

Coaching for diversity in the South African workplace

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ABSTRACT

South Africa is a country, which is characterised by immense cultural and ethnic diversity. The South African workplace comprises a complex and diverse population. Managing and harnessing inherent diversity in the South African workforce is a key component of workplace transformation initiatives.

This qualitative study examines the impact that diversity coaching has on promoting diversity in the workplace. In particular, the research sought to determine whether self-awareness that is obtained of unconscious bias can support the achievement of transformation of the South African workplace. The sample population for this research consisted of senior leaders in organisations and diversity specialists. Data collected included the personal and lived experiences of research participants who had either delivered or attended diversity coaching, which is designed to create self-awareness of beliefs and assumptions by using an unconscious bias method. The research aimed to determine whether conscious awareness of bias results in a change in behaviour and decision making on matters that promote diversity in the workplace.

The research findings provided evidence that diversity coaching, and making use of unconscious bias techniques, is successful in creating self-awareness of diversity matters. The nature of self-awareness gained through diversity coaching promotes positive behaviour change, which promotes diversity in the workplace.

The research identified opportunities for greater benefit to be derived from diversity coaching to transform the workplace. Aligning diversity coaching interventions within the context of organisational strategy and culture, encouraging unwilling employees to participate in diversity coaching, and evolving self-awareness into self-accountability to change decision making, were identified as opportunities to enhance the impact of diversity coaching.

KEY WORDS

Diversity coaching, Unconscious bias, Self-awareness, Decision-making, Transformation, South Africa

DECLARATION

I, Liesel Dentlinger, 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:

Signature:

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Signed at

On the day of 2019

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AA	Affirmative Action
AIC	African, Indian and Coloured
ANC	African National Congress
B-BBEE	Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
CEE	Commission for Employment Equity
DoL	Department of Labour
EAP	Economically Active Population
EE	Employment Equity
NDP	National Development Plan
NP	National Party

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

This study examined how executive and business coaching shape decisions that are made on matters, which impact transformation within the South African workplace. The purpose of the study was to determine whether evidence exists to suggest that coaching interventions, which focus on diversity and unconscious bias, support a change in decision-making on matters pertaining to transformation and the achievement of workplace transformation goals.

1.2 Context of the study

The key focus of this study and research report was diversity coaching within the context of transformation in the South African workplace. The scope of study was, therefore, particular to the uniqueness of South Africa's transformation challenges, and how these relate to matters of diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

Transformation in the South African context refers to redressing the impact of apartheid laws. Introduced as the law of the land in 1948, apartheid served as a means to institutionalise discriminatory practices that had established roots in prior decades based on White supremacy and segregation (Worden, 1996). Translated from its Afrikaans origin directly, apartheid means "apartness" and was an ideology, which the National Party (NP) government supported. The laws of apartheid established separate development of the various South African racial groups. On paper the intention was expressed as a means of equal development and freedom of cultural expression. The lived experience of the majority of South Africans, however, fell significantly short of achieving this aim. Apartheid era laws made it compulsory for different racial groups to live and develop separately, cementing a foundation for inequality in the country. Inter-marriage and social integration between racial groups were prohibited. A social system was created

under apartheid to advantage the White South African minority, while purposely disadvantaging the Black South African majority (Nel, 2010).

Although apartheid ended 25 years ago, South Africa remains plagued by its effects. Recovering from systemic racial discrimination that was imposed and entrenched by apartheid, is an ongoing process. The start of the journey to address the apartheid era's discrimination, was borne in a new Constitution and Bill of Rights, while the latter was hailed as one of the most progressive in the world, as it entrenches individual rights, freedom of expression and social economic rights. The country's new constitution has as its foundation the value of human dignity and improving human rights and freedoms. The ideals of these foundational frameworks for the country remain goals to strive towards, but the practical reality does not bear out this desire for South Africa. High levels of poverty continue to be part of the South African narrative. Despite the average Black household income increasing by 169% over the past decade, data shows that White households earn six times more than their Black counterparts (Statistics South Africa, 2018a).

Post-apartheid South Africa also faces the challenge of addressing economic reform, which includes the need to address the high concentration of large companies that dominate the market. Economic sanctions that were imposed during apartheid severely impacted the country's international competitiveness and, hence, at the dawn of democracy, the South African workforce comprised mostly unskilled labour and a low saving and investment rate (Bertelsmann Transformation Index, 2018).

