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Guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement

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Guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement

Linda Potgieter

1898913

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 the field of Business Executive Coaching

Johannesburg, 2019

ABSTRACT

Employee engagement is a driver of organisational performance, with leaders' emotional states considered to have an influence on their employees' engagement levels. The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of the effect of emotional contagion of leaders on employee engagement, toward informing the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to better manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

This study selected a qualitative research approach, utilising semi-structured interviews to explore the perceptions of employees, leaders and coaches in relation to leaders' emotional contagion and the effect thereof on employee engagement. The coaches were also interviewed for information on their coaching approach in working with leaders' emotional contagion effect on their employees. Thematic analysis was applied to the interview data to identify the key themes.

Key findings of the research included that leaders are perceived to have an emotional contagion effect on employees and their engagement levels. Also, leaders sought coaching based on triggers of their negative emotional contagion effect, and finally that the development of emotional intelligence through coaching was key to helping leaders better manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. A coaching framework and guidelines were developed based on the research findings, which focuses on a coaching approach for helping leaders to understand their triggers, emotional states and behaviours, the impact thereof on their employees' and their engagement, towards assisting them to better manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

While the development of leaders' emotional intelligence is addressed in the literature, the key contribution of this study is a recommended leadership coaching framework aimed at leadership coaches for specifically assisting leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

KEYWORDS: Leaders, emotional contagion, leadership coaching, employee engagement, emotional labour, emotional Intelligence

DECLARATION

I, ____Linda Potgieter _____, declare that this research report is my own work except as indicated in the references and acknowledgements. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Management in the field of Business Executive Coaching at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Name: Linda Potgieter Signature:

Signed at ……Parktown ……

On the ……28th …….. day of ……February…… 2020…..

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband Johan and my daughter Hannah who supported me throughout my journey of study (not only thorough this thesis). Thank you for all the love, encouragement, and care and support every step of the way.

“Hannah, Mommy loved having you as her study buddy”.

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To my family, my mom and dad and my sisters for their support and love and reassurance that I could do this.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

EC: Emotional Contagion

EI: Emotional Intelligence

EIL: Emotionally Intelligent Leaders Model

EQ: Emotional Quotient

ESCI: Emotional Social Competency Inventory

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of the effect of the emotional contagion of leaders' on employee' engagement, toward informing the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. Figure 1 below is a diagrammatic representation of the purpose of the study. The study was done through qualitative research exploring the perceptions of coaches, leaders and employees. The development of guidelines for coaches will contribute to the practice of professional coaching, which is an emerging field.

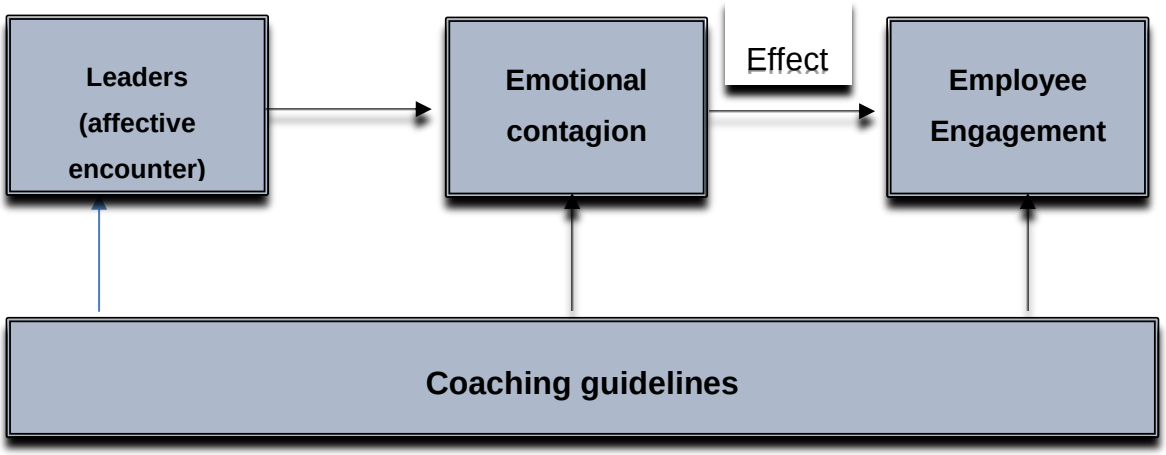

Figure 1: Purpose of the study

Figure 1 forms the conceptual framework of the study and shows how leaders' affective encounters with their employees may create a better understanding of leaders' emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. Establishing the possible effect of the emotional contagion may help achieve the development of guidelines for coaches to coach leaders to better manage their emotional contagion effect on their employees and therefore on employee engagement.

1.2 Context of the study

Leaders in organisations are said to have a great deal of influence on the employees they lead (Anitha, 2014). Their emotional states, whether positive or negative, may influence the people around them and is referred to as emotional contagion (Tee, 2015).

Schoenewolf (1990, p. 49) defined emotional contagion as “a process in which a person or group influences the emotions or behavior of another person or group through the conscious or unconscious induction of emotion states and behavioral attitudes”. In other words, the emotions or moods of a leader are infectious and may influence others in their work context. Hatfield, Bensman, Thornton, and Rapson (2014, p. 161) defined emotional contagion as “the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronise facial expressions, vocalisation, posture, and movements with those of another person and consequently to converge emotionally”.

Emotional contagion is regarded as a practice that allows the sharing or transmission of emotions from one person to another and frequently occurs without awareness or knowledge (although it can also be deliberately prompted) (Barsade & Gibson, 2007).

This study was conducted with employees and leaders from various organisations and across various industries. The coaches selected had also worked in a variety of organisations, industries and with various levels of leaders. The study was aimed at exploring the perceptions of the effect of emotional contagion of leaders on employee engagement, toward informing the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. Much of the research conducted around emotional contagion is focused on leadership development and its impact on a group or teams performance (Barsade, 2002; Dasborough, Ashkanasy, Tee, & Herman, 2009; Tee, 2015). There is little information about emotional contagion and its effect on employee engagement, and there is opportunity to specifically explore the perceptions of the effect of leaders’ emotional contagion on employee engagement.

In organisations, there is an emphasis on improving employee engagement as it is one of the many drivers of organisational performance (Macey & Schneider, 2008)**.** Employee engagement according to Czarnowsky (2008, p. 6) is defined as “Employees who are mentally and emotionally invested in their work and in contributing to their employer’s success”. Research has indicated that leaders and their level of engagement contribute to their employees’ engagement (Kular, Gatenby, Rees, Soane, & Truss, 2008). While the phenomenon of emotional contagion of leaders has been identified**,** (Halverson, 2004) more research is required to understand its dynamics and its effect on employee engagement (Vijayalakshmi & Bhattacharyya, 2012).

The importance of emotional intelligence (EI) for leaders was stressed by Goleman (1995) and was defined by him as being able to know and realise your own emotions and to identify, appreciate and influence others’ emotions. The concept of emotional intelligence has been focused on in leadership development (Johnson, 2008) and the coaching field (Grant, 2007), with a few models and tools recommended for developing emotional intelligence (Carey, Philippon, & Cummings, 2011)**.** However, it seems that not much emphasis has been placed on coaching leaders with regard to the concept of emotional contagion and its effect, which are important for leaders to improve employee engagement.

1.3 Research problem

Leaders’ emotional contagion affects the emotional states of employees (Vijayalakshmi & Bhattacharyya, 2012). The emotional contagion could be either positive or negative depending on the leaders’ emotional states. Meaning leaders may have an effect on employees and their level of engagement and commitment to the organisation in either a positive way or a negative way (van Knippenberg & van Kleef, 2016). It is therefore critical that leaders are first able to identify their emotional contagion effect and secondly, to understand the effect they have on employees and, more specifically, on employee engagement. The literature review showed a body of knowledge around emotional intelligence, leadership development and how leaders can develop their emotional intelligence to become better leaders (Goleman, 2017). From the literature search, it appeared that

limited research had been conducted around the understanding and effect that leaders' emotional contagion has on employees' and more specifically on employee engagement.

This research explored the perceptions of employees and leaders, of the leaders' emotional contagion effect with a view to developing a coaching framework for coaching leaders to better manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. By exploring the perceptions of the effect of emotional contagion on employee engagement, approaches to managing the emotional contagion effect may emerge. These approaches could assist with the development of coaching guidelines for coaches. Leaders who receive coaching based on these guidelines may be better equipped to manage and deal with the emotional contagion effect, either positive or negative (Tee, 2015).

1.4 Research objectives

1. To explore employees' perceptions of the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement.
2. To articulate leaders' understanding of the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement.
3. To explore coaches' approach to coaching leaders in relation to the emotional contagion effect on their employees with a view toward developing guidelines for coaches to assist leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

1.5 Research questions

i. What are the employees' perceptions of the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement?
ii. What do leaders understand about the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement?
iii. What components need to be included in the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement?

1.6 Significance of the study

The significance of this study was to highlight the perceptions of the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement. This will contribute to the body of knowledge on the perceived effect and dynamics of emotional contagion (positive or negative) on employee engagement, which is one of the many key contributors to organisational performance (Bono & Ilies, 2006; Halverson, 2004; Vijayalakshmi & Bhattacharyya, 2012; Volmer, 2012). The study will also contribute to the body of knowledge on leadership development at an organisational level as well as at an individual leader level. In addition, this study will contribute to the knowledge and practice of leadership coaching through the development of coaching guidelines. This will assist leadership coaches with potential coaching guidelines for coaching leaders that may assist leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. The development of these coaching guidelines will also contribute to coaching practices, an emerging field requiring this kind of research.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

The study did not focus on the personal relationships of the leader but rather only working relationships that affect employee engagement.

This study was not specific to a company or industry but rather spanned across industries and companies but only companies who provide access to conduct interviews were included.

The study was focused on senior to middle management leaders but not executives or 'C' suite level leaders. The study included employees reporting to senior leaders, but not direct reports of the leaders being interviewed. This measure was to provide a level of trust and safety for employees to be open in their interviews. Employees were then free to discuss any leadership experience they may have had or encountered more recently and/or in their past. The study did not include colleagues or direct supervisors of leaders, as these relationships were wide of the scope of the study and had no bearing on employee engagement in this context.

The study was not specific to gender or race as this was a generalised study of leaders' effect of emotional contagion on employee engagement.

The study included interviewing five leaders in different workplace contexts as well as five employees (who do not report to the leaders being interviewed).

The study also included interviewing five coaches who have had experience in coaching senior and middle management leaders.

1.8 Definition of terms

Coaching is "a partnership of equals whose aim is to achieve speedy, increased and sustainable effectiveness through focused learning in every aspect of the client's life. Coaching raises self-awareness and identifies choices. Coaching is Working to the client's agenda the coach and client have the sole aim of closing the gaps between potential and performance" (Rodgers, 2012, p. 7).

Emotional contagion is defined as "the tendency to automatically mimic and synchronise facial expressions, vocalisation, posture, and movements with those of another person and consequently to converge emotionally" (Hatfield et al., 2014).

Emotional intelligence as defined by Salovey and Mayer (1990, p. 5) is "the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions".

Emotional labour is defined as "managing one's feelings and behaviours in situations that require it or instances when a job requires it" (Humphrey, Pollack, & Hawver, 2008, p. 153).

Employee engagement is defined as "employees who are mentally and emotionally invested in their work and in contributing to their employer's success" (Czarnowsky, 2008, p. 6).

Leadership is "a process of social influence, which maximizes the efforts of others, towards the achievement of a goal" (Kruse, 2013, p. 3)

1.9 Assumptions

Five key assumptions were made in this research.

The first assumption made was that the relationship between employees and leaders did not affect employees' experience of leaders' emotional contagion on their engagement levels.

The second assumption made was that the levels of power in the working relationship did not have an influence on the leader emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

The third assumption made was that employee engagement was affected by emotional contagion of leaders.

The fourth assumption made was that leaders, employees and coaches interviewed for this study were able to articulate their experiences and/or perceptions of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement.

The final assumption made was that the employees, interviewed in the research, may bring experiences of other emotional contagion effect of leaders and not just their current experiences and relate these to their engagement as an employee.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study aimed to establish in research objective one, what the employees' perceptions were of the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement; in research objective two, the leaders' perceptions of the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement; and finally, in research objective three, some guidelines for coaching leaders to manage the emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

In the first part of the literature review, the key concepts of emotional contagion, employee engagement, emotional intelligence and leadership coaching were defined. Thereafter the literature was reviewed to address each of the three research questions of this study. The second part of the review, therefore, assessed the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employees, particularly on employee engagement. The third part of the literature review looked at the literature on leadership development with a focus on emotional intelligence and emotional labour, and the final element of the review focused on leadership coaching with the opportunity to explore possible guidelines for coaching leaders to manage the effect of emotional contagion on employee engagement.

2.2 Key Concepts and background discussion

The literature review for this study revealed many topics and concepts that are related to leaders' emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. Concepts such as emotional labour, leadership style, relationships between leaders and employees, employee engagement, emotional contagion, coaching and emotional intelligence all presented strongly in the literature. For ease of understanding and to focus the study, the concepts were grouped into four main themes, being:

- Emotional contagion
- Employee engagement

- Emotional intelligence
- Coaching of leaders

Each of these concepts will be discussed separately with the relevant sub-topics.

2.2.1 Emotional Contagion

Emotional contagion is the process where people's behaviours and attitudes are influenced by others (Schoenewolf, 1990). The literature review focused on studies conducted on emotional contagion and focused on the emotional contagion of leaders' behaviour on employees and their engagement in the workplace. The aim was to explore what the literature said about the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement and to develop guidelines for coaching leaders in managing their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

Pioneers of emotional contagion go as far back as 1895 when Le Bon (1895) and McDougall (1923) (as cited by Apfelbaum & McGuire, 1986) believed that "hysterical contagion" or crowd theory explained why people did things in groups and caused them to behave in a certain way, but it was Hatfield, Cacioppo, and Rapson (1993, p. 100) and their research on primitive emotional contagion who defined emotional contagion as "an automatic and subconscious transfer of emotions from person to person". Schoenewolf (1990, p. 49) defined emotional contagion as "a process in which a person or group influences the emotions or behaviour of another person or group through the conscious or unconscious induction of emotional states and behavioural attitudes". Kelly and Barsade (2001, p. 106) defined emotional contagion as a "process whereby the moods and emotion of one individual are transferred to nearby individuals". More recently emotional contagion has been recognised in the framework of leadership, as leaders and their emotional states, whether positive or negative, influencing the people around them and is referred to as emotional contagion (Tee, 2015).

Each of these definitions explains emotional contagion and provide a context or situation, but it is the definition of Tee (2015) that leaders' emotional states, whether positive or negative, influence their people and is referred to as

emotional contagion, which is most pertinent to the study and describes the concept well for the context within which it is required.

2.2.2 Employee engagement

Employee engagement is a complex and multifaceted concept and has long since been a concept that organisations have tried to use to their advantage, both in competitiveness and profitability. Employee engagement is defined as "employees who are mentally and emotionally invested in their work and in contributing to their employer's success" (Czarnowsky, 2008, p. 6). Expanding the definition from the individual to organisational level, Alagaraja and Shuck (2015, p. 18) defined engagement as "an individual employee's cognitive, emotional, and behavioural states directed toward desired organisational outcomes". Kumar and Pansari (2016) echo this by stating that happy, engaged employees excel and perform better than those employees who are disengaged. According to Neale et al. (2011), an engaged workforce builds strong relationships with their employees and customers through trust and honesty, and this contributes to the profitability of the organisation.

Leadership plays an important role and has been presented as significant in building employee engagement (Sorenson, 2013) with Hewitt, Davis, and Lashley (2014) also advocating the role of effective leadership and its influence on employee engagement. Goleman, Boyatzis, and McKee (2013) suggest that leaders act as the organisation's emotional guide and that emotions play a major role in getting work done. It stands to reason that leaders, therefore, affect employees' emotional states and therefore their engagement levels. The old saying that 'people leave managers, not the organisation' rings true and some researchers suggest that leadership is one of the ultimate factors affecting employee discernments in the workplace, and therefore, employee engagement (Attridge, 2009; Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002; Macey & Schneider, 2008; May, Gilson, & Harter, 2004; Wang & Walumbwa, 2007; Xu & Thomas, 2011).

2.2.3 Emotional intelligence

Literature shows that leaders who have the skill of emotional intelligence are more effective (Bono & Ilies, 2006; Goleman, 2017; Sy, Côté, & Saavedra, 2005). Salovey and Mayer (1990, p. 189) define emotional intelligence as “the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one’s thinking and actions”. While several definitions have emerged since then, particularly from Goleman (1995), this definition was best suited for this study as it described the process that leaders could use to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

2.2.4 Coaching of leaders

Leaders can learn the skill of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) and the research shows that coaching is an effective method to learn these skills (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2001). Coaching is viewed as helping leaders achieve their personal and professional goals, improve creativity, manage change and conflict, and build the skills of fostering relationships and improving communication (Grant, 2007). As the definition from Rodgers (2012, p. 7) outlines:

> coaching is a partnership of equals whose aim is to achieve speedy, increased and sustainable effectiveness through focused learning in every aspect of the client’s life. Coaching helps raise self-awareness and identifies choices. Working to the client’s agenda, the coach and client have the sole aim of closing the gaps between potential and performance.

This definition tells us that coaching is a developmental and constructive way to develop leaders and improve performance. Neale et al. (2011) strongly believe that coaching is what creates sustainability of change over time. They also believe that a combination of coaching supported by emotional intelligence assessments is a powerful blend that can improve and help businesses remain competitive.

2.3 The effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement

This section reviewed literature in relation to the first research question of the study, which was: what are the employees' perceptions of the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement? The literature review focused on the emotional contagion of leaders and the effect on employee engagement. The key focus areas in this research question were emotional contagion, employee engagement and leadership. Each of these was discussed independently with an attempt to understand the perceptions of the effect of leaders' emotional contagions on employee engagement.

2.3.1 Emotional contagion

Emotional contagion has been widely researched in the organisational psychology realm and the psychology discipline (Barsade, 2002; Hatfield et al., 1993). The literature revealed that leaders' emotional contagion had an effect on group behaviour and group performance (Barsade, 2002; Johnson, 2008; Volmer, 2012). Group contagion was also highlighted as having an effect on individuals (Dasborough et al., 2009). From this one can conclude that leaders' emotional contagion may have an effect on group engagement, which in turn could have an effect on individual employee engagement.

In the literature covered, the emotional contagion of leaders was viewed from the perspective of moods, and the effect of the moods of leaders, on groups and teams (Bono & Ilies, 2006; Neumann & Strack, 2000; Sy et al., 2005). Goleman et al. (2013) said leaders' emotional reactions are critical - and the group or team view these reactions as the most important response to a situation. Based on this, employees will model their responses to the situation, and this is most prevalent in circumstances of uncertainty. The role of a leader, Goleman et al. (2013) believes, is, therefore, to influence the team's or group's collective emotions positively and to dilute noise and disruptions that are created by toxic emotions.

Bono and Ilies (2006) argued that if leaders are optimistic and show positive emotions, their employees would feel more positive. More recently, research by van Knippenberg and van Kleef (2016) sketched leadership and affect, and its influence on employees. They discuss two distinctive influences; being emotional contagion, and how employees interpret emotional displays which they refer to as cognitive interpretation (van Knippenberg & van Kleef, 2016). They finally concluded that leaders who display positive affect; for example, happiness, excitement or humour, are more effective than leaders who display negative emotional impact; for example, anger or sadness. In addition, they suggested that employees are more likely to want to work with optimistic leaders and will be more likely to judge their leaders in a positive light. Conversely, the study conducted by Koning and Van Kleef (2015) showed that employees who experienced negative moods of a leader were more likely to perform better, as the employees perceived their performance as inadequate and felt the need to make improvements. However, the research by Goleman (2017) showed performance improvement was believed unsustainable, creating an atmosphere of fear-driven leadership which showed small increases in productivity over a short period, but was not a sustainable or long-term measure of successful performance improvements.

The concept of active events theory was introduced by Weiss and Cropanzano (1996), who suggested that employees' behaviours, moods and feelings are influenced by events in the workplace. Their research suggested that the employee may react in two possible ways; firstly, an instinctive emotional response to an event which may be as a result of affective driven behaviour; or secondly, a judgement-driven behaviour which could be influenced by employees' attitudes and understanding of the behaviour (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). In more recent research Volmer (2012), supports their suggestion and stated that emotional events can affect employees attitudes, behaviours and performance. This view was expanded upon and linked active events theory to emotional contagion (Judge, Weiss, Kammeyer-Mueller, & Hulin, 2017). From the above, one can assume that events experienced by employees with their leader can have an effect on employee engagement.

Coupled to active events theory, is the concept of cognitive appraisal theory, first introduced by Scherer (1999) and later expanded upon by Smith and Kirby (2001), which stated that employees will first attempt to make meaning of events that happen at work and then decide how to react to these events. Every employee will interpret events and make meaning from them based on their interpretation and frame of reference (Chaffee & McLeod, 2017), which means that employees may all have a different emotional reaction to the same event.

The implication of affective events theory and cognitive appraisal theory for this study is that a leader's emotional contagion may affect how employees attempt to make meaning of events, and further then, decide how to emotionally react these events. This view is supported by van Knippenberg and van Kleef (2016), who argued that leader affective displays may result in emotional contagion and that employees' attitudes, behaviours and moods may be influenced through emotional contagion effect. They, therefore, proposed that the influence of leaders' affective displays is emotional contagion. Goleman et al. (2013) believe "the greater the leader's skill at transmitting emotions, the more forcefully the emotions will spread" either in a positive or in a negative manner.

There has been vast research that has been conducted on the effects of leaders and their impact on employee well-being and happiness, but little has been specifically conducted on the actual emotional contagion of leaders and the effect on employee engagement (Skakon, Nielsen, Borg, & Guzman, 2010).

From the literature, it is clear that leaders' emotions, affective displays, moods, attitudes and behaviours do have an effect on employees' and therefore on employee engagement.

2.3.2 Employee engagement

As mentioned, employee engagement is a complex and multifaceted concept. It has been focused on as one of many factors of organisational performance over the last few years (Anitha, 2014). Studies have been conducted on the effect of employee engagement on, for example, concepts such as absenteeism, turnover, employee performance and organisational citizenship. Organisational

citizenship refers to an employee's enthusiasm to do more than the basic job expected of them, that is, to voluntarily do more for both the organisation and the team without expecting anything in return (Koning & Van Kleef, 2015).

Many organisations view employee engagement as a competitive advantage (Kumar & Pansari, 2016). Consequently, organisations are continuously trying to understand what drives employee engagement through research and surveys to better understand the key drivers of employee engagement (Kumar & Pansari, 2016). In this study and the literature reviewed, the aim was to understand some of the key drivers of employee engagement and explore the perceptions of the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement. From the readings, it has already been established that leaders and leadership do have an effect on employee engagement (Popli & Rizvi, 2016). Goleman et al. (2013, p. 20) believe that "the glue that holds people together in a team and that commits people to an organization, is the emotions they feel".

