership coaching plays an important role in unlocking and reinforcing the hidden potential in the students to develop effective mechanisms that intertwine the dual competing roles of study and work to help them cope.

6.4 Recommendations

Specific recommendations to key stakeholders in the academic and coaching practitioners are provided in this section. Suggestions for further research in the coaching field are also offered.

6.4.1 Recommendations for academics

Proper briefing of the coaching program is necessary in order to eliminate confusion. Key attributes to determining an effective approach in the development of MBA students is a structured leadership coaching program, with clearly defined objectives. In order to achieve this, it is recommended that coaching should be treated like an actual module.

The timing of the intervention is crucial in the MBA student's developmental journey. The coaching intervention's full effect can be felt if the coaching is scheduled earlier in the MBA Program, as it would have served as a guide for what lay ahead.

In order to gain full benefit, the coaching should be extended over the period it was initially designed for. The timing and the limited number of sessions made it feel rushed, and most started treating it like a tick box exercise.

An analogy raised by Bower and DSL (2012) is that key components such as choosing a phenomenal coach should not be mistaken to what derives value in leadership coaching. On the contrary, for the MBA student it was imperative to have good partnership between coach and client in order to derive benefits from leadership coaching. Finding a good match between the coach and the coachee and not just face matching is a good base for allocation of coaches. Attributes to be considered for a good coach-coachee match are commonalities in personality, professional backgrounds, experiences, interests and cultural backgrounds.

The role of MBTI (Myers Briggs Test) reports in allocation of coaches is another interesting area of research for pursuing.

6.4.2 Recommendations for coaching practitioners

Using professional coaches, who seem to know what they are doing tends to receive acknowledgement. As a result, the coaches find it in themselves to be fully immersed in the program.

The following section offers suggestions for further research

6.5 Suggestions for further research

This is the first research to date at the Wits Business School to explore perceptions of value of leadership coaching on development of MBA students as effective leaders, and coaching support in devising mechanisms to help students maintain balance in their work and study load.

6.5.1 Future studies can include the role of self-development in leadership coaching on MBA students.

6.5.2 Effective management of work and study is a viable area for pursuing future research.

6.5.3 This paper proposes that balancing personal lives is another area that could also spark research interest.

6.5.4 As students embark on their MBA, future studies on the value of coaching should include feedback from other stakeholders, such as colleagues and their direct reports as sources for measuring outcomes.

6.5.5 The role of MBTI reports in allocation of coaches is another interesting area of research worth pursuing.

6.5.6 The value of coaching support tools and frameworks in MBA programmes is another area of research interest.

This study contributes to literature by, first, exploring the value of leadership coaching in developing students as effective leaders, and secondly, by investigating the leadership styles that were addressed during coaching. Lastly, by investigating the relationship between leadership coaching support and the student outcomes of managing the balance between the two roles, with the awareness created in them to devise own mechanisms to cope with the demanding roles.

The limitations to the work however, are such that a disproportionate sample containing males was used. There is also limited distinction made between gender, ethnicity, level of employment or current circumstances, with no association with age, whatsoever. In addition, the focus of this study limits the application of the findings across other universities as the sample was gathered from one university in one country. The focus of the study was also on a smaller sample of MBA students. It is recommended that larger and more diverse samples need to be assessed and a greater balance should be aimed by studies in the future research.

The information will now be available on which to base this educational innovation for continuous improvement, where no previous records were available on the benefits of coached MBA students. This research has helped improve understanding the students' development as effective leaders, through the awareness created in being able to identify own leadership styles. The research also assisted in providing information on the developed coping mechanisms to balance work, study and personal challenges, and through coaching support.

The desirability of conducting this research stems from the researcher as a support member of the MBA Academic Program at the Wits Business School, to contribute to the body of coaching knowledge. A lot was learnt from the research experience on students perceptions of the value of leadership coaching. The entire process of going through literature, carrying out the interviews and tying up the findings with the literature provided heightening insights and understanding of value of leadership coaching.

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1. APPENDIX A - RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

MBA STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF VALUE OF LEADERSHIP COACHING

Your participation in completing the questions below is greatly appreciated. Be assured that responses will be treated in strict confidence, and no names will be revealed in my research findings for any future publication.