1.2.1. Legislation governing transformation in South Africa

A raft of legislation and government policies have been enacted to address the impact of apartheid. The National Development Plan (NDP) was introduced as government's approach to eradicating poverty and diminishing inequality by 2030. The NDP calls for the South African people to grow an inclusive economy, build capabilities, enhance the capacity of the state, and promote leadership throughout society. Most importantly, the NDP is a call to action for all South

Africans to play a role in building the country's future through partnerships and collaboration (National Planning Commission, 2013).

Legislation that provide the statutory framework to transform the workplace include the Employment Equity Act, No 55 of 1988, and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (B-BBEE) Act (Fauconnier & Mathur-Helm, 2008).

The Employment Equity Act aims to promote equal opportunities and fair treatment of all in the workplace by eliminating unfair discrimination. All registered companies that operate in South Africa are required to develop and submit an Employment Equity Plan to the Department of Labour. This plan must be developed in consultation with the employees of the organisation, and must set out the organisation's objectives to improve representation across all occupational levels. Non-compliance may result in penalties in the form of fines (Department of Labour South Africa, 1998). To achieve the Act's intent, namely to facilitate workplace transformation, the law provides for two elements. The first element aims to eliminate unfair discrimination, while the second focuses on implementation of affirmative action measures to enable the equitable representation of employees in the workplace across all race, gender and disability groups (Department of Labour South Africa, 1998).

Employment equity has been high on the agenda since 1998, when the Employment Equity Act was promulgated. However, data released by the Department of Labour (DoL) in the 18th Commission for Employment Equity (CEE) indicates that limited progress has been made to transform top, senior and middle management levels. White people occupy 67.7% of top management positions in South Africa. The African population occupies 14.3%, the Indian population occupies 9.4 and the Coloured population occupies 5.1% of all top management positions. Males occupy 77.1% of top management positions, and a mere 1.3% of top management positions are occupied by people with disabilities (Department of Labour, 2018). This data provides evidence of ongoing disparity between the percentage of the economically active population (EAP), by both race and gender, and the representation of top levels of management in

the workplace. The country's most recent demographic profile reports that 8.4% of the South African population is White (Statistics South Africa, 2018c); however, they represent the majority of top management (Department of Labour, 2018). A total of 80.2% of the population is African (Statistics South Africa, 2018c), but they only represent 14.3% of top management, and 22.1% of senior management (Department of Labour, 2018).

In addition to the slow rate of demographic transformation, White employees remain favoured for training and development opportunities, while White males, in particular, are given preference over their female counterparts (Department of Labour, 2018).

Omarjee (2017) argues that while progress within South African corporations, as reported annually by the CEE, shows that efforts are yielding results, progress remains slow.

The Department of Trade and Industry governs B-BBEE and aims to recognise business' contribution towards broad-based black economic empowerment. Seven elements were introduced in 2004 and measured through a generic transformation scorecard. The seven elements include Ownership, Management and Control, Employment Equity, Skills Development, Preferential Procurement, Enterprise Development and Socio-Economic and Sector Specific Contribution (Department of Trade and Industry, 2003). As a legal imperative, B-BBEE requires that all businesses that operate in South Africa should comply with the provisions of the Broad-Based Black Economic Act, No 53 of 2003. The Act is supported by Codes of Good Practice. While there are no direct financial penalties for non-compliance, the Act aims to ensure that business will be favoured towards compliant organisations (Department of Trade and Industry, 2003).

Statistics show that legislation alone is insufficient to bring about sustainable transformation in the South African workplace. Research both within the South African context (Horwitz, Browning, Jain, & Steenkamp, 2002; Kilian, Hukai, & McCarty, 2005; Selby & Sutherland, 2006) and internationally (Bartlett &

Ghoshal, 2002; Kilian et al., 2005) provides evidence that while legislation governing transformation is essential to support the creation of a discrimination free workplace, it is inadequate. In addition to a statutory framework for transformation, organisational culture change is also required. Transformation at organisational level must be systemic to support, embrace and entrench diversity. Employment practices and strategies that support human capital development, as well as inclusive practices and organisational culture change, are essential for sustainable transformation (Booyesen, 2007).