Active events theory and cognitive appraisal theory discussed earlier have some bearing on how employees experience events and then decide how to react to these events emotionally (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). These theories both allude to the fact that employees may have emotional reactions to events that take place in the workplace and their experiences, either positive or negative, will have the same effect on their engagement (Koning & Van Kleef, 2015).

Organisations are looking at what they can do to improve employee engagement as studies have shown that employees who are engaged perform better at work, are better colleagues and team players, and overall, have the organisation's best interest at heart (Koning & Van Kleef, 2015). In a study conducted by Anitha (2014), some of the key issues affecting employee engagement emerged as leadership, work setting, team and colleagues, and employee wellbeing. For the present study, leadership will be the focus as the factor influencing employee engagement, and more specifically, the perceived effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement. Leadership is discussed separately in the next section.

Studies have shown that having engaged employees reduces staff turnover, improves employee performance, improves productivity and retains customers. Engaged employees proved to be happier at work and in their personal life (Kular et al., 2008). By understanding what drives engagement or what creates disengagement, organisations are better able to put measures in place to control and manage employee engagement. A study conducted by Koning and Van Kleef (2015) showed that leaders' manifestation of emotions, specifically anger when displayed inappropriately, affects employees' intent to engage in organisation citizen behaviours and this could have a resultant effect on employee engagement. The results of the same study showed that employees were less willing to participate voluntarily in work or duties above and beyond their requirements after a leader displayed inappropriate emotional reactions. Goleman et al. (2013) say that negative emotions, especially chronic anger and anxiety, are powerful disturbances of work and consume the focus from the task at hand. They also stated that leaders "who spread bad moods are simply bad for business and those who pass along good moods help drive a business's success" (p. 35).

2.3.3 Leadership

Leadership influence on employee engagement has been well researched (Anitha, 2014; Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, & Liu, 2008; Kular et al., 2008; Michel & González-Morales, 2013). The conclusion from this research indicated that leaders, their leadership style, communication and displays of emotions have a bearing on employee engagement.

Studies showed that leaders who are able to elicit emotional responses from employees are more likely to achieve desired change (Bono & Ilies, 2006). This implies that leaders' emotional contagion could achieve desired change and influence employee engagement. Conversely, leaders' more negative emotions could have an adverse effect on employee engagement, as found by Koning and Van Kleef (2015). Their study showed that ŀeaders' expressions of anger, when displayed inappropriately, affected the employees' intentions to engage in organisation citizen behaviour.

Some of the research indicated that leadership styles, such as transformational leaders and charismatic leaders, have more of emotional influence on employees than other leadership styles (Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). Charismatic leadership style in the study conducted by Alarcon, Lyons, and Tartaglia (2010) showed a significant effect on employee engagement. What may be inferred from this research is that employee engagement could be affected by leadership styles which have specific attributes. In other words, in some instances, specific leadership styles may have more, or less, of emotional contagion effect on employees than others. This finding speaks to the factor of how susceptible employees may be to a leader's emotional contagion. Some employees would be more susceptible than others for various reasons as outlined by Johnson (2008); for example, people who tend to be more empathetic. Therefore, employees who are able to understand and feel the emotions of others (Clark, 1980) are more likely to be vulnerable to the emotional contagion of a charismatic leader, either positively or negatively.

The level of power in a relationship has also been shown to have an impact on the susceptibility of emotional contagion (Hsee, Hatfield, Carlson, & Chemtob, 1990). Bono and Ilies (2006) showed that because leaders have the positional power advantage, they have more opportunity to transmit emotions. The converse was discovered in a study by Dasborough et al. (2009) which stated leaders (due to their greater power) were more susceptible to emotional contagion. What this does show is that the relationship and power balance within a leader employee dynamic is an important factor and should not be devalued.

Taken together, the literature showed that leadership does have an impact on employee engagement. The literature also revealed that emotional contagion of leaders has an effect on employees. However, the research is limited to the influence of leaders' emotional contagion, specifically on employee engagement.

2.3.4 Proposition 1

The literature review shows that leadership does have an impact on employees and more specifically, a leaders' emotional contagion does have an effect on employee engagement (Koning & Van Kleef, 2015; van Knippenberg & van Kleef,

2016). Leaders' emotional states, whether positive or negative, influence the people around them and is referred to as emotional contagion (Tee, 2015).

The first proposition is that leaders' emotional contagion does have an effect on employee engagement.

2.4 Leaders' understanding of the effect of emotional contagion on employee engagement

In research question two, leaders' understanding of the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement was explored. The literature reviewed addressed the research question and focused on the concept of emotional labour and how leaders use emotional labour.

Managing one's feelings and behaviours in situations that require it, or instances when a job requires it is referred to as emotional labour (Humphrey et al., 2008). Hochschild first defined emotional labour in 1983 (Hochschild, Irwin, & Ptashne, 1983) and it was later reviewed by Grandey (2000), so that it speaks to leaders being aware of the impact of their emotional states, and therefore consciously controlling their emotional states and the effect on their employees.

In the review of the literature, studies were found which outlined that leaders' emotional displays affected employee engagement (Tee, 2015) as discussed earlier. The literature also showed that leaders understand the need to use emotional labour in suitable ways for appropriate situations (Humphrey et al., 2008). Further research found that certain leaders, such as transformational and charismatic leaders, were better able to demonstrate emotional labour and understood the effect of emotional labour in suitable situations (Shamir et al., 1993). These types of leaders understand the effect of positive and negative emotional displays on employees (Koning & Van Kleef, 2015).

Humphrey et al. (2008, p. 153) developed the phrase "leading with emotional labour" which referred to leaders who use emotional labour to influence employee moods and motivation levels, and ultimately, performance. When a leader encounters a situation and is required to act, they have three basic types of leader

emotional displays: (1) superficial acting, which is displaying emotions deemed appropriate for the circumstances but they are not the true emotions of the leader; (2) deep acting, which is in a sense empathy trying to understand the emotion required of the situation; and (3) displays of real or actual emotions felt (Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993). Leaders will manage these emotions and situations based on their levels of emotional intelligence (George, 2000). The conclusion is that leaders' have an understanding of the effect of their emotional states on employees. Leaders can use emotional labour to manage the emotional effect on employees provided that they have a level of emotional intelligence.

2.4.1 Proposition 2

The literature indicated that leaders do have an understanding of the effect of their emotional states on employees. Leaders are able to use emotional labour to manage the emotional effect on employees (Humphrey et al., 2008). Leaders are able to temper their emotional states to match the required or appropriate emotions for the situation (Lee & Chelladurai, 2016).

The second proposition is that leaders do understand the effect of their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

2.5 Developing leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement

This section reviewed literature in relation to the third research question of the study, which was: what components need to be included in the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement? In this section, the literature focused specifically on leadership coaching and the development of leaders' emotional intelligence (EI), as suggested development interventions for leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

2.5.1 Leadership Coaching

Coaching has become one of the leading strategies for leadership development (Carey et al., 2011), and with a plethora of literature on the effectiveness of coaching (Carey et al., 2011; Kahn, 2011; Rodgers, 2012), it is safe to assume that leaders do benefit from coaching as an intervention. Leadership coaching is an effective development tool or intervention in helping leaders develop and change behaviours that are not serving them as a leader (Carey et al., 2011). Also, coaching has proven to be a beneficial experience to help leaders develop and grow (Carey et al., 2011).

Coaching, however, is not always seen as beneficial, as many organisations use coaching as a punitive measure to correct behaviour - suggesting that leaders are forced to go to coaching to be 'fixed' (Joo, 2005). For coaching to be effective and help a leader, the reasons for attending coaching should be clear and the coachee should agree to be coached (Grover & Furnham, 2016).

Leadership coaching should be, and is, about development and an opportunity for a leader to evolve (Grant, 2014). Kampa-kokesch and Anderson (2001) suggested that if coaching is seen to be relevant and beneficial for the business, the leader is more likely to adapt and change behaviour. More specifically, coaching as an intervention to develop self-awareness (which is a critical part of emotional intelligence) and as a mechanism to adapt and change behaviour, could assist leaders in understanding their emotional contagion effect on employees - and how this then affects employee engagement (Dippenaar & Schaap, 2017; Goleman et al., 2013; Neale et al., 2011).

Guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement, an objective of this study, will contribute to coaching practice. In addition, these guidelines will contribute to the literature in the context of emotional contagion, leadership development, coaching, as well as employee engagement.

2.5.2 Developing emotional intelligence in leaders

Emotional intelligence has become a well-known phenomenon in recent years with a major emphasis being placed on leadership development and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2017). Much of the research around leadership development within the context of emotional contagion speaks about the value and importance of emotional intelligence of leaders (Wasylyshyn, Shorey, & Chaffin, 2012). The literature focuses on the benefit of developing emotional intelligence in leaders and how leaders can make use of these skills to better manage interactions and relationships with their employees. It follows then that if leaders are able to manage their emotional states, within the context in which the interactions take place, they can interact in an appropriate manner for the current situation, and that opportunities exist for their emotional contagion to positively affect employee engagement (Vijayalakshmi & Bhattacharyya, 2012).

2.5.2.1 Emotional Intelligence

Salovey and Mayer (1990) developed the first model of emotional intelligence and defined emotional intelligence in terms of emotional and social understanding, abilities of a person to resourcefully cope with demands. Goleman (2001) and Bar-On (2005, p. 3) believed these included (1) the ability to be aware of, to understand, and to express oneself; (2) the ability to be aware of, to understand, and to relate to others; (3) the ability to deal with strong emotions and control one's impulses; and (4) the ability to adapt to change and to solve problems of a personal or a social nature.

Bar-On, Brown, Kirkcaldy, and Thome (2000) believe that emotional intelligence is the ability to successfully differentiate, express, know and manage one's feelings and that of others in a positive and useful way. Goleman (1995) built on the definition of Salovey and Mayer (1990), by articulating the four main domains of emotional intelligence as (1) self-awareness, (2) self-regulation, (3) social awareness, and finally (4) relationship management. It was also Goleman (1995) that introduced the business case for emotional intelligence and advocated the benefits for business.

Goleman et al. (2013) suggested that successful leaders are competent in the four main domains of emotional intelligence. Of the four, the three domains of self-awareness, self-management and relationship management are most relevant to this study. These three domains have been recognised as pivotal for helping leaders manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. Wasylyshyn et al. (2012), as well as Goleman et al. (2013), stated that when these components, or elements of these components, work together in harmony, a leader is better equipped to lead, and the interactions with employees are decidedly improved, constructing a positive influence on employees.

In their study Allen, Shankman, and Haber-Curran (2016) had similar ideas about what made successful leaders and in their suggested Emotionally Intelligent Leaders (EIL) model, they outlined three facets that they believed to be key, which were: (1) consciousness of self, (2) consciousness of others, and (3) consciousness of context. It is the third facet mentioned in this model which is interesting and somewhat different to the existing emotional intelligence elements. Allen et al. (2016, p. 82) viewed the consciousness of context as "awareness of the setting and situation" and defined it as being "about paying attention to how environmental factors and internal group dynamics affect the process of leadership". In some respect, this facet speaks to emotional labour and echoes the sentiments of social awareness from Goleman (2013).

Emotional intelligence models and their applications have therefore evolved. The addition of emotional intelligence into approaches to develop leaders, coupled with improvements in coaching theory and practise standards, has resulted in the integration of emotional intelligence into coaching (Dippenaar & Schaap, 2017; Stillman, Freedman, Jorgensen, & Stillman, 2017). Goleman (2000) is adamant that emotional intelligence can be learnt and is a major advocate for emotional intelligence coaching.

2.5.2.2 Link between emotional intelligence and managing emotional contagion

It has already been mentioned that leaders play a pivotal role in the emotions shared by a team or experienced by an employee. Leaders also manage the

meaning of these emotions for a group or an employee and offer a way to interpret them or the situation (Goleman et al., 2013). It is therefore evident that leaders' emotional contagion if managed, could have a positive effect on employee engagement. Managing emotional contagion, however, would require the skill of emotional intelligence from the leader. Meaning the leader would need to be aware of their emotional state and be aware of the impact on others, and how to manage their emotional state, thereby managing their emotional contagion effect on employees (Humphrey et al., 2008; Lee & Chelladurai, 2016).

Research has shown that a leader's level of emotional intelligence creates a particular philosophy or ethos. Lack of emotional intelligence produces fear and anxiety in workers which may result in short-term productivity, but is not sustainable over the long term (Dippenaar & Schaap, 2017; Goleman, 2001); Goleman et al. (2001); (Goleman et al., 2013; Neale et al., 2011). Research, specifically from Goleman et al. (2013), has shown that if leaders push the emotions in a positive direction this also drives productivity in a positive direction.

Goleman et al. (2001, p. 48) go on to state that "an emotionally intelligent leader can monitor his or her moods through self-awareness, make changes to their moods through self-management, understand the impact through empathy, and act in ways that boost others' moods through relationship management", all of which are competencies of emotional intelligence. Leaders that show high emotional intelligence manage their moods and their emotions better than those with low emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2017; Neale et al., 2011). From this, one can argue that leaders with high emotional intelligence will better manage their emotional contagion effect on employees and their levels of engagement.

2.5.2.3 How can emotional intelligence be developed through coaching?

Blattner and Bacigalupo (2007) advocate for coaching as a means to improve self-awareness, self-confidence and equip leaders with the skills to be more effective. According to Stillman et al. (2017, p. 3), "adding emotional intelligence to the coaching process places an emphasis on emotional self-awareness,

relational dynamics, practical skill development, and purpose-driven sustainable change".

Approaches to coaching that targeted the development of emotional intelligence, intending to develop leadership, started gaining popularity (Wall, 2006) and the relationship of emotional intelligence to work performance also started receiving increased attention during the early part of the 21st century (Stillman et al., 2017). In the study by Wasylyshyn et al. (2012), the authors focused on an insight-oriented coaching model where behaviour change is desired more specifically on changes in emotional intelligence. The authors argued that strong emotional intelligence differentiated remarkable leaders from their peers. Dippenaar and Schaap (2017) suggested that cohesive and holistic coaching models implemented over longer periods of time; that have regular and goal-specific interventions; and are time specific, have showed to be more successful in changing leaders' emotional intelligence and behaviours long term.

From the research conducted, there is little found on coaching guidelines on managing emotional contagion of leaders and their effect on employee engagement. However, the literature does include guidelines for coaching leaders in developing their emotional intelligence.

Goleman et al. (2013) suggest a five-part process for the development of emotional intelligence competencies. The five-part process is designed to help a leader learn and work toward being and behaving with more emotional intelligence. Goleman et al. (2013) suggests this in the form of self-directed learning and makes use of Boyatzi's theory of self-directed learning to illustrate this. Figure 2 below depicts this process. Self-directed learning is said to be the crux of leadership development according to Goleman et al. (2013). They also stated that self-directed learning is most effective and sustainable when the leader understands the process of change.

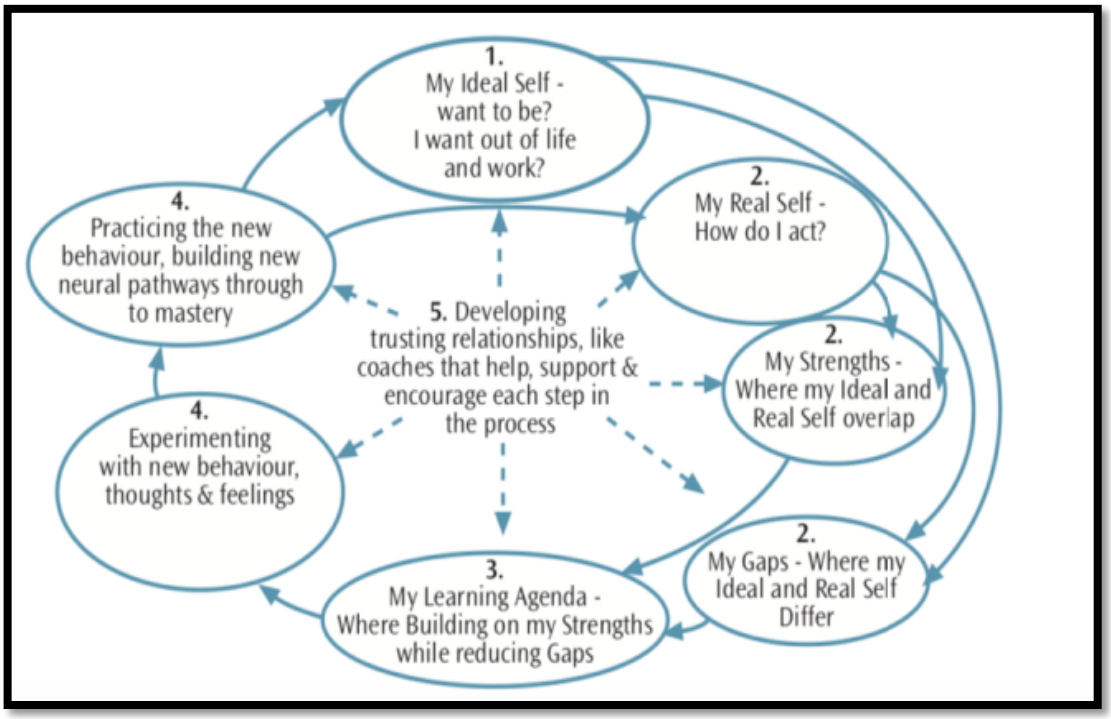

Figure 2: Boyatzis's Theory of Self Directed Learning (Taylor et al., 2019)

The process, as depicted above, starts with understanding one's ideal self (who does one want to be), then it's understanding the current self or real self (that is, how others experience one). This then leads to identifying one's strengths and where the ideal and existent self, overlap. The next step is identifying the gaps. The third step is the learning agenda - how one can build on strengths and how one can close the gap between current self and ideal self, and then working at the plan to close the gaps. The fourth step is then experimenting with new behaviours, thoughts and feelings, and practising these so new neural pathways can be mastered. Finally, it requires a support network of people to keep the person honest and on the path to change; building and developing trusting relationships that help and encourage the development and change. Goleman et al. (2013) strongly feel that reflecting on your real self is more difficult than it seems and requires self-awareness. This is a key element of emotional intelligence and the first step to help to build emotional intelligence in leaders. The self-directed learning approach could be adapted as a coaching approach for leaders to help them develop their emotional intelligence.

Neale et al. (2011) also believed that coaching is what creates sustainability of change over time. They suggest a development-coaching model focused on improving emotional intelligence in leaders, and more specifically self-awareness, called the PAUSE model. Figure 3 below shows the elements of this suggested coaching approach. The main emphasis of this approach is to change one habit or behaviour by developing self-awareness of one's feelings and associated attitude/s – and to explore the cause of the feelings or thoughts and associated attitudes at that moment. Once the specific habit or behaviour is identified then one can explore each stage: starting by pausing to think about the current behaviour or thought or feeling; moving on to trying to understand the thought, feeling or behaviour; trying to identify how the thought, feeling or behaviour could be of benefit or not; then working on the specific thought, feeling or behaviour, change. This can be done through for example visualising the desired thought, feeling or behaviour and then making a change. The final step is evaluating that change, working to refine the change until the required or preferred state, thought feeling or behaviour is achieved.

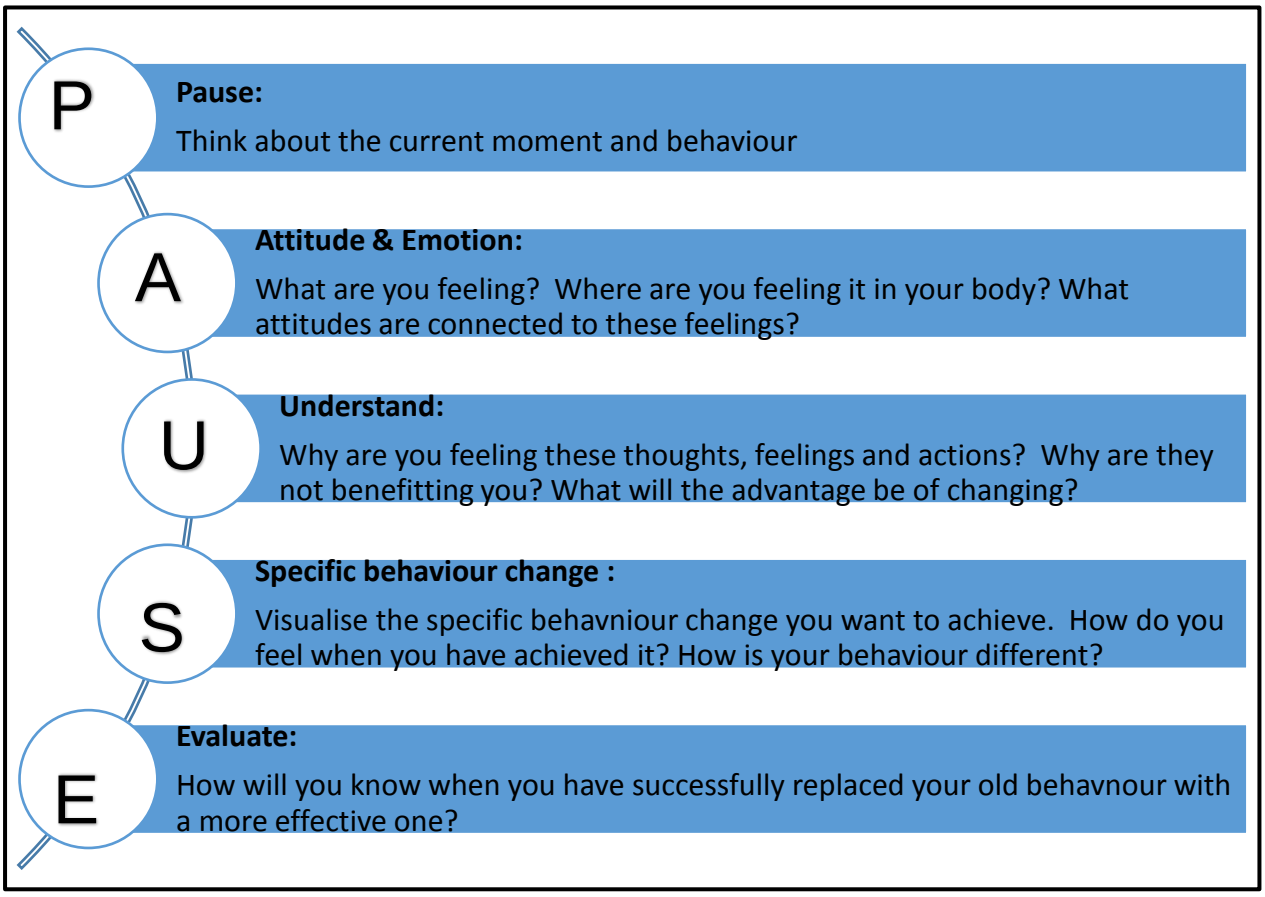

Figure 3: The PAUSE model (Neale et al. (2011)

Another advocate for the development of emotional intelligence through coaching is Rempala (2013). In his study on cognitive strategies for controlling emotional contagion, he focused more on the development of emotional regulation strategies rather than self-awareness. Emotional regulation builds on from the development of emotional self-awareness. In Rempala's study (2013), he showed that emotional regulation strategies can affect emotional contagion. The opportunity exists to explore the five strategies identified and to adapt them for guidelines for leadership coaching, coupled with the development of the broader elements of emotional intelligence. Rempala (2013) expanded on Gross' concept (2008) of emotional regulation and this expansion is depicted in Figure 4 below.