SECTION 1: BACKGROUND DETAILS

Participant Number	
MBA Cohort	
MBA first year of registration	
MBA graduation year	
Designation	
Number of years in this role	
Age	
Race	
Sex	

SECTION 2: LEADERSHIP COACHING OBJECTIVES

1. What do you think was the purpose of the MBA coaching programme?

2. What was the briefing on the coaching program?

3. How was the allocation of coaches done?

4. Which aspects of your coaching engagement did you find useful? Why?

5. Which aspects of coaching did you find unproductive? Why?

6. How did you address those challenges?

SECTION 3: THEME: EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

7. Did you accomplish the developmental goals you set with your coach? Please elaborate

8. In what way did coaching help you achieve your set goals?

9. What feedback have you received about your developmental process?

10. How have you acted on the feedback?

11. What have you learned about yourself?

12. What kind of leader do you consider yourself to be, and why?

SECTION 4: THEME: COACHING AS A SUPPORTING MECHANISM

13. Did you find it difficult to maintain balance in your studies and work load? Please elaborate

14. What was most difficult to balance in terms of managing your studies and work demands?

15. Did the coaching include mechanisms in helping you balance the demanding aspects of your studies and work? If so, explain how.

16. Did you find that useful? If so, how?

17. If not, how do you think it would have been helpful?

18. What else do you think that the coaching program could have offered?

2. APPENDIX B - RESEARCH PERMISSION LETTER

The Graduate School of Business Administration

2 St David's Place, Parktown, Johannesburg, South Africa

P O Box 98, Wits, 2050

Telephone: +27 11 717 3600, Facsimile: + 27 11 717 3514

Website: www.wbs.ac.za



The Graduate School of Business Administration

The Ethics Committee

APPROVAL TO USE AND DISCLOSE WITS BUSINESS SCHOOL NAME IN RESEARCH STUDY

This serves to confirm that I give approval to Motsei Choabi, Student Number 1741879 to disclose and use the name Wits Business School in her research study titled **The Perceptions of value of leadership coaching by Master of Business Administration Students at Wits Business School**.

Once completed, I would like to have a copy of the research findings, as it might have application in WBS on how we deliver our offering. I would like to urge her to also ensure she adheres to all requirements in respect of ethics, registration, approvals, etc.

Regards and best wishes with her studies.

Prof Jannie Rossouw
Interim Head of School
Wits Business School

From: Jannie Rossouw
Sent: Friday, 24 April 2020 12:52
To: Phumla Jili <phumla.jili@wits.ac.za>; Motsei Choabi <motsei.choabi@wits.ac.za>
Subject: FW: Permission to disclose institution name in my research

Dear collegaues

I do not have an electronic signature.

This e-mail therefore serves as approval for: APPROVAL TO USE AND DISCLOSE WITS BUSINESS SCHOOL NAME IN RESEARCH STUDY by Motsei Choabi. Please see the attached letter.

Regards

Jannie Rossouw

3. APPENDIX C – STUDENT INFORMATION SHEET

The Graduate School of Business Administration

2 St David's Place, Parktown, Johannesburg, South Africa

P O Box 98, Wits, 2050

Telephone: +27 11 717 3600, Facsimile: + 27 11 717 3514

Website: www.wbs.ac.za



The Graduate School of Business Administration

REQUEST TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH STUDY

My name is Motsei Choabi, a student in Master of Management in Business and Executive Coaching. I am conducting research in order to complete and graduate for my degree.

The purpose of my research topic is to explore **the perceptions of value of leadership coaching by Master of Business Administration students at Wits Business School.**

My request is for you to participate in a one on one twenty to thirty minutes interview. I would also request your permission to record the interview. This is purely to ensure that the details shared are accurate and correspond with my notes presented at a later stage.

I would like to mention that this is purely voluntary on your part, and that you are not coerced to participate in any way. You also have the liberty of stopping to participate at any stage. There are no disadvantages or repercussions for choosing not to participate or withdrawing from the study.

There will be no personal costs to you if you participate in this project, and you will not receive any direct benefits from participation. The interview will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not be asking for your name or any identifying information. The information you give to me will be held securely and not disclosed to anyone else. I will be using a pseudonym to represent your participation in my final research report.

This study has received due approval from the Head of Wits Business School. For any complaints or queries pertaining to any ethical or harmful aspects of the research, please feel free to refer them to the Research Office, University of Witwatersrand, 011 717 1328.