1.2.2. Role of business in South Africa's transformation

Following South Africa's democracy, business has enjoyed an era of unprecedented profitability and growth. The Johannesburg Stock Exchange (JSE) has recorded steady growth and among the highest growth rates in the world, rising to the 14th largest equities exchange in the world (Nel, 2010). In 2017 the South African economy grew by 1.3%, exceeding National Treasury's expectation of 1.0% growth. A 1.5% growth rate was anticipated for 2018 (Statistics South Africa, 2018a).

Despite the sound growth rates recorded in the economy, South African business is viewed as not having come to the table to adequately address issues of people development, and to transform domestic investment so that it funds sustainable jobs and wealth-creating capacity for the country, thereby ultimately creating skills upliftment (Nel, 2010).

According to Nel (2010), research was conducted in 2010 that supports the view that South African business has not brought about any progress in transformation when compared to similar research that was conducted in 1984 (Nel, 2010). The research measured respondents' perceptions along a continuum of values and practices, represented in four waves. The waves were defined by a choice that was made by business between "Exclusive and Exploitative Capitalism" and "Inclusive, Democratic and Market-based Economics" (Nel & Beudeker, 2009). The initial research conducted in 1984 by Project Free Enterprise included more than 3000 respondents, and identified that, on average, business could only be

plotted in the realm of first and second wave practices. Only scant examples of third and fourth wave practices and values were evident. More than 42 000 assessments were conducted between 2000 and 2008 drawing on responses from more than 400 companies, and asking more than 1000 respondents to assess where they perceived their organisation to be along the continuum of values and practices. The outcome of assessments towards the end of the 2000s pointed to a strong presence of leadership and organisational practices, which reinforce the first and second wave cultures. The assessments also provide evidence that South African organisations have not transformed towards being inclusive and embracing of diversity (Nel, 2010).

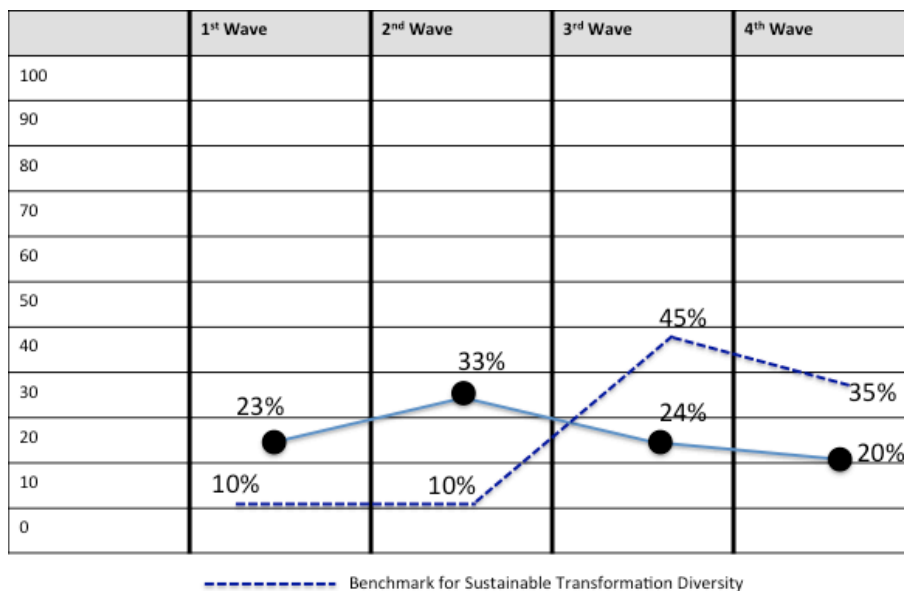


Figure 1: Transformation and leadership diversity (Source: Nel, 2010: p184)

Given South Africa’s distinctive history of entrenched racial discrimination through law and all associated practices, transformation and diversity management are imperatives for South African organisations. The diversity of the South African population mirrors the personalities that exist within organisations. Effectively managing the inherent diversity that these multiple personalities bring to the workplace, has the potential to enhance workplace productivity, whilst improving an organisation’s competitive edge (Mazibuko & Govender, 2017).

In an effort to promote diversity and inclusivity, South African workplaces implement interventions that create awareness and eventually acceptance of diversity within the workplace. One such intervention is individual executive and group coaching. The effectiveness of executive coaching has been linked to the focus of the coaching process, which, unlike many other business processes, is customised to focus on the individual. The benefit of executive coaching in the workplace is that it places emphasis on the individual knowing themselves better. This, in turn, allows the coached individual to live a more conscious life, which creates an opportunity to contribute more richly to the organisation. A reason why coaching has proven to be so effective for senior decision-makers in business is that it forces them to stop and reflect on their behaviour. The fast paced workplace seldom allows time to pause and to contemplate one's actions, particularly in so far as they may limit both individual and organisational performance (Sherman & Freas, 2004).