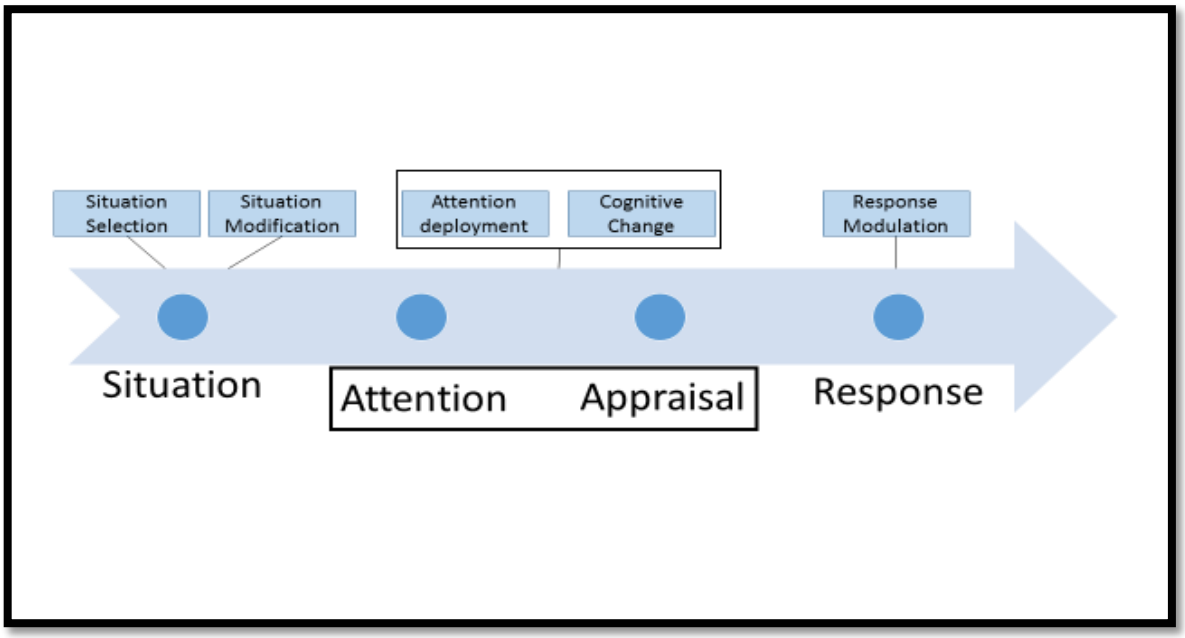

Figure 4. The process model of emotion regulation adapted from the 'Modal Model' (Gross, 2008, p. 10).

The model indicates that an emotional experience has meaning for an individual and this emotion and its response is emphasised by the situation the person finds themself in. The situation could be physical or psychological, for example, an encounter with danger or the thought of 'am I good enough'? This situation evokes or triggers an emotion, and almost always forces a person to pay attention and to focus on the emotion being experienced. The appraisal of the situation and the emotion prompts a response by the individual (Gross, 2008). Rempala (2013) expansion of the 'Modal Model' (Gross, 2008) discusses five strategies for

emotional regulation. The first of the five strategies involves situation modification and could include changing aspects of, or the situation entirely, as a form of emotional regulation. The second strategy is attention deployment and this means focusing on specific elements of the situation. The third strategy is cognitive change, the choice of how you view or create meaning from the situation; and finally, response modulation, the selection of an emotional or behavioural response (Rempala, 2013).

Both the 'Modal Model' (Gross, 2008) as well the PAUSE model (Neale et al., 2011) could contribute to the coaching literature and coaching practice, by creating guidelines for coaching leaders on self-directed learning, self-awareness and emotional regulation, and thus helping to coach leaders to manage their effect of emotional contagion on employee engagement.

2.5.3 *Proposition 3*

The literature revealed that if leaders were better able to regulate their emotions to suit the situation or context, they could contain the emotional contagion effect they have on employees' engagement. Coaching leaders has also been recognised as an effective intervention for developing leaders and their emotional intelligence (Dippenaar & Schaap, 2017; Goleman, 2017), with some coaching frameworks for developing emotional intelligence evident (Wasylyshyn et al., 2012), including an emphasis on the processes of self-directed learning (Goleman et al., 2013), for developing self-awareness (Neale et al., 2011) and emotional regulation (Gross, 2008; Rempala, 2013).

This forms the basis of the proposition for research question three: Guidelines can be developed for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion on employee engagement.

2.6 Conclusion of the Literature Review

From the literature review undertaken, it is clear that leaders do have an effect on employees through emotional displays, and these emotional displays are therefore experienced as emotional contagion by employees (Barsade, 2002; Halverson, 2004; Neumann & Strack, 2000; Vijayalakshmi & Bhattacharyya, 2012). Leaders use emotional labour to influence and manage emotional displays and their effect on employees (Humphrey et al., 2008). By developing the effective use of emotional labour in leadership, leaders are in a position to positively influence employee motivation and performance (Humphrey et al., 2008). Understanding when to use emotional labour in a sense is also emotional intelligence. From Goleman (2004), leaders are able to learn the skill of emotional intelligence. Developing leaders through coaching and more specifically, coaching that focuses on emotional self-awareness, emotional regulation and self-directed learning, leaders may be better equipped to manage their emotional contagion effect. This study can also contribute to coaching practice and literature by creating guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion on employee engagement through the effective use of emotional labour and the development of emotional intelligence.

The study has three propositions as outlined below:

1. Leaders' emotional contagion does have an effect on employee engagement
2. Leaders do understand the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement.
3. Guidelines can be developed for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion on employee engagement

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the research methodology that was adopted to address the research questions. The literature on qualitative research was explored to validate the selection of the appropriate research approach and design. The data collection method is discussed, the population and sampling method described, together with an explanation of the data collection procedure and data analysis. The limitations of the study are identified and the transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability of the study are justified. Finally, the chapter is concluded with an outline of the ethical considerations of the study.

3.1 Research approach

The research approach selected for this study was qualitative research. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, p. 192) define qualitative research as being "multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter". What this means is that qualitative researchers study occurrences in their regular settings, whilst attempting to make meaning of them, or interpreting the phenomena based on the meaning people give to them. Qualitative research can take the form of the collection of a variety of experiential materials, case studies, personal experience, interviews or observations that describe expected and trying instances and meaning in the lives of people (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994).

This study selected a qualitative research approach as it was concerned with exploring the perceptions of three different samples in relation to leaders' emotional contagion and the effect thereof on employee engagement. Qualitative research is more fluid as it allows the researcher and the participants in the study to interact more spontaneously and the situation is adaptable based on the context (Hashemnezhad, 2015). Conducting the semi-structured interviews with the three samples in this study created the context of flexibility within a dynamic and developing interview (Cooper & Endacott, 2007). For example, during an interview, the researcher asked open-ended questions allowing the participants to answer with more than a simple yes or no and allowed the researcher to ask additional probing and follow-up questions. This type of interview further allowed

the participants to convey their interpretations, perceptions and meaning of their experiences of leaders' emotional contagion on their engagement (Hashemnezhad, 2015), which was the objective of the study.

A qualitative research approach was best suited for this study as it allowed for the collection of richer, deeper and more meaningful data. The researcher had an opportunity to obtain additional data other than just the answers to the interview questions through, for example, being able to observe the participants' body language during the questioning, as well as to take the opportunity to probe and ask follow-up questions to extract underlying themes which otherwise may have been missed.

One of the disadvantages of qualitative research identified, is the volume of data that is collected, specifically from open-ended questions in interviews or focus groups. The volume of data creates complexity and is time-consuming when trying to categorise the themes of the data at the analysis stage (Anderson, 2010). Also, the researcher's bias or own views and opinions about the topic may subconsciously have an influence on the data collected and the analysis and this may influence the outcomes of the study (Anderson, 2010).

The advantages of qualitative research outweighed the disadvantages and therefore was the selected research approach.

3.2 Research design

The overall study design was a generic qualitative approach. This approach was described by Merriam and Tisdell (2015) as studies that ‘‘seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved" (Cooper & Endacott, 2007, p. 2).

The definition of a generic qualitative study is better understood when it is defined in terms of what it is not, rather than what it is. It is research that "is not guided by an explicit or established set of theoretical assumptions in the form of one of the more established qualitative methodologies" (Caelli et al., 2003, p. 4).

Kahlke (2014) states that generic qualitative studies draw from established methodologies, but have a flexibility that makes the approach more appealing to researchers whose studies do not conform to a particular established methodology. This was the case for this study and why the generic qualitative approach was selected for this study.

This study focused on the perceptions of employees, leaders and coaches on the effect that leaders' emotional contagion has on employee engagement, and how both employees and leaders make meaning from their experience. This form of research design was best suited to achieve the objectives as outlined. These sentiments are supported by Merriam and Tisdell (2015, p. 6) who describe generic qualitative studies as being belief or opinion and theoretically interpretive studies, that focus on "(1) how people interpret their experiences, (2) how they construct their worlds, and (3) what meaning they attribute to their experiences".

Generic qualitative studies autonomously categorise data that can be plotted appropriately, and from there, draw conclusions noting relationships. The design was therefore suited to the data analysis process of this study, which was a thematic analysis, noting trends and similarities (Cooper & Endacott, 2007). The approach also allowed for triangulation of data, which is described as ''an approach to data collection in which evidence is deliberately sought from a wide range of different, independent sources and often by different means'' (Cooper & Endacott, 2007, p. 3). For example, the study triangulated data collected from the interviews conducted across three different samples of participants.

A key disadvantage of the generic qualitative research approach is the lack of methodology, which may create uncertainty or lack of clarity of the approach, potentially putting the validity and reliability of the study at risk (Caelli, Ray, & Mill, 2003). This was not the case during the study. The strategies for fostering transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability are covered later in the chapter and the findings negate this disadvantage.

3.3 Data collection methods

Bolderston (2012) believes that interviews are a common method used to collect qualitative data and that the method was best suited to provide insight into peoples' behaviour and the meaning they attribute to that behaviour. As this study pertains to the perception of leaders' emotional contagion effect on employee engagement, the interview method of data collection was selected.

Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted which provided some structure to the interviews and the information collected from them but was not restrictive to a formal list of questions (Hammarberg, Kirkman, & De Lacey, 2016). This type of interview allowed the researcher some flexibility and the opportunity to probe for more information by asking follow-up questions (Hashemnezhad, 2015). An added advantage was that the researcher was free to conduct reflection after each interview and could adjust the thinking and process based on what emerged from the interviews. This approach also allowed for the opportunity to identify new themes, trends or even new ideas around the research (Dearnley, 2005). Another major benefit of semi-structured interviews, according to Bolderston (2012), is that the participants are free to express themselves without being confined to a structure imposed upon them. This approach to data collection was relevant for this study and allowed for the opportunity to obtain an understanding of the perceptions of both employees and leaders around how the leaders' emotional contagion affects employee engagement. In addition, the perspectives of leadership coaches were also explored.

According to Longhurst (2003), one of the disadvantages of the semi-structured interview method is the skill of the interviewer's questioning technique; in other words, the interviewer may ask leading questions which could distort the outcomes and taint the data collection. Longhurst (2003) suggested that the interviewer may, in addition, show bias toward the leaders' or the employees' point of view which may also result in misrepresentation of the data. Further to this, Louise Barriball and While (1994) felt that the participants may not want to contribute or answer questions out of fear of sharing information that may jeopardise their job. This fear could lead to participants wanting to answer with what they feel is socially desirable, that is, they will answer the question with what

they think the interviewer would like to hear. Another disadvantage of using this data collection method stated by Hashemnezhad (2015) is that researcher may not ask questions in a manner that allows the participant to answer, as the participant may not fully comprehend or understand what is required from the question. Weighting the advantages and disadvantages, the semi-structured interview approach provided more benefits and was therefore selected as the preferred method of data collection.

3.4 Population and sample

In this section, the population sample for this study was outlined, and then the nature of the different samples discussed together with the sampling method, was applied.

3.4.1 *Population*

The population for this study included senior to middle management leaders, and employees reporting to senior or middle management leaders (but not the direct reports of the leaders interviewed) in private and public sector in South Africa and Namibia. It also consisted of leadership coaches working in or with companies in the private sector in Johannesburg (but these coaches were not coaches of the leaders being interviewed). The samples, from this population, were selected against prerequisite criteria to collect different perspectives on the phenomenon of leaders' emotional contagion effect on employee engagement, as well as to understand what components could be included in guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

3.4.2 *Sample and sampling method*

A total of 15 participants were interviewed in groups of five, split into three samples, each based on meeting selection criteria identified as necessary for the study. The samples are defined as follows:

1. The first sample consisted of five senior or middle-management leaders interviewed from various organisations across industries and countries.

The sample selection criteria that were considered sufficient were defined as: A leader having more than five years of leadership experience and having led a team of at least two or more people during the period. Of the five leaders interviewed, all had more than ten years' experience in a leadership role and all five have led teams of more than two people during this time. The sample criteria proved sufficient as the participants were able to draw on the years of experience to answer the interview questions with confidence and meaning.

2. The second sample consisted of five employees interviewed from various organisations across industries. The sample selection criteria considered sufficient were defined as: Employees who have reported to several senior or middle management leaders (at least two or three different leaders, who may be in their current organisation and/or previous organisation/s). These employees were not direct reports of the first sample of leaders interviewed and were not in the same organisation as the first sample of leaders interviewed. These criteria proved sufficient as the participants were able to relate their experiences of the various leaders to answer the questions in the interview.
3. The third sample interviewed consisted of five experienced and accredited leadership coaches. The sample selection criteria included a minimum of five years of leadership coaching, a recognised coaching qualification and a membership with a professional coaching body. Also, the participants were required to have specific experience in coaching middle to senior management leaders on emotional intelligence competencies, aspects of which have some bearing on the management of leaders' emotional contagion. The criteria were sufficient as all five coaches had more than five years of coaching experience, all five coaches had recognised qualifications and all five are members of a professional coaching body. The criteria were sufficient as it allowed the coaches to draw from their coaching experience and answer the interview questions with insight and purpose. Important to note that these coaches were not specifically known to the sample of leaders or employees.

In the above three samples, no specific gender, race or age group were targeted for this research as the outcomes of the research did not require it.

According to Lewis (2015), sampling is the method of finding people or places to study; to obtain access to conduct the study, and to build trust so that participants provide relevant data. For this study, the sampling method selected was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is a sampling method in which the researcher trusts their own decision when electing sample participants for the study; it is also known as judgment, selective or subjective sampling (Black, 2009). This sampling technique is mostly used to group participants based on specific criteria, as described above, related to specific research questions and therefore was suitable for this study.

To find the participants for the employee and leader samples, the researcher tapped into her professional network and approached several leaders and employees within organisations in South Africa and Namibia. An introductory email was sent out to a larger group of people within this network to position the purpose of the study as well as to outline how the participant could contribute to leadership development and employee engagement (see Appendix A). Once a sufficient number of volunteers were found the prospective participants were contacted individually via telephone. The purpose of the call was to further expand on the objective of the study, to explain the process and what they could expect from the interviews. Also explained in the telephone call was the requirement to sign a consent form (see Appendix B), that their identity would be protected and that any information they may share would be kept confidential. Once each participant agreed, a 60-minute appointment was set at their convenience.

Similarly, the researcher used her network to source suitable leadership coaches. Again, an introductory email (see Appendix C) was sent out to a larger group of coaches within this network to position the purpose of the study as well as to outline how the study and the participant could contribute to coaching practices. Once a sufficient number of volunteers were found the prospective participants were contacted individually via telephone. The purpose of the call was to further expand on the objective of the study, to explain the process and what they could

expect from the interviews. It was further explained in the telephone call that they would be required to sign a consent form (see Appendix B), that their identity would be protected and that any information they may share would be confidential. Once each participant agreed, a 60-minute appointment was set at their convenience.

The three samples consisted of five participants each, grouped into leaders, coaches and employees, as depicted in Table 1. Additional details such as the gender of the participants and the industry within which they were interviewed have been included only for interest as this information was not pertinent to the study. The combined sample size totalled 15 and was shown to be sufficient based on the volume and quality of data collected during the interviews. This is supported by research conducted by Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, and Fontenot (2013) on qualitative research, who found that the interview sample size could range between 15 to 30 interviews. Other research conducted on various forms of qualitative research and more specifically on interviews conducted, suggests that large sample sizes could provide too much data, insufficient data or skew the data and therefore supported the idea of between 5 and 25 interviews (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006).

Table 1: Sample characteristics

Code	Industry	Gender	Experience in years
Leaders			
L1	Projects	M	20
L2	IT	M	11
L3	Logistics	M	17
L4	Finance	F	20
L5	Government	F	15
Coaches			
C1	Coaching	F	10
C2	Coaching	F	10
C3	Coaching	F	10
C4	Coaching	F	11
C5	Coaching	F	7

Employees			Time in current role
E1	Education	F	0.5
E2	IT	M	3
E3	Retail	F	5
E4	Retail	F	2
E5	Insurance	F	3

3.5 The research instrument

A semi-structured interview, together with an interview guide, was developed for each of the three samples of participants. Interviews were conducted for leaders, supported by an interview guide, and focused on exploring the leaders' understanding of their emotional contagion and its effect on employee engagement. The same approach was applied for the employee and coach samples with relevant interview guides used to extract data. The interview guides also took direction and input from the literature review conducted. Each interview guide was designed to collect specific data per sample and per the research question being answered. In each interview guide, some of the questions were adapted from the research on emotional intelligence and leadership from Strickland (2013).

The interview guide for employees focused on collecting data from employees, who were affected by emotional contagion of their leaders, or in other words research question 1, and asked questions focused on:

- Examples of when employees experienced emotional contagion from their leader and how the emotional state of the leader affected their engagement.

The interview guide for the leaders focused on collecting data from the leaders themselves, and their perception of how their emotional contagion affects employee engagement (research question 2) and asked questions around:

- Examples of when the leaders' emotional states affected the team or affected a specific employee or a few employees of the team.

The interview guide for the coaches focused on collecting data from coaches, who have coached leaders on developing their emotional intelligence competence amongst other leadership development areas to answer research question 3, and posed questions around:

- Examples of when they coached a leader through an experience of the leader's negative emotional contagion effect on their team and the approach they took during this coaching.

The interview guides per sample are outlined in Appendices F, G and H respectively.

The interview guides were piloted with the first participant from each sample group (Longhurst, 2003). Each of the pilot participants from each of the sample groups was asked for feedback on their experience of the interview process and interview questions. This allowed for a litmus test on the effectiveness and efficiency of the interview techniques, interview questions and interview process. In addition, the researcher was able to reflect on the interviews conducted in the pilot sessions. These reflections and feedback opportunities assisted with deciding if data could be used and if adjustments needed to be made to the sample selection, sample size, interview process or interview questions. From the information obtained from the pilot interview reflections, the length of the interviews was adjusted from between 60 to 90 minutes to 45 minutes. The questioning techniques during the interviews were adjusted to extract deeper data (that is, more probing); however, the questions were not adjusted, and the purpose of the study was expanded on with more detail at the start of the interviews to ensure clarity and understanding.

3.6 Procedure for data collection

The purpose of qualitative studies is to describe an event from the participants' points of view through for example interviews and observations (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). The method of data collection for this study took the form of semi-structured interviews, supported by interview guides specifically crafted for each sample. The choice of interviews as a method was informed by the

opportunity to obtain richer data from the answers provided to questions, as well as the opportunity to probe and dig a little deeper with the participants, allowing the researcher to obtain information that otherwise would have been lost (Mason, 2017). The procedure for arranging and conducting the interviews is outlined here.

Once the participants of the three samples were selected (and they had agreed to participate voluntarily), the purpose, objective and process were communicated to them. This was done in the form of written correspondence (see Appendix A). In addition, the participants signed a consent form (see Appendix B, referred to as informed consent) which outlined the rights of the participants, as well as explain how the participants' confidentiality will be protected. Once participants agreed to assist in the study, 45-minute appointments were set with each participant. The interview's purpose and outcomes of the research were explained to the participant at the start of the interview and the consent form formally signed. This approach allowed the researcher to convey further context and meaning to the interviews, and it also built the trust and confidence of the participants.

Each interview was conducted in a face-to-face setting in a space that the participant chose at a time convenient for them. All interviews were audio-recorded but only after gaining permission from the participants. It was important for the researcher to remain unbiased during the interviews and not to ask leading questions (Hammarberg et al., 2016; Hashemnezhad, 2015). The first interview of each sample was used as a pilot interview for purposes of reflection and evaluation. These pilot interviews allowed the researcher to test the instrument for rigour and enabled the researcher to interrogate the questions from the interview guide, the responses from the participant and compare this with the research questions the study aims to answer. Some adjustments were made to questioning techniques during the interviews and the time frame of the interviews were adjusted to 45 minutes.

The data from the interviews were transcribed by an independent transcriber. Thereafter, the participants were asked if they would like to verify the accuracy of their transcripts (Longhurst, 2003), before allowing the researcher to commence

with the analysis process. Only one of the 15 participants interviewed, requested to verify the content of their interview and this request was accommodated by sending a transcribed copy to the participant. The remainder of the participants were happy for the researcher to proceed without viewing the transcripts. In summary, the collection of data took place over two months and consisted of 15 face to face audio-recorded interviews of between 30 to 45 minutes in length; transcribed by an independent transcriber so they are in a format ready for analysis.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

Data analysis in qualitative research is looking for patterns and themes in the data obtained (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The method of data analysis selected for this study was themed analysis or thematic analysis. According to Braun, Clarke, and Hayfield (2019, p. 1) “themed analysis is systematically identifying, organising and offering insight into patterns of meaning or themes across a data set.”

Studies have shown that there are many approaches to thematic analysis (Javadi & Zarea, 2016) but Braun and Clarke’s (2006) 6-step framework was used in this study as it is the most widely used approach, it is understandable, and proven to be a user-friendly framework for doing the thematic analysis. The six steps followed by the researcher were:

1. The researcher familiarised themselves with the data
2. The researcher generated initial codes
3. The researcher searched for themes
4. The researcher reviewed the themes identified
5. The researcher defined and named the themes
6. The researcher produced a summary report on the themes

This study made use of this framework as a guide for data analysis as follows.