Regards



Motsei Choabi

4. APPENDIX D - INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM



INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

The perceptions of value of leadership coaching by Master of Business Administration students at Wits Business School

Name of researcher Motsei Choabi

I, ……declare that the research has been explained to me and I understand what my participation will involve.

Please tick where applicable

YES	NO	
☐	☐	I agree to take part in the study
☐	☐	I agree that the interview may be recorded for the above study
☐	☐	I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I am not under any coercion to participate
☐	☐	I agree that my participation will remain anonymous
☐	☐	I understand this research is not for my personal benefit at any point in time
☐	☐	I agree that the researcher may use anonymous quotes in her research report

Name of Student	**Signature**	**Date**
Name of Interviewer	**Signature**	**Date**

5. APPENDIX E – ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE **PROTOCOL NUMBER: WBS/BA1741879/369**

PROJECT TITLE The perceptions of value of Leadership coaching by Master of Business Administration students at Wits Business School

INVESTIGATOR	Ms Motsei Choabi
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	MM (Business & Executive Coaching)
DATE CONSIDERED	12 June 2020
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	MINIMAL RISK
EXPIRY DATE	28 FEBRUARY 2021

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 26 June 2020 **CHAIRPERSON** _____
(Dr MDJ Matshabaphala)

cc: Supervisor: Dr Matshedisho

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am are authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.

_____ 26 / 06 / 20

Signature **Date**

6. APPENDIX F – THEMES

Themes	**Categories**
Introspection	Searching and finding self Understanding self
Self awareness	
Reflections space	Responsibility and accountability Self reflection Engaging conversation with coach
Self development	Self improvement
	Motivation to succeed
	Development plan
	Behavioral changes
Feedback	Receiving feedback Giving feedback to others
Learnings	Communication skills

	Collaboration with others Adopting listening skills Trust
Effective Leadership traits	Identifying Leadership styles
i) Empowerment	
Managing balance effectively	Challenges Awareness created in finding own coping mechanisms
Coaching effectiveness	Coaching Programme structure Timing of the Programme Coach allocation

7. APPENDIX G – CONSISTENCY MATRIX

RQ #	State Research Question or Objective	State literature-based proposition	State conclusion or answer based on own research	Highlight key differences between your initial propositions and your findings – this is your contribution to knowledge
1	What are the MBA students perceptions of the value of leadership coaching component in their curriculum	The value of leadership coaching as a teaching and learning strategy, is in developing an MBA student who is already at the top of their fields. For their learning and development and performance improvement, the students are empowered to take ownership and responsibility into becoming effective leaders. (R. Boyatzis & Saatcioglu, 2008; Crossan et al., 2013; Hunt & Weintraub, 2004;	Maturity levels and emotional intelligence also play a role in being able to inspect as coaching does not offer solutions or answers	Leadership coaching is effective in the development of MBA students, if it is structured, the objectives are defined, the coaching approach is communicated effectively. Partnership between coach and client is also key towards creating benefits of leadership coaching

RQ #	State Research Question or Objective	State literature-based proposition	State conclusion or answer based on own research	Highlight key differences between your initial propositions and your findings – this is your contribution to knowledge
		Ladegard & Gjerde, 2014; Lawrence et al., 2018; Palmer & Whybrow, 2014; Steiner et al., 2018; Witherspoon et al., 1997; Woodward & Shaffakat, 2016)		
1.1	What styles of leadership are addressed in the coaching sessions?	Effective leadership is measured by clear understanding and identification of own leadership style (Campion, 2018)	Individuals have a mix of leadership styles inherent in them.	Being able to adapt to different situations, also defines good leader.
1.2	How do coaching sessions create awareness of balancing	Students are empowered to take ownership and responsibility into becoming effective leaders.	Leadership coaching benefit not only with creating awareness in the students to work out work and study	Proactive students are able to devise their own mechanisms, while non proactive students might need frameworks in coping mechanisms

RQ #	State Research Question or Objective	State literature-based proposition	State conclusion or answer based on own research	Highlight key differences between your initial propositions and your findings – this is your contribution to knowledge
	the students' studies and professional lives?	Leadership coaching effectiveness is linked with the intervention as a supporting framework to maintain life balance (Hunt & Weintraub, 2004; Le Roux, 2018; Lyons, 2000; Redshaw, 2000)	balance, but also personal lives	