Research conducted on executives in state departments who underwent ten months of executive coaching identified themes of diversity dynamics, including gender, race, ethnicity, authority, disability, language, age and the de-authorisation of diversity work (Motsoaledi & Cilliers, 2012). The research purpose was a descriptive analysis of the application of systems psychodynamic role analysis, using conscious and unconscious diversity dynamics in organisations (Motsoaledi & Cilliers, 2012). The research was premised on the view that executives grapple with understanding the depth in meaning of diversity behaviour as it manifests both within and around themselves, and how this, in turn, leads to conflict. The research found that the coaching process assisted executives to obtain insights into below-the-surface diversity dynamics, to address diversity in a sustainable manner, and allowed them to take up their organisational roles more effectively (Motsoaledi & Cilliers, 2012). The research implies that coached executives will have a more objective and dynamic experience of issues of diversity that may manifest in organisations between colleagues, and within themselves (Motsoaledi & Cilliers, 2012).

This research set out to link the workplace challenge of embracing diversity, as influenced by South Africa's unique historical challenges, with the benefits of coaching as a means of creating awareness of unconscious and previously unquestioned attitudes amongst leaders in organisations. It is within this context that the research intends to determine whether coaching interventions that focused on diversity result in greater self-awareness and insight, and whether it can impact decision-making on matters of diversity.

1.3 Research problem

The term "rainbow nation" was coined at the dawn of South Africa's democracy. The term became a way of describing the country's multi-cultural diversity, as well as its level of tolerance as it began to reconstruct the country and heal the nation, post-apartheid (Baines, 1998). However, neither the democratic era nor a change in political leadership 25 years ago have resulted in substantial economic change for the majority of the country's population. The unemployment rate in South Africa, as at the fourth quarter of 2018, was at 27.1%, equating to 6.14 million people (Statistics South Africa, 2018b). The United Nations Human Development Index of South Africa notes that the country has failed to significantly improve its standing since the 1990s. South Africa is ranked 116 out of 188 countries and territories (Jahan, 2015). Within the workplace, the key measure of transformation, namely the demographic profile of decision-makers, shows a slow rate of change (Department of Labour, 2018).

It is an acceptable norm that transformation will take time. The process requires on-going commitment by all involved to achieve sustainable outcomes. However, a predominant perception is that the overall pace of transformation in South Africa is too slow (Omarjee, 2017).

The everyday unconscious views and assumptions of leaders in business have the potential to impact the way in which businesses operate (Rostron, 2009). These assumptions and views can also be linked to leaders' approaches towards diversity in the workplace. Coaching as a business intervention creates a space for leaders to self-reflect and become aware of their unconscious views and

assumptions. Therefore, diversity coaching presents an opportunity to influence the way in which business leaders view and make decisions, which relate to matters of diversity. This research intends to provide a qualitative account of the lived experiences of business leaders who have undergone diversity coaching interventions to determine the impact that such interventions have had on their decision-making, specifically on matters that promote transformation in the South African workplace.

1.4 Research objectives

The research study's primary objective was to examine whether diversity coaching influences decision-making on matters of transformation in the South African workplace. A secondary research objective was to determine the nature of decision making that occurs following diversity coaching.

1.5 Research questions

The research questions that the report addresses include:

Does diversity coaching provide self-awareness of unconscious bias that impacts decision-making on matters of transformation?

Does self-awareness of unconscious bias impact a change in decision-making that promotes the achievement of transformation in the South African workplace?

1.6 Significance of the study

This study aims to link diversity coaching as a process and practice of becoming aware of one's own unconscious bias, which can influence decision-making on matters of diversity and, therefore, support transformation in the South African workforce. Hence, the study aims to contribute towards the practice of diversity coaching.

Within the South African context, this study is significant, as it should contribute to workplace processes that can support and increase the pace of transformation. Greater self-awareness amongst those who can influence decisions made on matters of transformation will support the achievement of organisational transformation visions and strategies, thereby supporting broader socio-economic transformation in South Africa. Decision-making on matters of transformation include, but are not limited to, employment, corporate social responsibility initiatives, equity of ownership of businesses, and socio-economic and enterprise development.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

The research was conducted through qualitative data collection from individuals who experienced a coaching intervention, while the expressed intention or unintended outcome was to focus on diversity or unconscious bias awareness. A further refinement of this scope was to include individuals who held or continue to hold positions in which decision-making is made on matters that impact transformation in the workplace.