The interview transcripts were checked for accuracy against the audio recordings. The transcripts were then analysed as a collective sample, in other

words, all the interviews for the employee participants were analysed as a group. This approach was then repeated for the other two samples of leaders and coaches respectively. The analysis was done first by reading and identifying keywords or phrases in the transcript per participant per question answered, then identifying common keywords or phrases per question per participant per interview. These were recorded on an excel spreadsheet for collation and further analysis (see Appendix D for an example). The keywords and phrases were organised into high-level categories and then further broken down into themes per category. This was an iterative process where the researcher, with guidance from the supervisor, reviewed and refined the categories into a single reference document. During this process, a collection of direct quotes from the various sample participants was also collected, and these were then used to support the findings or themes outlined in chapter 4 (see Appendix E for an example).

3.8 Limitations of the study

Some of the limitations of this study were identified as the following:

- The interviews conducted were shorter than anticipated.
- The interviewees felt like they were repeating examples and information.
- The venues for some of the interviews were noisy and may not have been conducive for recording and discussions.
- The data analysis process was not immersive, but rather an iterative process and this may have impacted the thread of meaning-making and theme identification.

3.9 Transferability, Dependability, Credibility and Confirmability

In this section, the researcher will address the key components that promote quality and rigour in a qualitative study, with emphasis on the measures to be adopted in this study.

The key components include:

- Transferability
- Dependability
- Credibility
- Confirmability

3.9.1 *Transferability*

Transferability is defined as research or findings that can be valid across other contexts, time or populations (Tracy, 2010). Guba and Lincoln (1989) suggest that transferability is dependent on the extent of likeness between two situations. In other words, the findings are applicable in a situation outside the study context, and the reader finds meaning and relevancy of the findings based on their own experiences.

This study on leaders' emotional contagion effect on employee engagement is applicable in the greater work context and not solely in the context of employee engagement. A leader's emotional contagion effect on employees, in general, can affect other elements of the workplace, workplace relationships and potentially the organisation's culture. Leaders' emotional contagion is not limited just to the workplace context; it is applicable across situations, perspectives, events and roles. The study was applicable in multiple environments in which the phenomenon occurs. This study could form a baseline study and understanding against which subsequent studies could be compared (Shenton, 2004).

3.9.2 *Dependability*

Dependability is defined as, or means, that the process of the study is consistent over time and across different researchers and different methods or projects (Gibbs, 2007; Huberman & Miles, 2002).

A research study can be shown to be dependable if the process followed is appraised. Guba and Lincoln (1989) recommend that the principle of auditability be the degree against which rigour is measured when dealing with the

consistency of data. Hammarberg et al. (2016, p. 500) suggest that dependability can be measured based on 'that given the same data, other researchers would find similar patterns". In other words, other researchers could have the same or similar conclusions based on the researchers' data, insights and contexts.

The researcher has triangulated data collected from the three sample groups through the semi-structured interviews. Interview guides were designed per sample group allowing the collection of data for the specific research objective.

The researcher was able to probe deeper during the interviews and ask additional questions which allowed for richer data collection. The inclusion of a pilot test of each interview guide per sample provided an opportunity for reflection and insight into the quality of data being collected. Adjustments were made to the guide based on the finding of the reflection. A thematic analysis approach was used to analyse the data collected per sample. The researcher's ability to interpret and analyse the data without bias and with due skill was important to ensure the trustworthiness of the outcomes of the study. The process of data triangulation, thematic data analysis, with supporting quotations, was also reviewed by the researcher's supervisor to enhance the dependability of the study.

3.9.3 *Credibility*

Hammarberg et al. (2016) believe that credibility is the benchmark for evaluating the veracity of qualitative research. In addition, they state that a study has credibility when data collected and results found, are underpinned by an accurate description of the context and those, who participated in the study, support the results based on their experience.

According to Hammarberg et al. (2016), a researcher can ensure credibility of a study through reflection by the researcher as to their influence on the study, by potentially using triangulation to support the findings, and by including participant data verbatim form to support their findings. Sandelowski (1986) suggests where there is incongruence between the data and the interpretation of the study's data, the credibility of the study could be in question.

In this study the participants were the key resource that provided the grounds for the credibility of the study; the use of purposive sampling ensured participants had the relevant experience and qualifications to contribute to the rich data collected. The findings of the study and the identified themes are supported by participants' verbatim quotations as evidence of such themes. An example of which can be found in appendix E which shows a working example of how the data themes were identified. Participants were also asked if they would like to review the transcripts of their interviews before they were used in the study. This provided a further step of validation on the content, themes and context which enhanced the creditability of the study. The findings also included triangulation across the three samples in relation to some of the identified themes. This is what is referred to as data source triangulation and is defined as comparing and validating the consistency of data collected at different times and by different means within a qualitative study or the use of multiple data sources (as for the present study) in qualitative research to cultivate a broad understanding of phenomena (Patton, 1999).

3.9.4 *Confirmability*

Confirmability is the final key element of the trustworthiness of a research study. It refers to objectivity and infers that the data collection and analysis is a true representation of the information that the participants provided. Also that the findings reflect the participants' views, and not the researcher's biases, motivations, or perspectives (Elo et al., 2014). The process of data collection and analysis has been clearly defined in this study. The data findings have also been clearly articulated from the participant's perspective and are supported by specific excerpts from participants. The researcher's supervisor has also reviewed and approved the themes of the study and the evidence from the data that supports these themes.

3.10 Demographic profile of participants

The demographic profile of the participants was based on the sample of people the study was able to gains access too. Of the 15 participants, four were male

and the remaining eleven were female. Eleven of the participants were white, three were African and one was coloured. Within the leader sample, the demographics were as follows: three of the leaders were male, two white, one coloured and two were female, with one being African and one white. Within the employee sample, one employee was an African male, and the other four were female, with three being white and one African. Within the coaches' sample, all five were female and all five were white. For the total sample of 15, the youngest participant was 30 years old and the oldest was 60 years old making the average age of the participants 45 years old. The intention was not to select a specific race, gender or age for this study as it aimed to explore the general effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement.

3.11 Ethical considerations

Orb et al. (2001) believe that qualitative research, and more specifically an interview method, is associated with ensuring confidentiality, informed consent, and privacy. They also state that ethical dilemmas are unpredictable but that researches should anticipate having to navigate them, for example, conflicts of interest and sensitive issues. This sentiment is echoed by Bolderston (2012) who views informed consent and issues of privacy and confidentiality as being basic principles of ethical research conduct. Bolderston (2012) argues that interviewees should be informed of the research topic and have an understanding of the purpose and how the data will be collected and stored.

To address some ethical considerations of this study the confidentiality of details of all participants was maintained. Each participant was allocated a code to indicate their sample and which number participant they were. For example, the employee category was allocated the code E, and participant one allocated the code E1. Doing this eliminated any of the personal details of participants. In addition, the details of the company within which the leaders and employees were interviewed, was kept anonymous. Further to this, details of employees and leaders interviewed were not declared to the organisation, and so maintained the trust and confidentiality. This was agreed with the organisation in advance so there were clarity and transparency.

The purpose of the study, the data collection method and data storage methods were explained to all participants prior to the interviews taking place. All participants were asked to sign a consent form in which it also explained the process, confidentiality and storage of data and is evident in Appendix B. It was also communicated to all participants that their personal details, as well as their answers provided to the questionnaire, were kept confidential. The participants were informed that they will not be forced to answer any questions they felt they did not want to answer for whatever reason.

The interviews were recorded but only after obtaining permission from the participants. These recordings were stored on an external hard drive under lock and key and only the researcher had access to the information. Transcripts were completed by an independent transcriber and only the researcher reviewed and signed off these transcripts. Participants were asked if they would like to view the transcripts after completion for sign off. Only one participant asked to view the transcript after completion. This participant was sent their transcript to view and sign off. The remainder of the transcripts were signed off by the researcher.

In addition, steps were taken to ensure that no plagiarism took place. Measures were taken and included producing original work and thoughts and where these were not original, referencing and in-text citations, adhering to the rules outlined by the university's policy, for example to the APA referencing requirements; making use of the turnitin software made available by the university before submissions; a review of all work by the student and by the supervisor.

The WBS ethical guidelines were followed throughout the research study. The new detailed WBS ethics form was completed and approved before collecting data. Panel approval was obtained before the commencement of the fieldwork.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will present the findings of the research for each research question. Thereafter, a section which focuses on triangulation across the samples is included.

4.2 Context summary pertaining to the findings

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceptions of the effect of emotional contagion of leaders on employee engagement, toward informing the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

This research was divided into three research objectives with the intent to answer three research questions. The research questions together with the themed categories identified from the data analysis are outlined in table.2 below.

Table 2: Research questions and categories

Research Questions	Categories
1. What are the perceptions of employees on the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement?	• Leaders' emotions and behaviours • Effect on employees' emotional states • Effect on employee engagement
2. What do leaders understand about the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement?	• Leaders' understanding of emotional contagion • Triggers of leaders' negative emotional states • Effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement • Leaders' reflection on improving their contagion effect
3. What components need to be included in the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement?	• Leaders' reasons for seeking coaching • Coaching approaches • Coaching outcomes and results • Suggested coaching tools and techniques

Each research question was explored through semi-structured interviews conducted with the three specific sample groups being employees, leaders and coaches. All the interviews were transcribed and the data then analysed. A thematic approach as outlined in chapter 3 was taken to conduct the data analysis.

The findings from each of the samples will be discussed in this chapter together with the specific themes identified per the research question. Participants quotes are used to illustrate or support the themes identified per category. As three samples were interviewed to address the three research questions respectively, there was scope for triangulation across the samples. A section is therefore included which focuses on triangulation of certain of the findings across two or three of the samples.

4.3 Findings pertaining to Research Question 1

Research question 1 states: What are the perceptions of employees on the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement?

Drawing from the employee interviews, questions 4, 5 and 6 were used as key questions from the employee interview guide (see Appendix F for details).

All five of the employees who were interviewed understood the term and meaning of emotional contagion, to ensure clarity the definition was explained in the context of the research. The overall findings for this research question are illustrated in Figure 5.

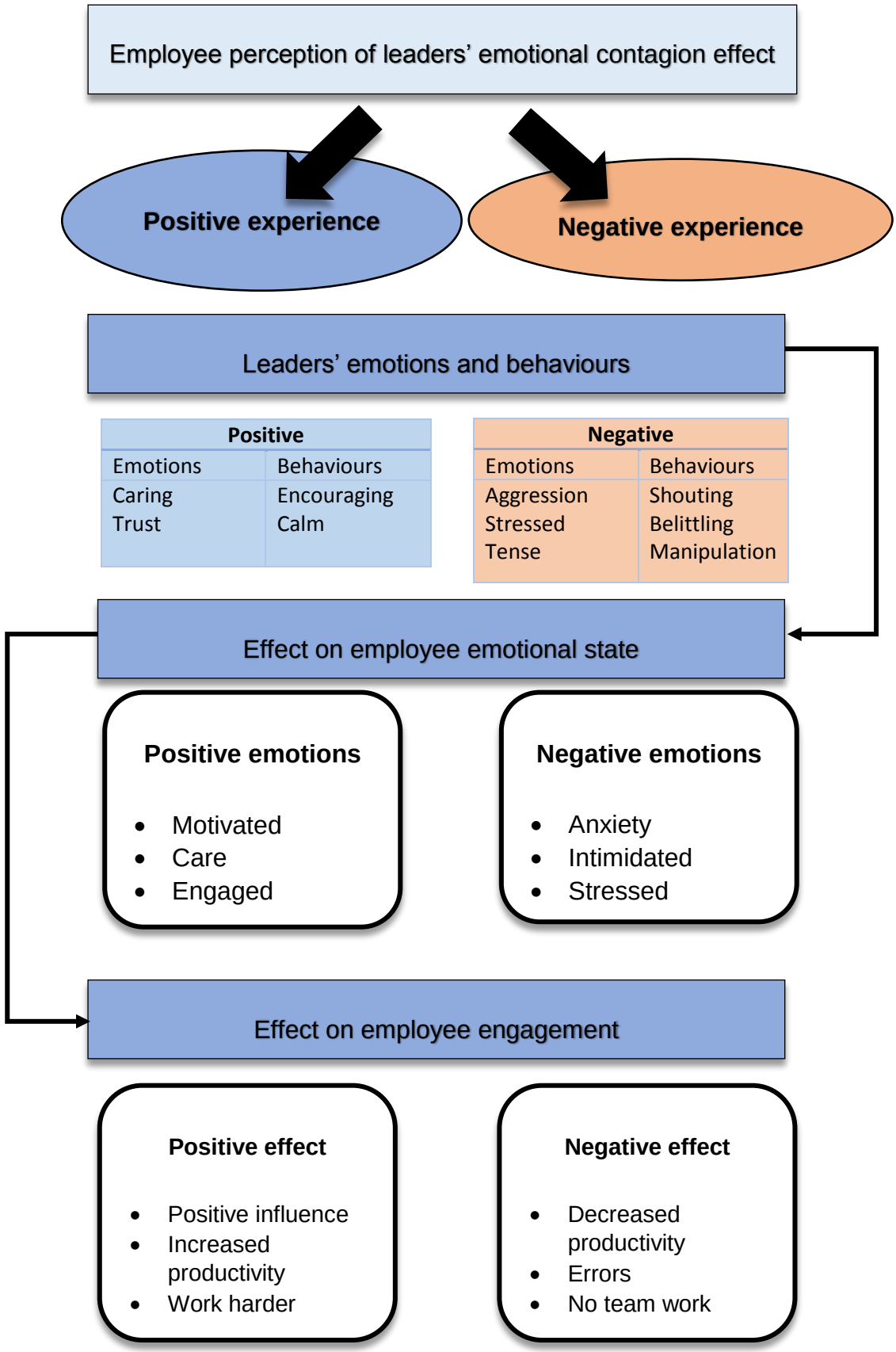

Figure 5: Summary of findings for research question 1

From the diagram above, it can be seen that three main categories emerged from the data for this research question, each of which included two themes related to positive and negative experiences. The categories were: leaders' emotions and behaviours, effect on employees' emotional states and effect on employee engagement

The data showed that four out of the five employees experienced their leaders' positive emotional contagion effect on their engagement, and five out of the five employees experienced their leaders' negative emotional contagion effect on their engagement. The three categories identified seem to be progressive. Starting with the leaders' emotions and behaviours, which had an influence on employees' emotional states and subsequently, the employees' emotional states affecting their engagement levels. The findings of each category are further elaborated upon below.

4.3.1 Leaders' emotions and behaviours

Employees who were interviewed said that the leaders' emotions and behaviours that were displayed or experienced through various interactions or situations seem to have had an emotional contagion effect on their emotional states, either positive or negative. Employees interviewed used both positive words, for example; calm, caring and supportive and negative words, for example; aggressive, shouting and stressed, to describe the emotions and behaviours of their leaders.

Table 3 below contains direct quotes from the employee participants which illustrate examples of both positive and negative emotions and behaviours of the leaders and also allude to some of the effects thereof.

Table 3: Leaders' positive and negative emotions and behaviours

Positive emotions and behaviours	Negative emotions and behaviours
E1: "… leadership is kind, caring and considerate … ask if I am okay and how am I doing" and "she is supportive and guiding, helping" E2: "…he is positive … just seeing him positive encourages you to give more and keep pushing" … "he encourages everyone and says well done …" E4: "…acknowledge my potential, given me opportunities. … there to guide me through, support was there" E5: "... my leader came past my desk and asked me how I was doing and how my daughter was doing" … I felt important and I mattered"	E1: "…he was aggressive, he was quite angry" … E2: "…if she does something wrong he shouts" E3: "…she's in a bad mood, let's stay away from her today" E4: "…she picks on anyone… "She is just poisonous" and "… what drama is going to be in the office today? Like how badly is she going to treat us today" E5: "…she was a perfectionist if it did not happen the way they wanted it wasn't good enough …"

4.3.2 Employees' emotional states

The leaders' emotions and behaviours, either positive or negative, appear to have a definitive effect on the employees' emotional states. Employees' emotional states were affected in both a positive and a negative manner. The words used by the employees to describe their emotional states as a result of their leaders' behaviours and emotional states were both positive, for example; motivated, engaged and care, and negative words, for example; stress, fear and anger.

Table 4 below shows examples of direct quotes taken from the employee participants during their interview. These illustrate both the positive and negative emotional states of employees:

Table 4: Employees' emotional states

Effect on employee emotional state Positive	Effect on employee emotional state Negative
E1: "…encourages you to do and be your best … you will feed off that and actually pass that onto your colleagues" E2: "…so the leader creates a level of positivity and confidence … and "… I feel motivated, determined" E4: "…I was at my best" and "…felt motivated" E5: "…made me feel like I was important and mattered" and "someone actually cared about me and I had support behind me"	E1: "…I actually felt quite disappointed in his leadership" and "he made me angry toward him" E2: "…She feels his anger"…"she is scared ..." E3: "…I get angry because she should not be talking like that" … I can't trust her" E4: "…it's discouraging"…"…"you feel belittled" and … "it creates anxiety, like lots of it, lots of it" E5: "…I was very emotional and burst into tears"

4.3.3 Effect on employee engagement

The leaders' emotions and behaviours together with their impact on the employees' emotional states seem to have a definitive effect on the employees' engagement levels. Two themes that emerged from this were again positive and negative effect and the employee participants interviewed used both positive and negative phrases to describe them.

Table 5 below contains direct quotes from the employee participants which illustrate the positive and negative effect on their engagement levels.

Table 5: Effect on employee engagement

Positive	Negative
E1: "…The leader left … She was kind and supportive… she is back and I can already see the productivity increasing" … and "people are more productive because they feel it from the inside… she's a positive influence" E2: "…discovered new ways of solving problems …"…."motivating me to operate a machine…he was positive and determined… so it also encouraged me to actually do better work" E4: "…felt engaged… encouraged me to work harder" E5: "…I wanted to do more because I felt like someone noticed me"	E1: "…increases productivity because everyone is afraid to make mistakes or not do something"… E2: "…at some point she didn't feel comfortable coming to work"…and "…not productive, working under stress" E3: "…they just do their thing they don't go the extra mile" E4: "…the team is divided" and … "it also drops our performance very much" and …"coming to work is a mission" E5: "…definitely affects my productivity" and "… there is a lot of staff loss …"

One employee felt so encouraged and motivated by her leaders' emotional contagion and it positively affected her productivity to the degree of her being promoted. The direct quote from E4 was: "…I was at my best" …and "…I even got promoted…"

4.3.4 Summary of findings for Research Question 1

The findings for research question 1 revealed three main categories, the first being leaders' emotions and behaviours, the second being the effect on employees' emotional states, and the third being the effect on employee engagement. Each of these themes related to positive and negative experiences of the employees. The three themes seemed to evolve. All five of the employees interviewed agreed that leaders' emotions played a major role in their levels of engagement and that their leaders' management of emotions was important to their (the employees') engagement at work.

4.4 Findings pertaining to Research Question 2

Research question 2 that must be answered is “What do leaders understand about the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement?”

Drawing data from the leader participants interviewed, questions 2, 4, 4 (a-c), question 7 (a & b) were key interview questions used from the interview guide (see Appendix G) for details.

In the data analysis conducted for research question 2, four main categories were identified. Most of these categories had further themes that were identified. Table 6 below outlines the high-level findings of the categories and themes for research question 2:

Table 6: Research Question 2 categories and themes

Categories	Themes
Leaders’ understanding of emotional contagion	
Triggers of leaders’ negative emotional states	• Personal Crisis • Work Pressures • Organisational change such as restructuring
Effect of leaders’ emotional contagion on employee engagement	• Positive effect • Negative effect
Leaders’ reflection on their contagion effect	• Managing emotional state differently • Changing behaviour

Each category and its corresponding themes will be further explored under the headings that follow.

4.4.1 Leaders' understanding of emotional contagion

The data analysis showed that the leaders did seem to understand, with the wisdom of hindsight, the impact of their emotional contagion on employee engagement. All five of the leaders interviewed understood the term or concept of emotional contagion. All five of the leaders also clearly understood the effect of their emotional contagion. Table 7 below illustrates direct quotes from the leader participants that support these findings.

Table 7: Leaders' understanding of emotional contagion

Leader	Quote
L1	"…people want to approach you because you seem like you're in a good mood. Whereas people don't want to approach you if they know that you're going to snap at them and you're in a bad mood"
L2	"…if you feel optimistic and victorious … it can lead to positive things".
L3	"…emotions impact your staff immediately"
L4	"…emotions play a huge role… because it is affecting your work and your productivity…"
L5	"…they can play a big role if they not contained or controlled"…"obviously impacts everyone around you"

4.4.2 Triggers of leaders' negative emotional states

The leaders acknowledged that their negative emotional states had a detrimental effect on employee engagement, and three types of triggers for their negative emotional states emerged: personal crisis, work pressure, and organisational change such as restructuring. Each theme will be further detailed below.

4.4.2.1 Personal Crisis

Three of the five leaders experienced personal crises in their lives that contributed to their negative emotional states. This, in turn, had an emotional contagion effect on their employees' engagement. Table 8 below outlines direct quotes from the leader participants that illustrate the triggers for the emotional states. One leader (L1) had the experience of being diagnosed with stage 4 cancer, the second leader (L3) was in the process of getting divorced, and the third leader (L4) had an ill mother which weighed heavily upon her.

Table 8: Personal Crisis as a trigger for leaders' negative emotional states

Leader	Quote
L1	"…I was diagnosed with cancer stage 4…tired, sore and this big thing looming on you … you are not in the mood"
L3	"…I am busy with a divorce …it tore me down… I was really struggling…"
L4	"…mom was ill… she is fiercely independent and won't ask for help with her mom… distressed about the situation…"

4.4.2.2 Work pressures

The leaders spoke of work pressures, meaning they felt the pressure of work performance targets or requirements of them and the pressure of dealing with employees in general. Three out of the five leaders cited work pressures as triggers for their negative emotional states which had a further negative emotional contagion effect on their employees' engagement. Table 9 outlines direct quotes from the leader participants that illustrate this.

Table 9: Work pressures as a trigger for leaders' negative emotional states

Leader	Quote
L1	"…high pressure, requiring the team to work overtime…"
L2	"… I'm under a lot of pressure" and "I find myself getting frustrated at an inability to solve a problem" "...employee feels shouted at or abused… guys leave me alone..."
L4	"…in a bad mood today… find fault with everything…put that onto staff…"

4.4.2.3 Organisational change such as restructuring

The third type of trigger for the leaders' negative emotional states was organisational change. Three out of the five leaders cited organisational restructuring or retrenchments as a negative trigger for their emotional states. The leaders interviewed were dealing with their anxiety and stress around restructuring or retrenchments as well as dealing with the anxiety of staff affected by retrenchment or restructuring. Table 10 below outlines direct quotes from the leader participants that support this finding.

Table 10: Organisational change as a trigger for leaders' negative emotional states

Leader	Comment
L1	"…pressure due to restructuring"
L3	"…restructuring and retrenchments… I was feeling insecure and worried"
L5	"…restructuring… it upsets me which is why I'm actually looking for a way out"

4.4.3 Effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement

The triggers for leaders' negative emotional states appear to have a negative effect on their employees' engagement. Yet the research data, in the form of examples and experiences shared by the leaders, showed that this contagion effect could be positive or negative depending on the leaders' emotional states being either positive or negative. All five of the leaders interviewed suggested that their emotional contagion on employee engagement was both positive and negative depending on their (the leaders') emotional states being either positive or negative. Table 11 contains direct quotes from the leader participants that support these findings.

Table 11: Positive and negative effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee' engagement

Positive effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement	Negative effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement
L1: "…so it that actually got them to do what they needed to do… fostering a positive environment…" L2: "…when we implement a solution and it is successful… feeling happy… celebrating … leads them to be more enthusiastic about some things…" L3: "…the moment I changed my attitude they started buying into the process…" L4: "…diffused the situation… I think he got more positive and feeling a bit more capable of actually discussing his problems rather than just sitting on them…" L5: "…after we cleared the air…work actually improved after that"	L1: "…people saying I really just don't want to be here" and "lots of negativity going on at work but you still need to find a way to getting people to do what you want" L2: "…you will do less and that actually leads to fear" and "…if you don't like the experience of asking for help you are less likely to do that…" L3: "…I could immediately see the whole team worried …the energy levels dropped… they dropped so much we needed to explain to them how important it was to keep the sail boat going..." L4: "…huge effect … makes even more mistakes and not productive at all…" L5: "…why should I be here if I'm not wanted and appreciated…I'm looking for a way out"

4.4.4 Leaders' reflection on improving their contagion effect

While leaders indicated above that they understood the emotional contagion effect on their employees, they found it difficult to manage this when they were triggered emotionally, particularly negatively. For this reason, after sharing specific examples of their negative emotional contagion effect on employee engagement in the research interviews, leaders were asked the question of: "Going back to the time of this example, how do you think you as the leader could have dealt with the situation differently - to have a more positive or constructive influence on the team/the specific employee/the few employees?" All five of the leaders agreed that they could have done things differently, resulting in two main themes, either through managing their emotional states differently or by changing their behaviour. Table 12 below provides direct quotes from the leader participants to illustrate this.

Table 12: Leaders' reflection on improving their emotional contagion effect

Managing emotional state	Changing behaviour
L1: "…in terms of emotional state, I was to move above my feelings …move beyond your own frustrations and irritations and put what I am really feeling aside and try make it work" L2: "…for me emotions are black and white…in the tech space if you take out emotions you are only dealing with facts….You get more productivity…" L4: "…realised that her having a bad day or being in a mood is her, and not the staff member … " L5: "…maybe if I had controlled my emotions more."	L1: "…as a leader… the situation I need to respond to needs a different response" L3: "…I had to go home and spend evening reflecting…" and "I changed my attitude toward the whole thing … immediately they started buying into it" L4: "…address the mistake and not the person" and "tried to diffuse that situation …it was positive because we came up with solutions…" L5: "…only after he had time to reflect that he saw the errors of his ways…"

In the above table, some leaders recognised that by putting their emotions aside (L1) or keeping their emotions under control when dealing with a situation (L5),

they would better manage their contagion effect on their employees. One leader (L2) suggested taking emotions out of the equation altogether to negate the contagion effect.

On reflection of their actions, some of the leaders recognised that changing their behaviour by, for example, changing their attitude or dealing with the error and not the individual, may result in a more positive emotional contagion effect on employees' engagement. In the table above L1, L4, and L5 suggested both managing their emotional states differently and changing their behaviours or responses. L2 mentioned only managing their emotional state differently and L3 only mentioned changing behaviours after reflection. Taken together, it seems that both managing their emotional state and changing their behaviour or responses are important for managing their negative emotional contagion effect on their employees.

4.4.5 Summary of findings for Research Question 2

The findings for research question 2 found that all five leaders understood the term and meaning of emotional contagion. All of the leaders experienced triggers either in the form of personal crises, work pressures and organisational changes that had a bearing on their negative emotional contagion effect. All five of the leaders interviewed understood that their emotions played a major role in influencing employee engagement, either positively or negatively. While leaders understood their emotional contagion effect, in retrospect, they appeared to find it difficult at that moment when they were triggered emotionally – particularly, in a negative sense. This was evident in their reflections on what they could have done differently. On reflection, the leaders suggested managing their emotional states (when triggered) and changing their behaviours as ways of diminishing their emotional contagion effect on their employees' engagement levels.

4.5 Findings pertaining to Research Question 3

Research question 3 that must be answered is “What components need to be included in the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement?”

Drawing from the data obtained from the coaches’ interviews, question 4, question 4(a-d) and question 6 were key questions used from the interview guide (see Appendix H for details).

All five of the coaches who were interviewed understood the term and meaning of emotional contagion, to ensure clarity the definition was explained in the context of the research. All five of the coaches interviewed said that their coaching work with leaders focused very often on aspects of developing the leader’s emotional intelligence. Although all of the coaches said that emotional intelligence was generally a focus in their coaching, they also indicated specific elements such as leader’ self-awareness and the leaders’ impact on how people they work with or in their relationships experience them, as concepts most central to their work.

Table 13 below outlines the high-level categories and themes identified from the data analysed for research question 3.

Table 13: Research question 3 categories and themes identified

Category	Themes
Leaders’ reasons for seeking coaching	• Results or performance-driven • Personal issues or unhappiness
Coaching approach for helping leaders manage their emotional contagion effect	• Coaching for development of self-awareness • Coaching for behaviour change

Table 13: Research question 3 categories and themes identified cont.

Category	Themes
Coaching outcomes and results	• Development of self-awareness and awareness of the impact on others • Moderation of behaviour in working with people
Suggested coaching tools and techniques for helping leaders better manage their emotional contagion	• Tools for developing self-awareness • Techniques for fostering change

The themes in each of the above categories will be discussed.

4.5.1 Leaders' reason for seeking coaching

The coaches in this study were asked to reflect on a recent example of when they coached a leader through an experience of the leader's negative emotional contagion effect on their team, or a specific employee, or a few employees. The coaches were also asked to clarify the reason the leader sought coaching. Leaders' reasons for seeking coaching related to two main themes, firstly performance and results-driven, and secondly, personal issues or unhappiness.

Table 14 reflects direct quotes from the coach participants that support these findings.

Table 14: Leaders' reasons for seeking coaching

Results or performance-driven	Personal issues or unhappiness
C1: "…high performance, hard-driving … not interested in people. People are resources" C2: "…results driven … not people-focused… performance-orientated" C3: "…perfectionist…high performance-driven…" C4: "…shouting … micromanagement"	C1: "…feeling overlooked and unappreciated …" C2: "…disagreement with people and conflict…being anxious or frustrated" C3: "…her boss is impacting her… she is doing the same to her staff… bad-tempered, not taking care of herself … sick… overworking" C4: "…personal tragedy which caused her to be disengaged…" C5: "…unmet emotional needs which caused him to be grumpy, unapproachable…created a miserable place to work…"

As depicted above, four out of the five coaches cited performance or results-driven as a reason that leaders sought coaching. The coaches explained that in some instances leaders focused only on results and performance and that leaders' viewed employees as resources and not as people. The coaches suggested that some of the leaders wanted their employees to mirror their behaviour by expecting perfection and high performance from their employees. This behaviour from the leaders seemed to have a negative effect on the leaders' employees and was seen to be the reason for seeking coaching.

All five coaches, as indicated in Table 14, cited personal issues or unhappiness as reasons for leaders seeking coaching from them. As examples, leaders experienced anxiety, frustration, being unappreciated, having unmet emotional needs as individuals and experienced personal tragedy.

Taken together, the coaches conveyed that leaders seemed to understand the negative emotional contagion effect of these themes on their employees and, as a result, were reasons that the leaders sought coaching as they needed assistance with how to develop in this area.

4.5.2 Coaching approach - helping leaders manage their emotional contagion effect

The coaching approaches used by the coach participants interviewed varied somewhat but two main themes emerged from the data analysis and these were:

- Coaching for development of self-awareness
- Coaching for behaviour change

4.5.2.1 Coaching for development of self-awareness

All five of the coaches interviewed stated that the coaching approach used was to help leaders to develop their self-awareness including an awareness of their own emotions and the impact of their behaviour on others. Table 15 outlines direct quotes from the coach participants that support the findings.

Table 15: Coaching for development of self-awareness

Coach	Quote
C1	"…aim is to build self-awareness… help notice how they show up and notice the impact…" and "I found the most useful first step is to help them understand themselves and their impact on other people …"
C2	"…so, we worked with him on how to bring his message across… a big part of this was around being emotionally aware, self-awareness…"
C3	"…looked at her life wheel and did an analysis of where she was losing a lot of energy, body, mind and spirit…"and "…we were able to identify that she ignores the physical, completely pays no attention to her emotions or anybody else's…"
C4	"…reframing her identity… who am I… triggered an awakening."
C5	"…I do use EI, I got through each pillar… self-awareness, emotional literacy… communication" and "…grow their emotional capacity and use EI as the tool."

From the interviews, all five of the coaches stated that the leaders in their examples provided were not aware of their lack of self-awareness, or how this impacted on others they work with or their relationships. The coaches suggested that these leaders were also not aware of the impact that a lack of self-awareness may have on their employees' engagement levels. The coaches were therefore of the view that helping leaders develop self-awareness and awareness of their impact on the people they encounter or generally work with, may help leaders manage their emotional contagion effect on employees and their engagement levels. One coach (C5) from the interview sample suggested a different coaching approach stating that she believed "…to succeed as a leader we need the foundation of EQ …". Her belief informed her specific approach to all her coaching clients and which she suggested that all coaches should think about. The approach is to coach leaders in developing emotional intelligence as a starting point or foundation and then to work with them on their specific coaching goals from there.

4.5.2.2 Coaching for behaviour change

Three of the five coaches stated in their work with the leaders, they focused on coaching them to change their behaviour, particularly when they are in a negative emotional state. Table 16 outlines direct quotes from the coach participants that support these findings.

Table 16: Coaching for behaviour change

Coach	Quote
C2	"…so, we looked at the context and how that would influence him and how he would emotionally act … how that would drive his behaviour and be cognisant of that" and "…working on listening and pausing … understand where the other person is coming from… worked a lot with relating to others…"
C3	" …so, I took the line of how she is showing up with her family because she is seeing how her relationships in her family are breaking down but not noticing it so much at work…"
C4	"…she sat back and looked at the behaviour with new eyes… saw through the drama … recognised the patterns she had been replicating" and '…worked around looking at present state to the desired state…what gaps needed to close."
C5	"…Self-Emotional Literacy, being aware of changing the thought, the voice in your own head…we used ladder of accountability for change"

The coaches stated that the leaders, in their examples provided, were not aware of the impact of their behaviour (when in a negative emotional state) on their employees' engagement levels and their relationships with their employees. Helping leaders change their behaviour, or their approach they have with the people they encounter or generally work with (for example, working on the leaders' listening and pausing their response, as stated by C2 in the above table), may help leaders better manage their emotional contagion effect on employees and their engagement levels.

4.5.3 Coaching outcomes and results

The coach participants were asked about the outcomes and results of their coaching efforts with the leaders' they referred to in their examples. Two main themes emerged from this, being:

- Development of self-awareness and awareness of the impact on others
- Moderation of behaviour in working with people

Four out of the five coaches stated the development of self-awareness and awareness of the impact on others as an outcome of the coaching conducted with their leaders. All five coaches stated moderation of behaviour in working with people as an outcome achieved from the coaching conducted. Table 17 below reflects direct quotes from coach participants that support these findings.

Table 17: Coaching outcomes and results

Development of self-awareness and awareness of the impact on others	**Moderation of behaviour in working with people**
C1: "…So once you created a profile … draw attention … you created a sense of self-awareness" C2:" …in the triad session one of the board members said there was increased self-awareness"…"impact on others" C3: "…at this point I can say she has a high awareness of her impact on herself and others" C4: "…awareness of the impact of how she shows up and its effect on staff"	C1: "…just by knowing or realising what he was doing, with his way of being, enabled him to soften that and moderate it" C2: "…reported improvement in the energy levels with staff … improved relationships" C3: "…she is creating balance…drawing boundaries… struggling with it though" C4: "…more people-focused… more intentional…she is far more empathetic" C5: "…people said how different they are… friendlier… learnt how to be softer"

4.5.4 Suggested coaching tools and techniques

The coach participants interviewed were asked the following question: "What coaching advice would you give other coaches when coaching a client through the same or similar situation you just described?"

Two main themes emerged from this data. One being coaching tools for developing self-awareness and the second being techniques for fostering change.

Three out of the five coaches suggested tools for developing self-awareness and two out of the five suggested techniques for fostering change. Two out of the three coaches that suggested tools for developing self-awareness advocated a 360-degree assessment pre-coaching to enable the coachee to understand areas of potential development. The same 360-degree assessment was also conducted post-coaching to identify if there had been any changes or improvements following the coaching intervention. The rationale for the assessments was to highlight how others experience the leader and to provide a further basis of feedback to enable the development of self-awareness.

Two of the five coaches suggested tools for fostering change both of which were grounded in understanding the current state of the leader, identifying the desired state and working on strategies to achieve the desired state. Table 18 below outlines direct quotes from the coaching sample interviewed that support these findings.

Table 18 Suggested coaching tools and techniques

Tools for developing self-awareness	Techniques for fostering change
C1: "…Five lenses include enneagram but give you a whole lot more to help develop self-awareness " C2: "…360 feedback and assessment…" and psychoanalytic…making the unconscious conscious" C3: "…360 assessment with honest feedback before and after coaching process" and "…wheel of life… analysis of where she is losing energy… stress management"	C3:" …reframe those strategies that she used as a child …what would work better as an adult, so that those emotions and behaviours are not impacting others" and "working with current state and desired state for change" C4: "…present or current state to the desired state…to create change"

It is interesting to note that the suggested tools and techniques from the coaches mentioned above are aligned or congruent with the coaching approaches used by the coach participants in their examples shared in section 4.5.2.

4.5.5 Summary of findings for Research Question 3

Research question 3 aimed to answer the question of "What components need to be included in the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement?"

From the research data, it was established that coaches interviewed understood the term emotional contagion and were able to relate examples of leaders they had coached through negative emotional contagion effect on their employees.

What emerged from the findings were the reasons leaders would seek coaching - being results and performance-driven, and personal issues or unhappiness. Further to this, the coaching approaches, coaching outcomes and suggested tools for coaching reflected each other with the coaching approach - being developing of self-awareness and coaching to change behaviour, the coaching outcomes being the development of self-awareness and moderation of behaviour in working with people, and the suggested tools being the development of self-awareness and fostering change. The three themes show an interesting congruence in their findings.

From the above, it may very well be feasible to establish the components that need to be included in the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

4.6 Triangulation across the three samples

This study included the perspectives from three different samples to answer three different research questions related to leaders' emotional contagion effect. That is an employee perspective for research question 1 *(What are the perceptions of employees on the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement?)*, a leader perspective for research question 2 *(What do leaders*

understand about the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement?), and a coaching perspective for research question 3 *(What components need to be included in the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement?).* This research design, therefore, catered for some triangulation of the findings across two or all three of these samples.

Triangulation of findings across all three samples showed consistency in certain key findings for research questions 1 and 2, as follows:

- Firstly, in relation to research question 1, all three samples perceived that there was an emotional contagion effect of leaders on employee engagement, with leaders' positive emotions having a beneficial influence on employee engagement and leaders' negative emotions having a detrimental or dampening effect on employee engagement.
- Secondly, in relation to research question 2, while the findings indicate that leaders' have an implicit understanding of their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement, all three samples highlight the difficulty that leaders have in regulating their emotional states (when their negative emotional states are triggered) and managing the negative emotional contagion effect of this on employee engagement.

Turning to research question 3, triangulation of findings across two of the three samples in two different ways, also showed consistency in findings related to what development leaders need through leadership coaching - to manage their negative emotional contagion effect on their employees. In the first instance, the suggestions from the employee sample for development of leaders were triangulated with the leaders' views of what development they needed from coaching. Secondly, the triggers of leaders' negative emotional states from the leader sample were triangulated with the reasons for seeking coaching by clients (also leaders) from the coaching sample. These two areas of triangulation are discussed next.

4.6.1 Triangulation of employee suggestions for leader development with coaching outcomes desired by leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect

The employee participants were asked the question: “If you had to recommend development like coaching, what elements would you suggest the leader focuses on?” The theme that emerged from this was developing emotional intelligence and developing awareness of the impact of the leaders’ emotions on people. Four out of the five employee participants interviewed suggested development of emotional intelligence, which mostly related to awareness of and management of their emotional states (see the first column in Table 19). Three out of the five employees suggested developing awareness of the impact of the leaders’ emotions on people (see the second column in Table 19).

The leader participants interviewed were asked the following question: “If leadership coaching was available to you: what elements would you like to receive coaching on that would assist you to manage your emotional contagion effect on your team or specific employee?” The theme that emerged from that question was developing emotional intelligence and people skills. Four out of the five leaders suggested that developing emotional intelligence and people skills would be of value for them as a leader. Emotional intelligence is related more to managing their emotions more effectively and people skills are related to awareness of the impact of their behaviour on employees and more effective interaction and communication skills (see the third column in Table 19).

Table 19 below outlines the direct quotes from the employee participants and leader participants that support this finding of consistency across the two samples in terms of leadership development needs from coaching – to better manage their negative emotional contagion effect on employees.

Table 19: Triangulation of employees' and leaders' suggestions for leader development to manage their negative emotional contagion effect

Developing emotional intelligence (Employee sample)	**Developing awareness of the impact of the leaders' emotions on people (Employee sample)**	**Developing emotional intelligence and people skills (Leader sample)**
E1: "…coaching on emotional intelligence…" E2: "…and treat them differently that will make a difference in the productivity of employees" E3: "…managers need to learn to control their emotions…" and "speak to people differently … understand confidentiality…" E4: "…they must leave their issues at the gate… as much as there is something bothering them, they really need to make the working place bearable…"	E1: "…I don't think they realise that people actually feed off them…" E2: "…if managers see what subordinates see and feel…" E3: "…and understand that their bad mood affects staff…" E5: "…become more aware of how their emotions effect people around them…"	L2: "…People skills … ways of interacting that is more endearing…to create more personal bond…" L3: "…coaching is the best tool manager can have for emotional intelligence" L4: "…coaching on communication skills" and "…coaching to help understand the impact of my behaviour on people…" L5: "…coaching to manage my emotions better …"

4.6.2 Triangulation of leaders' triggers of negative emotional states with client reasons for seeking coaching observed by the coaches

The leader participants interviewed were asked what triggered their negative emotions in their work context, which led to a negative emotional contagion effect on their employees. Three themes or types of triggers were identified – personal crises, work pressures and organisational change.

Leader participants experienced personal crises such as divorce, terminal illness and family members who were ill. The work pressures felt by leaders included pressure to perform and meet high standards or expectations from their leaders, as well as dealing with employees and their struggles. The trigger of organisational change included the theme of restructuring and leaders struggling with dealing with their anxieties and fear as well as managing and dealing with the fears of their employees.

The theme, of leaders' triggers of negative emotions identified from the leader participants, were triangulated with the reasons for seeking coaching identified from the coaching participants in relation to their clients (also leaders). Reasons for seeking coaching fell into two main themes, one being results or performance-driven, and the second being personal issues or unhappiness.

Table 20 below outlines direct quotes from the leader participants and the coach participants that support this finding:

Table 20: Triangulation of leaders' triggers of negative emotional states with client reasons for seeking coaching from the coach sample

Triggers of leaders' negative emotional states (Leader sample)	Client reasons for seeking coaching (Coach sample)	
	Results or performance-driven	**Personal issues or unhappiness**
Personal crises: L1: "I was diagnosed with cancer stage 4…tired, sore and this big thing looming on you … you are not in the mood" L3: "…I am busy with a divorce …it tore me down… I was really struggling…" L4: "…mom was ill… she is fiercely independent and won't ask for help with her mom… distressed about the situation…"	C1: "…high performance, hard-driving … not interested in people. People are resources" C2: "…results driven … not people-focused… performance-orientated" C3: "… perfectionist …high performance-driven…" C4: "…shouting … micromanagement"	C1: "…feeling overlooked and unappreciated…" C2: "…disagreement with people and conflict…being anxious or frustrated" C3: "…her boss is impacting her… she is doing the same to her staff… bad-tempered, not taking care of herself … sick… overworking" C4: "…personal tragedy which caused her to be disengaged…" C5: "…unmet emotional needs which caused him to be grumpy, unapproachable…created a miserable place to work…"

Work pressures: L1: "…high pressure, requiring the team to work overtime…" L2: "… I'm under a lot of pressure" and "I find myself getting frustrated at an inability to solve a problem" "...employee feels shouted at or abused… guys leave me alone..." L4: "…in a bad mood today… find fault with everything…puts that onto staff…" **Organisational change:** L1: "…pressure due to restructuring" L3: "…restructuring and retrenchments… I was feeling insecure and worried" L5: "…restructuring… it upsets me which is why I'm actually looking for a way out"		

The leaders' triggers of negative emotional contagion on employee engagement (see the first column in table 20) were due to personal crises, work pressures (either personal or employee-based) and organisational change. In the same respect, results-driven (personal work pressures on the leader) and personal unhappiness were reasons leaders sought coaching (see second and third column 20). These two themes show consistency and triangulate with each other, as they both have an effect on the leaders' emotional states (more specifically a negative effect), which has already been stated as having a negative effect on their employees' engagement levels. This triangulation enhances the consistency of the finding that leaders need to learn to better manage their negative emotions and the triggers of these negative emotions, which could be done through leadership coaching to assist leaders in managing the negative emotional contagion effect on their employees' engagement.

Taken together, the two areas of triangulation outlined above highlight the consistency of the findings across the three samples in relation to the development areas required for leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement, and the implications for coaching on focusing on these development areas, which forms part of research question 3.

4.7 Summary of findings

Summary of the findings from the data analysis conducted is outlined below per the research question.

For research question 1, three main categories emerged from the perceptions of employees on the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement. Three main categories appeared which were emerging in nature: the first was leaders' emotions and behaviours, the second was leaders' emotions and behaviour effect on their employees' emotional states and the third the resultant effect of the employees' emotional states on their levels of engagement and these were related to positive and negative experiences.