The research also included a sample of human resources, transformation specialists and diversity coaches who work in the field of diversity coaching. These respondents were engaged in the processes, methodology and evidence of return on investment of diversity coaching, which influence decision-making.

The scope of this research included all market and industry sectors, irrespective of size or business objective. The scope included any coaching intervention, be it individual (one-on-one), team or group coaching, which focused on matters of diversity and unconscious bias.

The research confined its focus to the definition of transformation in the context of South Africa, as described in section 1.2 above.

Excluded within the context of this study are the concepts of power and privilege in so far as they apply to any respondent in the research sample.

1.8 Definition of terms

Diversity	“Diversity means all the ways we differ.....anything that makes us unique is part of the definition of diversity” (Jordan, 2011, p. 1).
Inclusivity	“Inclusion involves bringing together and harnessing these diverse forces and resources in a way that is beneficial. Inclusion puts the concept of diversity into action” (Jordan, 2011, p. 1).
Transformation	Transformation is the process of changing from one qualitative state to another (Harvey, 2004 - 2019). In South Africa, transformation has a particular meaning, which relates to society’s political transformation.
Unconscious bias	“Unconscious bias encompasses the attitudes or stereotypes that are outside of our awareness and affect our understanding, interactions, and decisions, projecting prejudices we do not realise we have, allowing us to react almost instantaneously and make fast decisions. Bias can also prompt us to jump to unwarranted conclusions about people” (Lopez, 2019, p. 69).

1.9 Assumptions

The research made use of a data collection method of semi-structured interviews in a face-to-face engagement. Therefore, the assumption at the start of the research was that research participants would be willing to share an honest recollection of their coaching experience, self-awareness, learning and evidence of any change in decision-making that was made within the workplace. It was, therefore, assumed that the depth of discussion held during the data-gathering

phase would allow for sufficient information to be gathered in order to provide evidence that addresses the research objectives.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review of this research is positioned in the context of transformation challenges within the South African workplace. Within this context, a definition of diversity and diversity management enhances the conceptual framework that informs this study.

The literature review provides a critical review of academic research within the field of diversity coaching and unconscious bias, which inform the propositions that this study seek to assess.

2.2 Background discussion

2.2.1 Defining diversity

Harrison and Sim (2006) define diversity as referring to all the ways in which people differ. These differences can include those that one is born with and cannot change. Differences can also include those that have been assigned by society. Any trait that makes people unique forms part of the definition of diversity (Harrison & Sin, 2006). Narrow definitions of diversity consider factors such as race, national origin, gender, age, ethnicity, disability and religious beliefs, while more broader definitions consider factors such as sexual orientation, level of education, marital status and economic status (Rostron, 2009).

Rostron (2009) argues that diversity is a universal theme, but to fully understand and appreciate diversity, one requires “different thinking with an appreciation for difference” (Rostron, 2009, p. 1). Rostron and Janse van Rensburg (2009), as quoted in Rostron (2009), define diversity as being about difference, specifically in relation to equality, power and worldview (Rostron, 2009).

Algahtani (2013), in reference to work carried out by the University of Rhode Island in 2004, defines diversity as being a “wide-ranging term, including racial, ethnic, socio-economic, value and any cultural or identity difference” (Algahtani,

2013, p. 53). Algahtani also considers a definition by Baldwin Wallace University in 2013 that regards diversity as “the ability to think critically while acknowledging and respecting different beliefs, practices and norms” (Algahtani, 2013, p. 53). Haring-Smith (2012) argues that broadening the definition of diversity requires that, in addition to socio-economic factors, one must adopt a worldview when defining diversity. She reasons that while race and class may often align with ideological and political beliefs, this alignment is not an absolute (Haring-Smith, 2012).

Despite the wide range of definitions currently available, and still to emerge in future, most variations of the definition recognise that people are inherently different – whether through real factors associated with demographics, or those that are perceived to be ascribed to them through social constructs. This research departs from the premise of accepting a broad definition of diversity, and acknowledges that through the course of the research, an evolution of the meaning of diversity may develop.