For research question 2: the data findings revealed that leaders did have an understanding of the effect of their emotional contagion on employee

engagement. The triggers of which being personal crises, work pressure and organisation change at the root cause of their negative emotional state. On reflection leaders suggested managing their emotional states better or changing their behaviour as ways to reduce their negative emotional contagion effect on employees' engagement levels.

For research question 3, four main categories emerged. For the first category leaders' reasons for seeking coaching the two themes, performance or results-driven and personal issues or unhappiness, emerged. These two themes were triangulated against the category 'triggers for leaders' negative emotional states' identified in research question 2.

The second category coaching approach, identified two themes being coaching for the development of self-awareness and coaching for behaviour change. The third category 'coaching outcomes' revealed two main themes: development of self-awareness, awareness of the impact on others, and moderation of behaviour in working with people.

Finally, the suggested coaching tools and techniques identified two themes being tools for developing self-awareness and techniques for fostering change. Both these tools and techniques can be likened to the coaching approach as well as the coaching outcomes categories mentioned above.

All three samples understood the emotional contagion effect of leaders on employee engagement, with leaders' positive emotions having a beneficial influence on employee engagement and leaders' negative emotions having a detrimental or dampening effect on employee engagement. All three samples highlighted the difficulty leaders have in regulating their emotional states, particularly their negative emotional states and the negative contagion effect of this on employee engagement. Finally, all three samples identified that leaders needed to develop firstly, self-awareness of their emotional states and then, development and regulation of their abilities to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

In chapter 5 the findings for each research question will be discussed in detail, with patterns and differences being identified and then related to the literature review in chapter 2. Discussion of the triangulation of findings in the final section of chapter 4, across two or three of the samples, will be included under the relevant research questions in this chapter.

5.2 Discussion pertaining to Research Question 1

Research question 1 states: What are the perceptions of employees on the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement? This section discusses the findings for research question 1.

5.2.1 Leaders' emotions and behaviours

The employees interviewed, experienced both positive and negative emotional contagion effect from their leaders, which were displayed through the leaders' emotions and behaviours. Leaders that showed positive emotional contagion were described as showing care, being positive, providing support and making employees feel important. Bono and Ilies (2006), in their study on emotions and mood contagion, found that when leaders show positive emotions, their employees feel more positive. Conversely, and supporting the theory that emotional contagion by leaders has an effect on employee engagement, was when leaders showed negative emotional contagion. In these instances, leaders were described by the employees as aggressive, angry, and anxious and/or stressed, and they had the effect of negative emotional contagion on employee engagement. These findings align with research which concluded that leaders' emotional displays (for example, anger and anxiety) affect employees' intent to engage in organisational citizenship behaviour, as well as being powerful disturbances of work, suggesting that leaders in bad moods are bad for business (Goleman et al., 2013; Koning & Van Kleef, 2015).

5.2.2 Employees' emotional states

From the employees' perspective, the findings established that the leaders' emotions and behaviours had an effect on the employees' emotional states, again either positively or negatively, depending on the leaders' emotions and behaviours being either positive or negative. From the definition of emotional contagion in the context of leadership, it was established that leaders and their emotional states, whether positive or negative, influence the people around them and is referred to as emotional contagion (Tee, 2015). Goleman et al. (2013) suggest that leaders act as the organisation's emotional guide and that emotions play a major role in getting work done. It stands to reason that leaders, therefore, have an effect on employees' emotional states and therefore on their engagement levels. In addition, Goleman et al. (2013, p. 20) believe that emotions are the crux of what commits people to an organisation. From the findings and the literature explored, one can conclude that leaders' emotional states do have an effect on employees' emotional states and employees' emotional states do then have an impact on their engagement levels, either positive or negatively.

5.2.3 Effect on employee engagement

As mentioned under 5.2.1, the findings for research question 1 were seemingly progressive, meaning that the leaders' emotions and behaviours had an effect on employees' emotional states, which in turn had an effect (either positive or negative, depending on the leaders' emotions and behaviour being either positive or negative) on the employees' engagement levels. These findings in relation to the employees' perceptions were also confirmed by triangulation with the findings from both the leader and coach samples. Active events theory and cognitive appraisal theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) suggest that employees may have an emotional reaction to events, such as their leaders' emotions, that take place in the workplace and then their experience, either positive or negative, which will have the same effect on their engagement (Koning & Van Kleef, 2015).

5.2.4 Conclusion for proposition 1

The first proposition is that leaders' emotional contagion does have an effect on employee engagement.

From the findings, it can be stated that leadership does have an impact on employees and more specifically a leaders' emotional contagion does have an effect on employee engagement (Koning & Van Kleef, 2015; van Knippenberg & van Kleef, 2016). Leaders' emotional states and behaviours, whether positive or negative, influence their employees' and therefore their employees' engagement, and is referred to as emotional contagion (Tee, 2015).

5.3 Discussion pertaining to Research question 2

Research question 2 that must be answered is "What do leaders understand about the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement?" This section discusses the findings for research question 2.

5.3.1 Triggers for leaders' negative emotional states

The leaders' negative emotional states had a detrimental effect on employees' engagement. Three types of triggers emerged that had a bearing on the leaders' negative emotional states: (1) personal crises, (2) work pressures, and (3) organisational change. From the findings, one can conclude that negative triggers have a negative emotional contagion effect, which means that positive triggers have a positive emotional contagion effect on employees. Many studies have identified that positive effect from leaders has a positive emotional contagion effect on employees and that negative affect has a negative emotional contagion effect on employees (Koning & Van Kleef, 2015; Van Kleef et al., 2009; van Knippenberg & van Kleef, 2016).

5.3.2 Effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement

In the findings, leaders acknowledged that their emotional states played a key role in influencing employee engagement, either positively or negatively,

depending on the leaders' emotional contagion being either positive or negative. These findings, based on the leaders' perceptions, were confirmed by triangulation with the findings from both the leader and coach samples.

Active events theory and cognitive appraisal theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) both posit that employees may have an emotional reaction to events that take place in the workplace and their experience, either positive or negative, will have the same effect on their engagement (Koning & Van Kleef, 2015). It stands to reason that leaders' emotional contagion effect on employee engagement is either positive or negative depending on the leaders' emotional states being either positive or negative.

5.3.3 Leaders reflection on improving their contagion effect

While leaders acknowledged the emotional contagion effect on employees' engagement levels, it was clear from their examples shared and responses that they found it difficult to manage their negative emotional states when triggered. This finding from the sample of leaders was also confirmed by the employee and coach samples, thereby enhancing the consistency of this finding. Leaders were asked to reflect on what they could have done differently in relation to their examples given of negative emotional contagion effect due to being triggered emotionally. The leaders' responded that they would both manage their emotional states better and change their behaviour.

In terms of managing their emotions, the leaders suggested putting their own emotions aside or keeping their emotions under control. These suggestions resonate with the term emotional labour. Grandey (2000) argued that leaders were aware of the impact of their emotional states, and can therefore consciously control their emotional states and the effect on their employees. Further studies showed that emotional labour has also been found to be effective for leaders in managing their emotional contagion by demonstrating appropriate emotions for the situation, as well as understanding the effect of emotional labour in appropriate situations (Humphrey et al., 2008; Koning & Van Kleef, 2015; Shamir et al., 1993). In addition to emotional labour, leaders could manage their emotional states and the triggers of these emotional states better if they could

develop their emotional intelligence; more specifically, they could benefit from developing their self-awareness and self-regulation. This rationale is supported by Goleman (2001, p. 4) who believed the four key components of emotional intelligence, and which make better leaders, are (1) the capacity to be cognizant of, to appreciate, and to express oneself; (2) the capacity to be conscious of, to comprehend, and to connect to others; (3) the skill to deal with emotions and regulate one's urges; and (4) the aptitude to acclimatise to change and to resolve problems of a personal or a shared nature.

In terms of leaders changing their behaviour, they would first need to develop a level of self-awareness, so they are aware of their behaviour - and the impact their behaviour has on their employees' engagement. Once aware of the behaviour, the leader is in a position to decide how to change the behaviours to better manage the emotional contagion effect on their employees. Wasylyshyn et al. (2012) focused on an insight-oriented coaching model and suggest that behaviour change is critical; and more specifically, to changes in leaders' levels of emotional intelligence. Dippenaar and Schaap (2017) suggest cohesive and holistic coaching models are effective in transforming leaders' emotional intelligence and behaviour permanently.

5.3.4 Conclusion for proposition 2

The second proposition was that leaders do understand the effect of their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement

From the findings, it can be stated that leaders do have an understanding of the effect of their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. However, the findings from this study indicate that the leaders have difficulty in managing the negative emotional contagion effect on employees when their negative emotions are triggered. Leaders recognise that they can use emotional labour to manage the emotional contagion effect on employees (Humphrey et al., 2008). Leaders are also able to temper their emotional states and behaviours to match what is appropriate for the situation (Lee & Chelladurai, 2016).

5.4 Discussion pertaining to Research question 3

Research question 3 is “What components need to be included in the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement?” This section discusses the findings for research question 3.

5.4.1 Leaders’ reasons for seeking coaching

Leaders’ reasons for seeking coaching related to two main themes, firstly performance and results-driven, and secondly, personal issues or unhappiness. In the examples provided by the coaches of clients they had coached, leaders had experienced personal crises and negative emotions such as anxiety, fear and frustration. These negative emotions had a negative effect on the leaders’ emotional states and behaviours. The coaches conveyed that these leaders seemed to understand the negative emotional contagion effect of these themes on their employees and their employees’ engagement levels, and as a result of this effect, were reasons that the leaders sought coaching.

Triangulation of these findings, that is, the reasons for seeking coaching (as observed by the coach sample about their clients who are leaders) was done with the triggers of leaders’ negative emotions (as experienced by the leader sample). This triangulation enhances the consistency of these findings in terms of the importance of leaders needing to learn to manage their negative emotions that are triggered, through leadership coaching aimed at assisting leaders to manage their negative emotional contagion effect on employees’ engagement. Koning and Van Kleef (2015) showed that ~~l~~eaders’ negative emotions when displayed inappropriately, affect employees’ engagement levels. Supporting this concept, leaders emotions (for example, anger and anxiety) affect employees’ engagement levels and are bad for business and create disorder at work (George, 2000; Koning & Van Kleef, 2015; Popli & Rizvi, 2016).

5.4.2 Coaching approach for helping leaders manage their emotional contagion effect

From the research conducted with the coaches' sample, and in the examples they provided, it was established that their clients (also leaders) lacked self-awareness of their emotional contagion effect, and the impact this had on the people they worked with and the effect on their employees' engagement levels. The two main themes that emerged for coaching approaches to help leaders manage their emotional contagion effect were (1) coaching for the development of self-awareness, and (2) coaching for behaviour change.

Firstly, the coaches focused on developing the leaders' awareness of their emotions and awareness of the impact of their behaviour on others. By helping the leaders develop self-awareness, the coach was able to help the leader identify the instances and behaviours which had an emotional contagion effect and understand the emotional effect they had on their employees. Goleman et al. (2013) support the development of leaders' emotional intelligence and specifically self-awareness, stating that it makes them overall better leaders but also overall better people. Self-awareness is one of the four domains of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) and is said to be the starting point for developing leaders' emotional intelligence. Coaching and development of emotional intelligence are also viewed as vital leadership development interventions for developing better leaders (Crow, 2012; Dippenaar & Schaap, 2017; Grant, 2007; Neale et al., 2011; Stillman et al., 2017; Wall, 2006; Wasylyshyn et al., 2012). Dippenaar and Schaap (2017, p. 6) suggested an integrated coaching model consisting of four phases (1) preparation, (2) developing the coaching intervention, (3) transfer and (4) evaluation, as a form of developing emotional intelligence in leaders. Whilst Neale et al. (2011, p. 184) suggest the PAUSE model helps leaders develop self-awareness and emotional intelligence.

Secondly, the coaches focused on fostering behaviour change in the leaders to help better manage their emotional contagion effect on their employees. These findings are supported by Goleman (2017) who said if leaders were better able to regulate their emotions to suit the situation or context, they could contain the emotional contagion effect they have on employees' engagement. The coaches'

sample also worked with their leaders to help them understand the impact of their behaviour. By helping develop the leaders' emotional intelligence they were able to understand what behaviours the leader displayed and how these behaviours impacted their employees negatively, allowing for an opportunity to identify the requirements for changing these behaviours. Coaching for behaviour change was advocated by Wasylyshyn et al. (2012) where they outlined an insight-orientated coaching model. The outcomes of their coaching model focused on behaviour change of a leader depending on where on the behaviour continuum they were and was focused predominately around developing emotional intelligence (Wasylyshyn et al., 2012). If leaders are able to manage their emotional states within a specific situation, they can respond in an appropriate manner and affect employee engagement positively (Vijayalakshmi & Bhattacharyya, 2012). Building on this, one could say that development of emotional intelligence could also be considered as displays of emotional labour by a leader. Humphrey et al. (2008, p. 153) advocated "leading with emotional labour" which referred to leaders who use emotional labour to influence employee moods and motivation levels, and ultimately, performance. Finally, leaders influence employees' engagement levels based on their level of emotional intelligence (George, 2000).

5.4.3 *Coaching outcomes and results*

Coaches were asked about the outcomes and results of their coaching efforts with the leaders (their clients), and the two themes that emerged were the development of self-awareness and moderation of behaviour when working with people. These findings were confirmed through triangulation of the leadership development needs suggested by both the employee and leader samples, – for leaders - if they were to receive leadership coaching on managing their negative emotional contagion effect on employee engagement.

Allen et al. (2016) believed that emotional intelligence was what made leaders successful. They developed the Emotionally Intelligent Leaders model (EIL), which outlined three facets that they believed to be key: (1) "consciousness of self", (2) "consciousness of others", and (3) "consciousness of context" (Allen et al., 2016, p. 81). The coaching outcomes and results from the examples provided

by the coaches from the research echo these facets of the EIL and support the work by Daniel Goleman over the years (Goleman, 1995, 2001, 2017; Goleman et al., 2001; Goleman et al., 2013).

Dippenaar and Schaap (2017) suggest that a holistic coaching model with specific goals has proved to be effective in transforming leaders' behaviour permanently. It, therefore, stands to reason that a combination of a holistic coaching intervention with a specific goal to develop leaders' emotional intelligence over a period time, could help leaders manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. This goal could comprise two sub-goals, with one being related to the development of self-awareness and the other to moderation of behaviour, particularly in working with people.

5.4.4 Suggested coaching tools and techniques for helping leaders better manage their emotional contagion effect

Coaches were asked during their interviews to provide advice to other coaches on how they would coach leaders through managing their emotional contagion effect on employees and their engagement levels. The two main suggestions were tools for developing self-awareness and techniques for fostering change.

The main tool suggested by the coaches to help their coachees (also leaders) develop their self-awareness was a 360-degree feedback tool. Prior to the coaching, the 360-degree feedback tool is used to ask the employees for input and their opinions on how they (the employees) experience their leader who is being coached. By using this approach, the coach helps the leader to develop a level of self-awareness and awareness of their behaviour and its impact on employees and identifies the areas to be focused on in the coaching. The 360-degree assessment may be administered again post-coaching to assess the changes made by the leader through the coaching. Kwiatkowski (2018) supports the 360-degree feedback process and its value as a leadership development tool. Goleman (2011) also supports the use of the 360-degree feedback mechanism to help leaders understand what competencies should be strengthened to enhance their emotional intelligence development. Together Boyatzis, Goleman, and Rhee (2000) developed the Emotional and Social Competency Inventory

(ESCI-360) The Emotional and Social Competency Inventory (ESCI) is a 360-degree survey intended to evaluate 12 proficiencies that use emotional intelligence levels as a differentiate and as a measure of work performance. The ESCI measures the demonstration of leaders' emotional intelligence and behaviours through their perceptions and those of their participants.

The suggested technique for fostering change that came from the coaches' sample was that of working with the leader's current state of behaviour or thinking versus the desired behaviour or thinking. The coaches aimed at creating a sense of awareness of the current negative behaviour the leaders were displaying and the negative effect that these behaviours had on their employees and their engagement levels. They worked with the leader to understand what type of positive behaviour the leader would prefer to display and the preferred positive effect the leader would like to have on their employees. This coaching approach used is rooted in solution-focused coaching advocated by Cavanagh and Grant (2010), which is an approach that seeks to assist the client to define a desired future state and to create an approach in both thinking and action that assists the leader in realising that state. The coaches also used an element of self-directed learning and it was Goleman et al. (2013), who stated that self-directed learning together with coaching, were crucial interventions for developing emotional intelligence in leaders. He also stated that self-directed learning is most effective and sustainable when the leader understands the process and need for change.

5.4.5 Conclusion to proposition 3

Proposition 3 stated that "Guidelines can be developed for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion on employee engagement". From the findings, it is evident that there are, in fact, guidelines, development suggestions, tools and techniques that can form part of guidelines for coaching leaders to better manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. The literature also provides guidelines, models and tools (for example,(Blattner & Bacigalupo, 2007; Carey et al., 2011; Crow, 2012; Goleman et al., 2013; Shamir, Dayan-Horesh, & Adler, 2005; Shamir & Eilam, 2005; Shamir et al., 1993; Wasylyshyn et al., 2012) that can be incorporated into these guidelines for leadership coaching.

5.5 Conclusion

The discussions in this chapter were focused on answering research questions 1, 2 and 3.

For research question 1, from the findings, it can be stated that a leader's emotional contagion does have an effect on employee engagement (Koning & Van Kleef, 2015; van Knippenberg & van Kleef, 2016). Leaders' emotional states and behaviours, whether positive or negative, influence their employees' and therefore their employees' engagement, and is referred to as emotional contagion (Tee, 2015).

From the findings for research question 2, it can be stated that leaders do have an understanding of the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement. However, the leaders have difficulty in managing the triggers and their negative emotional contagion effect on employees and their engagement levels.

Based on the research findings for research question 3, guidelines can be developed for coaching leaders to better manage their emotional contagion effect on employees' engagement.

Conclusions and recommendations will follow in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the conclusions of the study pertaining to each of the three research questions. Thereafter, recommendations for stakeholders are outlined, with emphasis on guidelines for leadership coaches in coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. Finally, suggestions for future research are made.

6.2 Conclusion regarding Research Question 1

Research question 1: What are the perceptions of employees on the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement?

In answering research question 1, the study found that the perception of employees is that leaders do have an emotional contagion effect on them, more specifically on their emotional states, and this in turn on the employees' engagement. The conclusion for this research question is that the effect of the leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement is either positive or negative depending on the leaders' emotional states being positive or negative. The conclusion can be summarised in Figure 6.

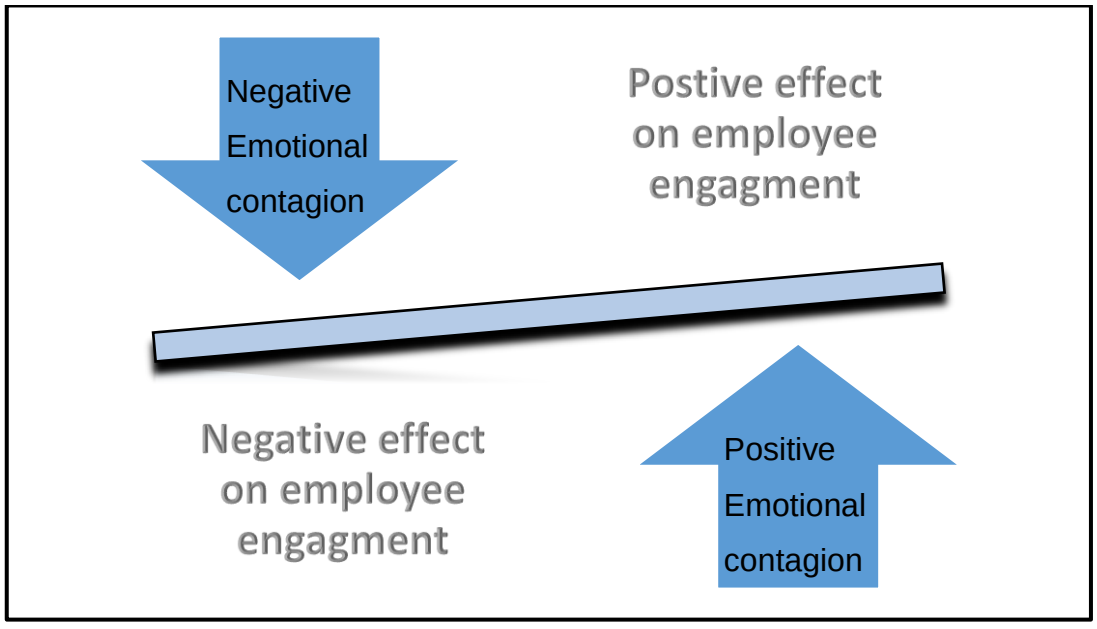

Figure 6. Leaders' emotional contagion effect on employee engagement

This conclusion implies that if leaders manage their negative emotional contagion it could have a positive effect on employee engagement. Therefore, if leaders have a positive emotional contagion effect it will have a positive effect on the employees' emotional states and a positive effect on their engagement levels. The literature supports the conclusion for research question 1, in that several authors Bono and Ilies (2006) and Goleman et al. (2013), argue that leaders do have an emotional contagion effect on employees' emotional states when transmitting emotions to employees, either positive or negative, and this, in turn, does affect employees' engagement.

6.3 Conclusions regarding Research Question 2

Research question 2: What do leaders understand about the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement?

From the research findings, it has been concluded that leaders do in fact understand the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement. In the research conducted by van Knippenberg and van Kleef (2016) they affirm the conclusion that leader's emotional displays result in emotional contagion and that employees' attitudes, behaviours and moods are influenced through this emotional contagion effect. In this study, leaders also recognised that their positive emotional contagion does have a positive effect on employee engagement and a negative emotional contagion does have a negative effect on employee engagement. Bono and Ilies (2006) agreed with this view. Interestingly, though leaders recognised the requirement to change their behaviours or moderate their negative emotional states (through, for example, emotional labour), they have difficulty in doing this, particularly when they are emotionally triggered. Humphrey et al. (2008, p. 153) developed the phrase "leading with emotional labour" which referred to leaders who use emotional labour to influence employee moods and motivation levels, and ultimately, performance.

Leaders also recognised the triggers that affect their emotional states (more specifically, their negative triggers), and thereby their negative emotional contagion and its negative effect on employee engagement. In the research, it

was identified that the negative triggers of leaders' emotional contagion (that is, work pressures, personal crises and/or organisational changes) were also the reasons that leaders sought coaching, as they also recognised the negative emotional contagion effect of their states on their employees. Positive triggers or affect from leaders have a positive emotional contagion effect on employees, and negative triggers or affect has a negative emotional contagion effect on employees (Koning & Van Kleef, 2015; Van Kleef et al., 2009; van Knippenberg & van Kleef, 2016). The conclusion for research question 2 is summarised in Figure 7.

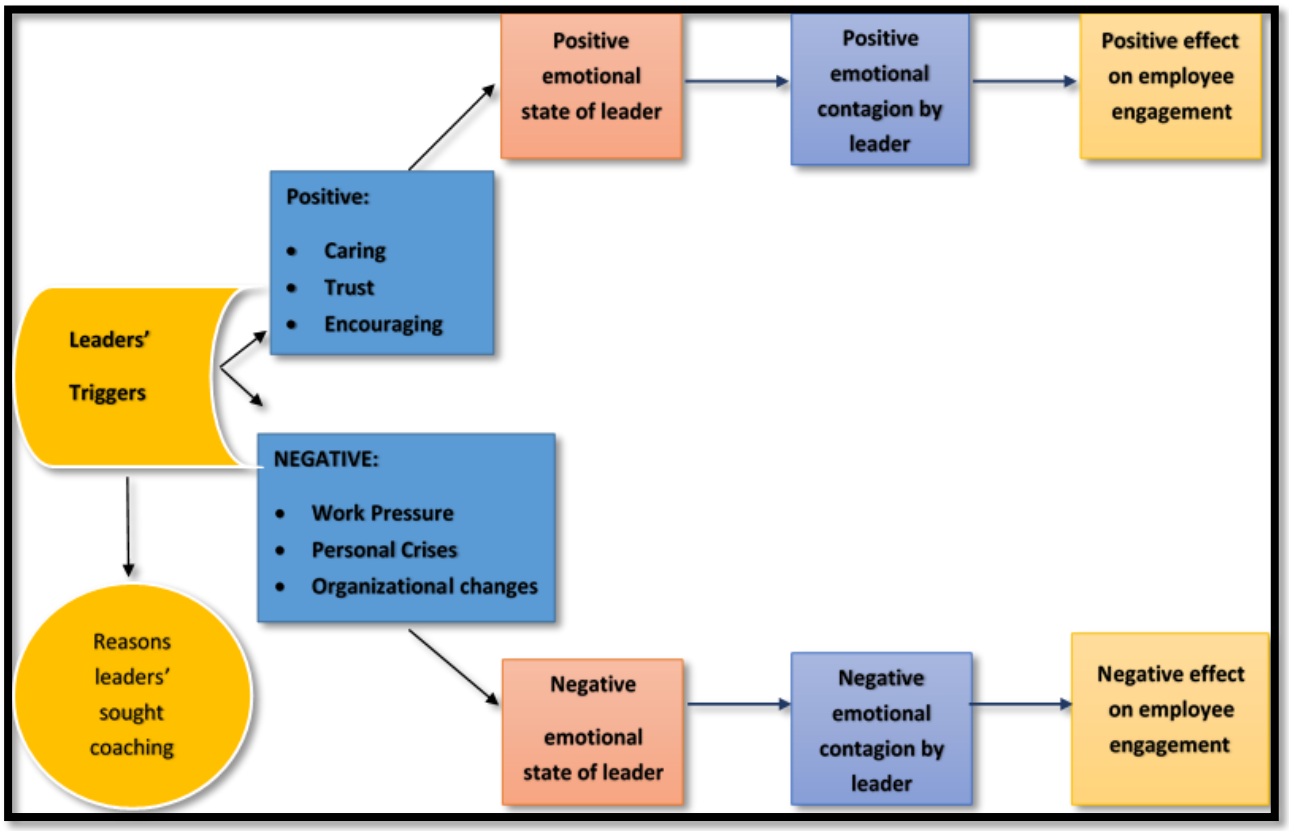

Figure 7: Understanding leaders' emotional contagion effect on employee engagement

6.4 Conclusions regarding research question 3

Research question 3: What components need to be included in the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement?

Findings showed that the coaching outcomes achieved by the coaches' sample when coaching their clients (who were also leaders), the coaching approaches used by the coaches during the coaching conducted by the coaches, and the suggested tools and techniques from the coaches, all had a similar focus. These components of coaching all focused on the development of the leaders' emotional intelligence, and more specifically, development of the leaders' self-awareness and change or modification of the leaders' behaviours - to better manage their emotional contagion effect on their employees and their employee engagement levels. Key coaching tools that emerged were the 360-degree assessment, as well as the 'current versus desired state' technique.

The conclusion for research question 3 is summarised in Figure 8 below. The components, that can be included in guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect, include: (1) understanding the triggers of leaders' negative emotional contagion, which are also the reasons leaders seek coaching; (2) understanding the effect of these triggers on leaders' behaviours and emotional states; (3) understanding the impact of the leaders' behaviour and emotional states on their employees; (4) a coaching approach that focuses on the development of the leaders' self-awareness, and change or modification of the leaders' behaviours to enable them to better manage their emotional contagion effect - through tools such as the 360-degree assessment or the reframing solution-focused, current versus desired state technique; and (5) the coaching outcomes the leaders are working toward, which is the development of emotional intelligence, and more specifically, development of self-awareness and behaviour modification or change through self-regulation.

This conclusion is supported by the literature and more specifically by the work of Grant (2007) whose view is that coaching helps leaders achieve their personal and professional goals, improve creativity, manage change and conflict, and build the skills of fostering change, building relationships and improving communication. Also Neale et al. (2011) also strongly believe that coaching creates sustainability of change over time and the combination of coaching, supported by assessments, is a powerful blend that can improve and help businesses remain competitive.

Coaching is recognised as an effective intervention for developing leaders and their emotional intelligence (Dippenaar & Schaap, 2017; Goleman, 2017), including an emphasis on the processes of self-directed learning (Goleman et al., 2013), for developing self-awareness, behaviour change (Neale et al., 2011) and emotional regulation (Gross, 2008; Rempala, 2013).

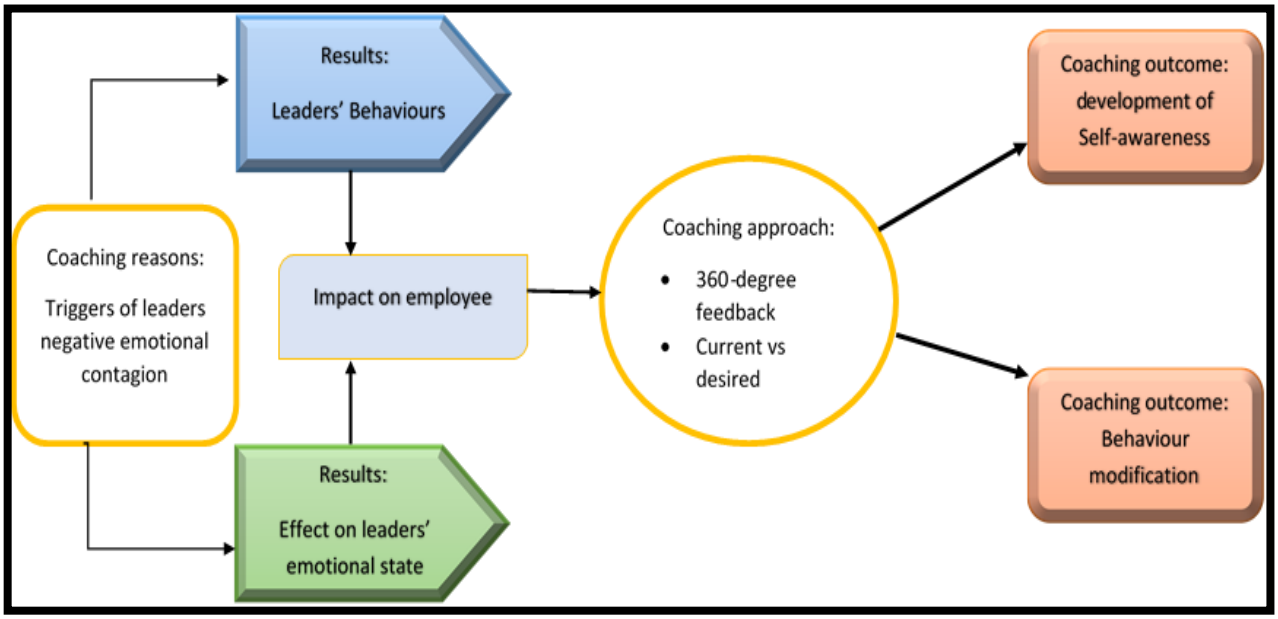

Figure 8: Components required for the coaching of leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement

The main purpose of this study was to develop guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. These guidelines, which draw from these findings and the literature, will be outlined in the next section

6.5 Recommendations

The recommendations will be focused on the key stakeholders, being leadership coaches, leaders and organisations – with an interest in the coaching of leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. Recommendations for each of the stakeholders are outlined below.

6.5.1 Leadership Coaches

Leadership coaches are a key stakeholder in this study. In section 6.4 above, the conclusions for research question 3 highlighted key components which could be considered in creating guidelines for coaching leaders to better manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. Furthermore, research by Dippenaar and Schaap (2017) recommended that when developing leaders' emotional intelligence, leadership coaches use the coaching approach of shorter coaching sessions, stretched over a longer period and working with the leader on shorter, multiple and related coaching goals. They argued that this approach has been viewed as more effective in effecting change and sustaining the change. Therefore, it is recommended this approach be adopted by leadership coaches in the coaching guidelines for coaching leaders to better manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. These guidelines are represented in a five-phased coaching framework as depicted in Figure 9. This recommended five-phased framework for coaching leaders stretches over at least 6 months and contains suggested coaching guidelines for helping leaders to better manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. The guidelines for each phase are explained in more depth after Figure 9.

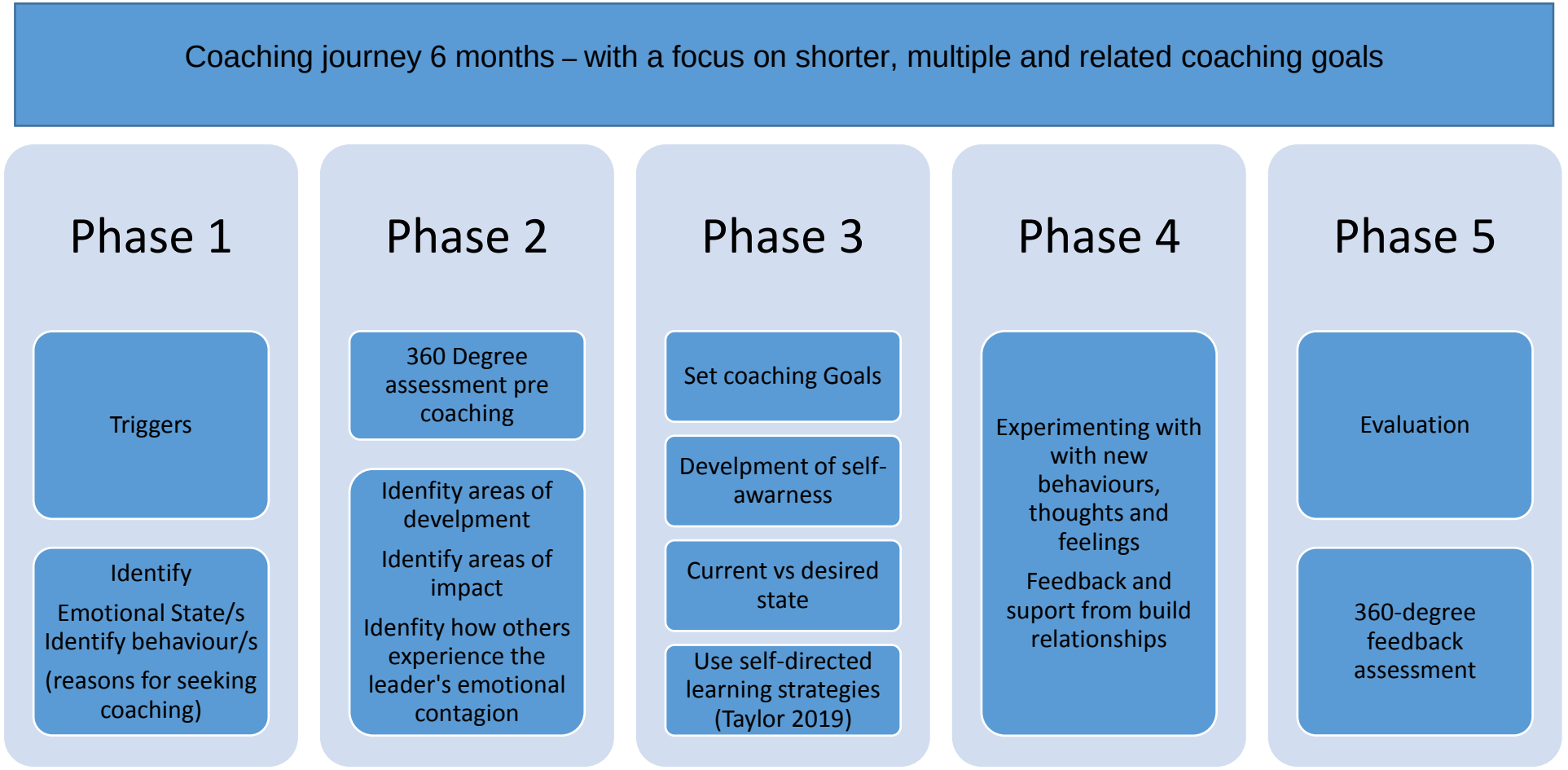

Figure 9: Five-phased coaching framework

Phase 1 is the starting point of the coaching journey between the leader and the leadership coach. The coaching intervention aims to help the leader develop self-awareness or modify behaviour in the interest of better managing their emotional contagion effect on employees. Following the initial contracting for coaching between the coach and leader, it is recommended that the reasons (or underlying triggers) for the leader seeking coaching be explored. From the study, these triggers were found to be (1) personal crises, (2) work pressures, and (3) organisational changes. In addition, it emerged that these triggers were also the reasons that leaders sought coaching. These triggers had a significant effect on the leaders' negative emotional states, which in turn had an effect on the leaders' emotional contagion effect on their employees. In phase 1, the coach and leader should work together to identify the underlying trigger/s of the leader's negative emotional states and/or behaviours; and the impact of these on others.

Phase 2 of the coaching journey suggests the leadership coach make use of a relevant 360-degree assessment tool. A tool that measures different aspects of a leader's emotional intelligence is recommended. This assessment is done pre-coaching to enable the coach and leader to understand areas of potential development, which will assist with setting coaching goals in Phase 3. The rationale for this assessment is to understand how others experience the leader and provide feedback to enable the development of self-awareness of the leader. (Note: The same 360-degree assessment can also be conducted post-coaching to identify if there have been any changes or improvements following the coaching intervention.)

Phase 3 of the coaching journey focuses on setting the coaching goals. The coaching approach is then based on achieving these coaching goals through helping the leader to develop self-awareness, and to moderate their emotional state and/or change behaviour. The suggested coaching approach to enable this is an adapted version of the self-directed learning approach developed by Taylor et al. (2019), underpinned by the work of Cavanagh and Grant (2010) and the use of current state versus the desired state, which is rooted in the solution-focused coaching approach. In Figure 10 below the suggested coaching approach is outlined and is based on an adapted version of Boyatzis's Theory of Self Directed Learning (Taylor et al., 2019). It is a seven-step process and encompasses both phase 3 and 4 of the coaching framework. Step 1 of the approach starts with the leader understanding the ideal state (emotional or behavioural) they would like depicted, then it moves to step 2 and to understand the current state (emotional or behavioural) the leader depicts. In step 3 the coach and leader can identify

the leaders' strengths and where the ideal state and actual states, overlap. Step 4 involves identifying the gaps between the ideal and the actual states. Step 5 is the learning agenda - how the leader can build on strengths and close the gap between the current versus desired state, and then working with the leader's coaching goals to close these gaps.

The fourth phase of the coaching framework, allows the coachee to experiment with new behaviours, thoughts and feelings, and practising these so new neural pathways or habits can be mastered, and this is step 6 in the coaching approach outlined in Figure 10. Finally, in step 7 of the coaching approach, and also suggested by Taylor et al. (2019), it requires a support network of people to keep the person honest and on the path to change while building and developing trusting relationships that help and encourage and provide feedback on the development and change. This can be done by the leader requesting feedback from their network and then working with the coach on creating coaching goals based on the feedback received.

The fifth phase as depicted in Figure 9 is about evaluation. At this point, the 360-degree assessment can be administered post-coaching to identify any changes or improvements have taken place.

The above-phased approach does not have to be linear, but rather be iterative depending on the coaching goals and what aspects the leader wants to master.

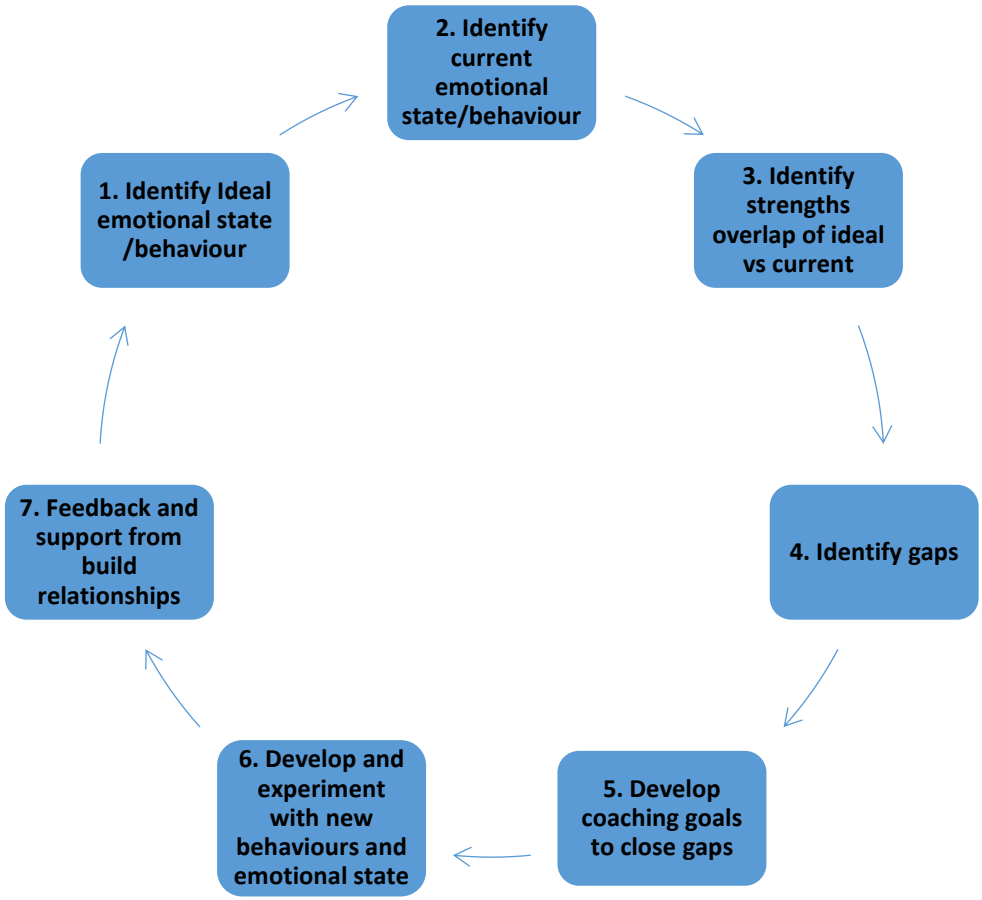

Figure 10: Suggested coaching approach using Boyatzis's Theory of Self Directed Learning (Taylor et al., 2019)

6.5.2 Leaders

For leaders to become better leaders and better at managing their triggers, and their negative emotional contagion and its effect on employee engagement, it is recommended that leaders reflect on their development requirements. From the study, leadership coaching has been suggested as an effective intervention to enable leadership development, and in particular, development of emotional intelligence (Dippenaar & Schaap, 2017; Goleman et al., 2013). It is further recommended that leaders, through receiving coaching, focus on the development of their emotional intelligence and more specifically their self-awareness, which may help them better manage their negative emotions and therefore, their negative emotional contagion effect on employees and their engagement levels.

6.5.3 Organisations

Organisations that are focused on improving productivity, driving profits and increasing performance, are looking for definitive levers to attain these goals. One lever is improving employee engagement. The study recommends that organisations could improve employee engagement by investing in leadership development through coaching interventions with a specific focus on developing their leaders' emotional intelligence (Goleman, 2017; Goleman et al., 2013). In particular, the coaching interventions need to focus on helping leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement, as per the recommended coaching framework and guidelines above.

6.6 Suggestions for further research

This study focused on suggesting guidelines for coaching leaders to better manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement. Suggestions for further research are:

- Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of a planned coaching intervention for leaders using the above-proposed coaching framework and guidelines. To compare post-coaching versus pre-coaching shifts in emotional contagion effect and the impact on employee engagement in the leaders' units.
- Replicate the current study using purposive sampling, focusing only on female leaders or male leaders to establish if there is a link between emotional contagion effect on employee engagement and gender.
- Replicate this study in a specific industry to establish if any additional factors within the industry contribute to the emotional contagion effect of leaders on employee engagement.

6.7 Concluding remarks

This study has contributed to the field of leadership coaching, within the broader ambit of leadership development, by delineating the importance of leaders' emotional contagion effect on employee engagement, and the need to focus on this more specifically within the broader goal of developing leaders' emotional intelligence. With the field of coaching and the body of research still developing, opportunities remain for further studies to be conducted on the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on

employee engagement and ways that coaching could help leaders and organisations better manage these effects.

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APPENDIX (A) Introduction email - Employees

I am currently a student at Wits Business School completing my Masters in Business and Executive Coaching. I am conducting my research portion of the Degree and would appreciate your assistance, please.

My ethics approval number is WBS/BA1898913/767.

During my career of 20 years in various junior and senior roles, I have come to experience the emotional contagion of my leaders either positive and inspirational or very negative and toxic. These experiences had an effect on my engagement at work. In my role as a leader, I also came to understand my emotional contagion influence on my people (again either positive or negative) and the effect on their employee engagement.

My research will explore:

Guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement

Emotional contagion is defined ***"Having one person's emotions and related behaviours directly affect your emotions or trigger similar emotions and behaviours in yourself or others" (Hatfield et al., 1993)***

The idea is that, by looking at leaders' encounters with their employees and the emotions and behaviours of the leader during these encounters, we may better understand leaders' effect on employee engagement. Once we are able to understand the effect we can look to develop guidelines for coaches to help leaders to better manage the negative effects or channel the positive effects of the contagion on their employees and therefore on employee engagement.

As a leader, you focus on key drivers of performance and teamwork which are largely centred around employee engagement. This research will contribute not only to executive and leadership coaching practices but also to leadership development as well as employee engagement strategies.