2.2.2 Managing diversity in the workplace

Upon the acceptance and understanding that diversity exists, the concept of managing diversity emerges as a practice. The concept of managing diversity has its origins in the United States in the mid 1980s (Strachan, French, & Burgess, 2010). Following the 1980s trend of affirmative action, internationally the focus moved to the concept of multiculturalism, which is an approach of appreciating diversity while recognising individuality. Multiculturalism is based on integration (Parekh, 2001).

Diversity management refers to a strategic organisational approach, adopted to manage workforce diversity, organisational culture change and the empowerment of the workforce (Arredondo, 1996).

The concept of managing diversity is different to that of affirmative action and employment equity, although many times these terms are used to mean one and the same (Thomas, Cumming, Lattimer, & Plani, 1996). Affirmative action is a

policy that deals directly with system discrimination, and focuses on increasing the representation of designated groups through targeted hiring (Maier, 2002).

Diversity in the workplace includes various factors, the most common of which include race, gender, age, colour, physical ability and ethnicity. Managing diversity in the workplace refers to creating an equitable working environment in which a diverse workforce is able to perform to its full potential (Agolla & Ongori, 2007).

Diversity management theories have evolved across a continuum of compliance orientated headcount representation, to business imperative justification; from immersion training to valuing differences; and from engagement and inclusion to the most recent no fault or unconscious bias interventions (Yang & Konrad, 2011).

Critiques of diversity management hail any success that it may have had as being mostly attributed to the theory of diversity, as the theory has matured at a faster pace than diversity management practices. Most organisations have operated in the absence of comprehensive diversity policies in the past and continue to do so today. Most initiatives are limited to assigning employment hiring targets, insignificant skills development and secondary diversity issues such as sexual harassment (Booyesen, 2007).

As the world becomes more globalized, there is an increased need to interact with people from diverse backgrounds (Algahtani, 2013). Workplaces are part of a worldwide economy, competing within a global framework. Organisations, therefore, have to become more diverse in order to remain competitive, hence maximising and capitalizing on workplace diversity has become a key organisational priority (Human, 2005).

Arredondo (1996) defines workforce diversity as “an indisputable fact, a catalyst for organisational change, a composite of multicultural human resources, a business objective and a learning opportunity” (Arredondo, 1996: p15). While diversity is often defined as individual human differences within the workplace,

diversity focuses on individual differences that can be harnessed to promote the organisation's objectives (Arredondo, 1996).

In the workplace multiculturalism is often used interchangeably to refer to diversity and primarily refers to culture, ethnicity and race (Arredondo, 1996). Rosado (1996) defines multiculturalism as a "system of beliefs and behaviours that recognises and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organisation or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context, which empowers all within the organisation or society" (Rosado, 1996). This definition provides a clear understanding of multiculturalism, as it contains four key action phrases, namely beliefs and behaviours; recognises and respects; acknowledges and values; and encourages and enables. These action phrases denote the depth to which one needs to delve when working with matters of diversity.

The workplace is experiencing growing levels of globality. The world of today is more connected than ever before, and the notion of closed spaces has become illusory. The interconnectedness of countries, groups and people is highly evident in all spheres of life (Stelter, 2009). Hence, an acknowledgement of the diversity of the people working within the workplace, and harnessing this diversity, is an essential component of business reality.

2.2.3 Managing diversity in the South African workplace

Discrimination, as part of the South Africa's political legacy, has created challenges for workplace diversity. In South Africa diversity is often spoken about in conjunction with legislation that governs EE and B-BBEE. The context of this study, as outlined in Chapter One, provides evidence that the rate of transformation in South Africa has been slow. The inability of organisations to bring about meaningful transformation in the levels of representation within the workplace has, therefore, further exacerbated the diversity challenge in the South African workplace.

While it is acknowledged that all past and current legislation have implications for managing diversity in South Africa, it is not synonymous with the governing statutory framework to address inequality in society (Booyesen, 2007). Mazibuko and Govender (2017) advocate that employment equity and affirmation action programmes should be viewed as tools that engineer and drive diversity (Mazibuko & Govender, 2017). Tjale (2015) argues that diversity management should bear less legal and moral connotations, and should instead be regarded as a business initiative to address diversity in the workplace (Tjale, 2015).