I am looking for senior or middle-management leaders (below C suite level) to interview. The leaders should have at least 5 years of experience in a leadership role and have led a team, of two or more people, during this time.

I would like to ask for at least five volunteers to participate in an interview of between 45 – 60 minutes and ultimately to contribute to leadership development and employee engagement.

If you are interested please communicate directly with me or respond to this email with your contact details so I may get in touch with you.

Linda Potgieter

Contact number: 082 XXXXX

Email: 18XXXX@students.wits.ac.za

Your support would be greatly appreciated!

APPENDIX (B) Consent Form

To be completed once the ethics form has been signed off by Wits Panel

Consent to participate in a research project for Linda Potgieter

MMBEC Student 2018/2019 with Wits Business School

Student number:1898913

"Guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement"

- I…… voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.
- I understand that even though I agree to participate, I can withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences of any kind.
- I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.
- I understand that participation involves an interview of between 60 – 90 minutes and answer questions based on the topic outlined above.
- I agree that my interview may be audio-recorded.
- I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.
- I understand that in any reports on the results of this research that my identity will remain anonymous. This will be done by allocating a code to me and disguising any details of my interview which could reveal my identity or the identity of people I may talk about.
- I understand that the information obtained will be used in an MMBE research dissertation and my anonymity will be guaranteed.
- I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained on an external hard drive for two years and that only the researcher will have access to this information.
- I understand that a transcript of my interview will be provided to me for approval before being used in the research and that all identifying information will be removed. This transcript will be retained for two years and stored on an external hard drive which only the researcher will have access too.
- I understand I can contact any of the people involved in the research to obtain further information.

Signature of the research participant

---------- ----------

Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

---------- ----------

Signature of researcher Date

- This example is adapted from https://www.tcd.ie

APPENDIX (C) Introduction email Leaders

I am currently a student at Wits Business School completing my Masters in Business and Executive Coaching. I am conducting my research portion of the Degree and would appreciate your assistance, please.

My ethics approval number is WBS/BA1898913/767.

During my career of 20 years in various junior and senior roles, I have come to experience the emotional contagion of my leaders either positive and inspirational or very toxic and how these experiences affected my engagement at work. Upon reflection, I also have come to understand my role as a leader and my emotional contagion influence on my people (again either positive or negative) and the effect on their employee engagement.

My research will explore:

Guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement

Emotional contagion is defined ***"Having one person's emotions and related behaviours directly affect your emotions or trigger similar emotions and behaviours in yourself or others" (Hatfield et al., 1993)***

The idea is that by looking at leaders' encounters with their employees and the emotions and behaviours of the leader during these encounters, we may better understand leaders' effect on employee engagement. Once we are able to understand the effect we can look to develop guidelines for coaches to help leaders to better manage the negative effect or channel the positive effect on their employees and therefore on employee engagement.

A key driver of performance and teamwork is centred on employee engagement. This research will contribute not only to executive and leadership coaching practices but also to leadership development and employee engagement strategies.

I am looking for coaches who are experienced and accredited leadership coaches (that is they have a recognised coaching qualification, membership with a professional coaching body and at least five years of leadership coaching experience). In addition, the selected coaches need to have specific experience in coaching middle to senior

management leaders on emotional intelligence competencies, aspects of which should have some bearing on the management of leaders' emotional contagion.

I would like to ask for at least five volunteers to participate in a 60 – 90 minute interview and ultimately to contribute to coaching practices.

If you are interested please contact me directly or respond to this email with your contact details so I may get in contact with you.

Linda Potgieter

Contact number: 08X XXXX XXX

Email: 18XXXXX@students.wits.ac.za

Your support would be greatly appreciated!

APPENDIX (D) Data analysis – an example of identifying common keywords or phrases per question per participant per interview.

RQ2: What do leaders understand about the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement?

Question	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Role of emotions	big part as we are humans	we are human, we all get emotional at times	impacts the staff immediately either positively or negatively	the huge role affects productivity - yours and staff's	extremely important, everyone sees them and adapts accordingly, and if you don't control them the yo yo effect affects everyone
Your emotional state has affected your team	High pressure no one wanted to work overtime or do the hard shift	I get frustrated at not being able to solve problems, makes their lives a misery because I am frustrated, also when you feeling victorious feel happy and optimistic, celebrate	restructure time of stress and feeling insecure, personal life crisis as a leader (divorce)	Issues at home (personal issues)	disagreement with a staff member who was trying to sabotage the team success, trying to establish an open and honest relationship
	Foster environment of happiness to pull together as a team	fosters an environment positivity	tore me down, really struggled and I leaned on family and friends	find fault with everything and be in a bad mood	shouting match with staff who is not open to new things and wanting to sabotage
	As a leader, I must move above my feelings of frustration and irrationality stay positive	Stress pressure - guys leave me alone			
	remain positive, how to	Employees feel shouted at or abused they feel uncomfortable			

Question	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Factors that lead to the emotional state	High pressure, restructuring, personal tragedy (illness)	the frustration of not being able to solve a problem, enthusiastic if we help a customer	restructure time of stress and feeling insecure, stress, pressure, personal crisis (divorce)	personal factors, fiercely independent and won't ask for help	high stress, no trust change in structures, no regard for women in the workplace and I have to report to one of them
How did it affect staff engagement	Negativity people not wanting to be at work when they see the positive they want to give more, although staff don't know your circumstances they are negative in general, despondent about retrenchments, why must I still work if I am going to lose my job, people say yes in fear of losing their job	the negative atmosphere creates an environment where they want to figure it out for themselves and it takes longer and the solution isn't always correct	the whole team worried, support structure helped me through, being open with my team created the trust,	the huge effect, staff make more mistakes not productive at all, lead to disciplining of staff and resentment from staff, staff are moody and grumpy, took him longer to do his work and he made mistakes,	no trust and the team was divided, I can't let my boss and his prejudice hurt my team, they appreciate my attempts to improve the motivation levels and to deal with the one or two people who try to tear us down. Positive effect when I am positive as a leader
		Feel less empowered, leads to fear don't want to ask for help, no overtime felt despair didn't care	my changed approached changed the staff attitude, energy levels went up	emotional immature	
Emotional Labour	experience the need to respond appropriately rather than how I feel I need to get what I want, need to use the right tactic to get what I need I chose to be positive rather than scream and shout. Need to put your stuff aside and move forward to get the work done		I realised and changed my approach if I had taken out the emotions I would have come to the same conclusion, I withdrew as I knew the impact of my emotional state, I used my support structure to help me on off days	I had defused the situation since she did not understand her impact	if I controlled my emotions more we would not have had the shouting match, we did speak about it and cleared the air, adapting my mood and my issues to not impact the team

Question	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Reflection /Awareness	big life changes give you perspective on what's really important - if it doesn't work it's not the end of the world, can't let it consume you, true support in times of crisis who can you can rely on - family friends colleagues, mentors, bosses (if they are prepared to), employees setting boundaries should be respected, I cannot do everything myself I need to trust and rely on people to help achieve things	Positive emotions are sometimes bad - if we say we can do this and then realistically it's not something we can do.	I had to go home and spent evenings reflecting, and the same thing keeps coming up what you decide is the impact positive or negative	we expect leaders to be emotionless or not to be human and feel things, different educations, life and backgrounds create different expectations of both staff and leaders, you come from your base and beliefs and think others should do the same	my mood has an impact positive or negative and I can manage that if I manage myself
Empathy	we all have stuff (regardless of what it is and in the same boat navigating life, recurring patterns tell us something we should pay attention to	The guys leave me alone or I don't engage when I am stressed. For me emotions - it's black and white. In the tech space if you take emotions out you're dealing with facts and figures and if you take out the emotions you get more productivity	my team showed me empathy, authenticity shows real empathy	no empathy and would benefit from this	you need to understand where they come from and why their behaviour is why it is, you need to manage your emotions to draw the best

Question	L1	L2	L3	L4	L5
Coaching	beneficial, preventing people from taking advantage of you, standing up for yourself, value your position and your role, deal with insecurities, learning to be more assertive	How to be more effective, improve my people skills, manage life better, communication, interpersonal relationships	I learnt to look at things from a different perspective, and then it is easier to find alternative solutions, it's hard to make time but useful when you do. I want to work on the emotional touches (as a male I lack that touch), want to bring a change, practical coaching hands-on observation, self-evaluations, reflections,	A huge benefit, communication, EI	coaching help guide me on how to manage my emotions, I need help with stress management and prioritisation, strategic objectives, sleep patterns and how I can prevent my stress from affecting the team negatively

APPENDIX (E) Example of theme extraction – with supporting quotes

RQ2 – What do leaders understand about the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement?

Leaders who were interviewed understood the term EC and I checked for clarity with the definition.

All leaders interviewed agreed that the emotions played a major role in their work either positively or negatively and that managing emotion was important

2.1 Leader' understanding of emotional contagion	L1 "…if you're constantly in a bad mood…that does play off onto people around you…" L1 "… people want to approach you because you seem like you're in a good mood. Whereas people don't want to approach you if you're going to snap at them" L2 "…we should try to not let our emotions get in the way…" L2 "…if you feel optimistic and victorious … it can lead to positive things". L3 "…emotions impact your staff immediately" L4 "…emotions play a huge role… because it is affecting your work and your productivity…" L5 "…they can play a big role if they're not contained or controlled"… obviously impacts everyone around you"
2.2 Triggers of Leaders' emotional states	
2.2.1 Personal Crisis Cancer diagnosis, divorce, mother ill	L1 "…diagnosed with cancer stage 4…tired, sore and this big thing looming upon you … you are not in the mood" L3 "…I am busy with a divorce …it tore me down… I was really struggling…" L4 "…mom was ill… she is fiercely independent and won't ask for help with her mom… distressed about the situation…"
2.2.2 Work pressures High pressure, performance expectations,	L1 "…high pressure, requiring the team to work overtime… trying to foster a positive environment" L2 "…I find myself getting frustrated in an inability to solve a problem" L2 "…I'm under a lot of pressure then I focus...employee feels shouted at or abused… guys leave me alone..." L4 "…in a bad mood today… find fault with everything… she puts that onto staff…" L5 "…I was trying to establish and open honest relationships….he was trying to sabotage the team… we had a blowout, to the standoff …a shouting match …fortunately it was behind closed doors"
2.2.3 Organisational change such as restructuring	L1 "…Pressure due to restructuring"

	L3 "…restructuring and retrenchments… I was feeling insecure and worried" L5 "…restructuring… it upsets me which is why … I'm actually looking for a way out"
2.3 Effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement	
2.3.1 Positive effect of leaders EC	L1 "…so it that actually got them to do what they needed to do… fostering a positive environment…" L2 "…when we implement a solution and it is successful… feeling happy… celebrating … leads them to be more enthusiastic about somethings…" L3 "…the moment I changed my attitude they started buying into the process…" L4 "…diffused the situation… I think he got more positive and feeling a bit more capable of actually discussing his problems rather than just sitting on them…" L5 "…after we cleared the air…work actually improved after that" L5 "…the way I have lead them, they really appreciate it …with the restructure they really don't want to lose me" L5 "…an overall improvement … I don't have to chase for reports…"
2.3.2 Negative effect of leaders EC	L1 "…people saying I really just don't want to be here" L1 "…lots of negativity going on at work… you still need to find a way to getting people to do what you want" L1 "…why should I do it at night?... why must I sacrifice my time?" L2 "…leads me to get frustrated and makes their lives a misery …the impact on them, they figure it out for themselves which might take them three hours whereas I could have helped them in 15 minutes" L2 "…you will do less and that actually leads to fear… if you don't like the experience of asking for help you are less likely to do that… " L3 "…I could immediately see the whole team worried …the energy levels dropped… they dropped so much we needed to talk with them and explain to them how important it was to keep the sailboat going..." L4 "…huge effect … makes even more mistakes and not productive at all…" L4 "…resentment builds up …" L5 "…why should I be here if I'm not wanted and appreciated…I'm looking for a way out"
2.4 Leaders' reflection on their contagion effect	
2.4.1 Managing Emotional state differently	L1 "…put what I am really feeling aside and try to make it work" L1 "…in terms of emotional state I was to move above my feelings …move beyond your own frustrations and irritations"

	L2 "…for me emotions are black and white…in the tech space if you take out emotions you are only dealing with facts…. You get more productivity…" L4 "…realised that her having a bad day or being in a mood is her an not the staff member … " L4 "…we expect leaders to be emotionless … it's impossible…" L5 "…maybe if I had controlled my emotions more."
2.4.2 Changing behaviour	L1 "…as a leader… the situation I need to respond to needs a different response" L3 ''…I changed my attitude toward the whole thing … immediately they started buying into it" L3 "…I had to go home and spend the evening reflecting…" L4 "…tried to diffuse that situation … positive because we came up with solutions…" L5 "….only after I had time to reflect that he saw the errors of his ways…"

APPENDIX (F) Instrument 1 - Employees

Instrument: Interview guide for employees
What are the perceptions of employees on the effect of leaders' emotional contagion on employee engagement? (Research Question 1)

Participants:

1. Organisation: .....
2. Location: .....
3. Name: .....
4. Position/Title: .....
5. Phone Number: .....
6. Interviewer: .....
7. Date of interview: .....

The purpose of this interview is to collect data for the research study pertaining to "Guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement", details of which have been outlined in the consent form previously provided to you. It will consist of an interview of 60 minutes in length which will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. The transcription of the interview will be sent to you for review and approval of accuracy of the information for before being included in the research study. As mentioned in the briefing form the participants of this study are guaranteed full confidentially.

- Do you have any questions about the study and your involvement in it?
- If you are comfortable, may we proceed with the interview?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Background information gathering:

- What is your role in the organisation?
- How long have you been in your role?
- How have you long reported to your current manager?

2. What is the role of emotions in your work?
    a. Prompt - How does your emotional state affect your work?
3. What do you understand by the term 'emotional contagion'?

    (NOTE: If the participant does not understand the term – the following will be given as the explanation and a check of understanding conducted before proceeding to next question):

    "Having one person's emotions and related behaviours directly affect your emotions or trigger similar emotions and behaviours in yourself or others" (Hatfield et al., 1993)
4. Tell me about an example of when you experienced emotional contagion from your leader? That is when the emotional state of the leader affected you? (Note: If the participant cannot think of an example with their current leader, prompt for an example with previous leaders or another leader)
    - (Possible prompt) tell me more about the experience (Probe - Try to extract meaning with examples).

    a. How did the experience influence your emotional state in your role and work (engagement)?
        - Prompt to unpack the answer - How did that show up in your work (for example, the quality of your work, the impact on your work outputs or deliverables, any effect working with others or on the morale of the team?)

    b. If the example given seemed to have a negative influence on the employee - follow with:
        - Going back to the time of this example, how do you think your leader could have dealt with the situation differently to have a more positive or constructive influence on you?

5. Obtain a second example if possible – Tell me about an example of when you experienced emotional contagion from your leader? That is when the emotional state of the leader affected you? (Note: If the participant cannot think of an example with their current leader, prompt for an example with previous leaders or another leader)
    - (Possible prompt) tell me more about the experience (Probe - Try to extract

meaning with examples).

a. How did the experience influence your emotional state in your role and work (engagement)?
    - Prompt to unpack the answer - How did that show up in your work (for example, the quality of your work, the impact on your work outputs or deliverables, any effect working with others or on the morale of the team?)

b. If the example given seemed to have a negative influence on the employee - follow with:
    - Going back to the time of this example, how do you think your leader could have dealt with the situation differently to have a more positive or constructive influence on you?

6. What is your perception in general of how leaders experience and manage their emotion when dealing with team members?
    - Prompt - drawing from experiences with your current leader/s and previous leaders or other leaders they have reported to (e.g. when part of a project team)?

7. If you had to recommend development like coaching what elements would you suggest the leader focuses on?

8. Any other comments you would like to share?

APPENDIX (G) Instrument 2 – Leaders

Instrument: Interview guide for Leaders

What do leaders understand about the effect of their emotional contagion on employee engagement? (Research Question 2)
(Research Question 3)

Participants:

1. Organisation: .....
2. Location: .....
3. Name: .....
4. Position/Title: .....
5. Phone Number: .....
6. Interviewer: .....
7. Date of interview: .....

The purpose of this interview is to collect data for the research study pertaining to "Guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement", details of which have been outlined in the consent form previously provided to you. It will consist of an interview of 90 minutes in length which will be audio-recorded and later transcribed. The transcription of the interview will be sent to you for review and approval of accuracy of the information for before being included in the research study. As mentioned in the briefing form the participants of this study are guaranteed full confidentially.

- Do you have any questions about the study and your involvement in it?
- If you are comfortable, may we proceed with the interview?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Background information

- Looking back on your career to date, how many years of experience do you have in a

management/leadership role?

- What is your current role in the organisation?
- How long have you been in your role?
- How many staff members do you have reporting to you?
- How long have these staff members reported to you?

2. What is the role of emotions in your work? And as a leader?
3. What do you understand by the term 'emotional contagion'?

   (NOTE: If the participant does not understand the term – the following will be given as the explanation and a check of understanding conducted before proceeding to next question)

   "Having one person's emotions and related behaviours directly affect your emotions or trigger similar emotions and behaviours in yourself or others"

4. Tell me about an example of when your emotional state as the leader affected your team or affected a specific employee or a few employees in your team? (Note: If the participant cannot think of an example with their current team prompt for an example when leading a previous team or other employees).

   - (Possible prompt) tell me more about the experience (Probe - Try to extract meaning with examples).

   a. Thinking back on your experience, what factors led to your emotional state? (prompt – what happened that triggered your emotional state?)
   b. How did the experience influence the emotional state of your team (or specific employee/s) and their work (engagement)?
      - Prompt to unpack the answer - How did that show up in their work? for example, the quality of their work, the impact on their work outputs or deliverables, any effect on their working with others or on the morale of the team?)
   c. If the example given seemed to have a negative influence on the team/the specific employee/ the few employees - follow with:
      - Going back to the time of this example, how do you think you as the leader you could have dealt with the situation differently - to have a more positive or constructive influence on the team/the specific employee/the few employees?

5. Tell me about another example of when your emotional state as the leader affected your team or affected a specific employee or a few employees in your team? (Note: If the

participant cannot think of an example with their current team prompt for an example when leading a previous team or other employees).

- (Possible prompt) tell me more about the experience (Probe - Try to extract meaning with examples).

a. Thinking back on your experience, what factors led to your emotional state? (prompt – what happened that triggered your emotional state?)
b. How did the experience influence the emotional state of your team (or specific employee/s) and their work (engagement)?

6. Prompt to unpack the answer - How did that show up in their work? for example, the quality of their work, the impact on their work outputs or deliverables, any effect on their working with others or on the morale of the team?)
    a. If the example given seemed to have a negative influence on the team/the specific employee/ the few employees - follow with:
        - Going back to the time of this example, how do you think you as the leader you could have dealt with the situation differently - to have a more positive or constructive influence on the team/the specific employee/the few employees?
7. What is your understanding of coaching? (Prompt: Have you experienced coaching (with a professional coach), or received any training on coaching?) NOTE: <u>If the leader understands what coaching is</u>, proceed to the two questions below. <u>If the leader does not understand what coaching is</u>, then first explain what coaching is and clarify their understanding, before proceeding to the two questions below.

    "Coaching is the process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities they need to develop **themselves and become more effective"** (Joo, 2005)

    a. How do you think coaching (in partnership with a leadership coach) could benefit you further in managing your emotions more effectively?
    b. If leadership coaching was available to you: what elements would you like to receive coaching on that would assist you to manage your emotional contagion effect on your team or specific employees more effectively?

8. Any other comments?

APPENDIX (H) Instrument 3 – Coaches

Instrument: Interview guide for Coaches
What components need to be included in the development of guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement?
(Research Question 3)

***this interview will also gather data in relation to research question 1 and research question 2

Participants:

1. Organisation: .....
2. Location: .....
3. Name: .....
4. Position/Title: .....
5. Phone Number: .....
6. Interviewer: .....
7. Date of interview: .....

The purpose of this interview is to collect data for the research study pertaining to "Guidelines for coaching leaders to manage their emotional contagion effect on employee engagement", details of which have been outlined in the consent form previously provided to you. It will consist of an interview of 90 minutes in length which will be audio recorded and later transcribed. The transcription of the interview will be sent to you for review and approval of accuracy of the information for before being included in the research study. As mentioned in the briefing form the participants of this study are guaranteed full confidentially.

- Do you have any questions about the study and your involvement in it?
- If you are comfortable, may we proceed with the interview?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Background information gathering:
    - How long have you been a coach for?

- What level of leaders you do you mostly deal with in your coaching practice?
- What are your coaching qualifications and professional membership?
- What are your core coaching competencies or niche that you focus on in working with leaders?

2. In your coaching work with leaders, how often do you find there is a focus on aspects of the leader's emotional intelligence (IEQ)? Which aspects of EQ seem to emerge quite often in relation to leaders?

3. What do you understand by the term "emotional contagion"?

   (NOTE: If the participant does not understand the term – the following will be given as the explanation and a check of understanding conducted before proceeding to next question)

   "Having one person's emotions and related behaviours directly affect your emotions or trigger similar emotions and behaviours in yourself or others"

4. Please think of a fairly recent example of when you coached a leader through an experience of the leader's negative emotional contagion effect on their team, or a specific employee, or a few employees? That is, when the emotional state of the leader affected the team or an employee adversely or negatively?

   I would now like to ask you a series of questions relating to this example:

   a. Tell me more about the coaching reason and the intended outcomes of the coaching for this leader?
   b. What is your understanding of what influenced the emotional state of the leader?
      - How did this show up in the leader's work?
      - How did this show up in the leader's interactions with the team or employee?
      - How did this show up in the leader's overall behaviour with his/her team or the employee?
   c. How did the experience seem to influence the emotional state of the team or employee and how did it affect the team's work or the employee's work (engagement)?
      - Prompt – how did this show up in the team's work or the employee's work? For example, the quality of your work, the impact on your work outputs or deliverables, any effect working with others or on the morale of the team?)
      - What approach did you use in coaching your client to manage the emotional

contagion effect on the team or the employee? (Probe - for examples and understanding of the rationale for the coaching approach)

- What coaching tools did you use in your coaching sessions with your client? From your perspective, which were more effective and why?
- What other coaching techniques (if any) did you use to assist in the coaching process? What was your rationale for using these?
- What specific techniques did you pass on to your client to assist her/ him? Your rationale for these?

d. What were the outcomes of the coaching conducted with your client? What specific changes did the client make, and what was the impact of these on the team (or employee)? (Probe for examples - that relate to employee engagement e.g. attitude to work, team or employee morale, quality and outputs of the work)

5. Upon reflection, what do you think you would or could have done differently in your coaching sessions with your client and the situation you described before?
6. What coaching advice would you give other coaches when coaching a client through the same or similar situation you just described?
7. Any additional comments?