Efforts to address the challenge of diversity within organisations include interventions such as training, workshops and facilitated coaching sessions. These interventions depart from the premise that it is possible for matters of discrimination to be brought to the fore and addressed (Human, 2005). This same author argues that espoused commitment to diversity of many organisations in South Africa and many dominant-group members “do not always reflect a sincere change of heart”. Human shares of her experience of working in the field of diversity management, saying that most organisations claim that they are committed to diversity and to the eradication of prejudice. These companies state that they have developed sophisticated and detailed plans to provide opportunities for under-represented groups in society; however, these statements and strategies are always accompanied by a “but” and a qualifier (Human, 2005). The view of leadership in organisations in South Africa, predominately represented by the White minority race group, is that there are various challenges, which relate to implementing and embracing diversity in the workplace. These challenges range from the scarcity of diversity candidates to their high salary demands, the high expectations set by Black employees, and the challenges within the South African education system that impact Black employees. In contrast, Black employees believe that nothing has really changed in the workplace since the dawn of democracy. Black employees believe that White managers distort the meaning of terms such as “equal opportunity” and “affirmative action” to suit their own ends; that White men continue to enjoy promotions; and that when Black candidates apply for promotions, they are told they are “not ready” for such roles (Human, 2005).

Human (2005) further advocates that it has become practice for managers to attend workshops on managing diversity with the aim of increasing their awareness of cultural differences and the need to respect them. The workshops, however, may well simply reinforce the apparent differences between race and cultural groups, further entrenching an environment of “us” versus “them”. This results in creating stereotypes and generalizations on the basis of “national” or “ethnic” culture, and ultimately fails to take into account the vast array of sociological and psychological variables that impact social interaction in the workplace (Human, 2005).

The trend of creating an “us” versus “them” approach in diversity management programmes is not unique to South Africa. In an attempt to balance this out, diversity trainers have stressed the complexity of cross-cultural encounters, and on the far extreme, some programmes have discounted the relevance of cultural differences. In other words, the argument is that the differences between people are so varied, that we should rather concentrate on the unique individual instead of on the cultural context to which he or she belongs. This approach, however, disregards the common sense understanding that most people have cultural differences and, therefore, may prevent us from taking action in a new cultural setting (Human, 2005).

South African organisations have adopted an “understanding differences” approach that assumes that conflict in the workplace arises from a lack of awareness and understanding among employees, particularly of differences, which may exist between people who are expected to work together (Thomas *et al.*, 1996). Programmes developed under this guise aim to improve the quality of work relationships, and to reduce social conflict. While such programmes have the potential to enhance relationships and promote greater respect and appreciation of others, emphasis is on the individual and on interpersonal issues only (Thomas *et al.*, 1996).

A theoretical paradigm developed by Ely and Thomas (2001) comprises of three different perspectives on how organisations perceive the task of managing

diversity. The perspectives assigned to the paradigm are discrimination and fairness; access and legitimacy; and learning and effectiveness (Ely & Thomas, 2001). They assert that the majority of organisations in the United States of America apply the first two perspectives, while few make use of the third perspective. Studies were conducted in South Africa, applying the approach of Ely and Thomas. The outcome of this research indicated that it is the first paradigm, namely the discrimination-fairness perspective, which is prevalent in South African organisations. Table 1 below provides a summary of the focus of diversity efforts, human resources practices, effectiveness measures, and the strengths and weaknesses of each of the three paradigms, as they relate to South Africa.

Table 1: Thomas and Ely’s Diversity Paradigms as applied to South Africa (Source: (Booyesen & Ngambi, 2004)

	Discrimination-Fairness	Access-Legitimacy	Learning-Effectiveness
Focus	Creating equal opportunity, assuring fair treatment, and compliance with state equal opportunity laws	Match internal employee demographics to customer and marketplace served	Incorporate diversity into the heart and fabric of the mission, work and culture of the organisation
HR practices	Recruitment of women and PDGs. Mentoring and career development programs for women and PDGs	Recruitment of diverse set of employee KSA's to match external demands. Rewards	Redesigned and transformed to enhance performance of all employees
Effectiveness Measures	Recruitment numbers. Retention Rates of women and PDGs	Niche markets captured. Degree of diversity among employees	All employees feel respected, valued and included.
Weakness/Strengths	Does not capitalise on diversity of all employees. Emphasis on assimilation	Does not affect mainstream of company business; diversity confined to specific market segments	All employees respected, valued and included.

Both Ely and Thomas (2001) and Ngambi (2002) argue that the third perspective will enable organisations to adequately benefit from managing diversity. The application of Ely and Thomas’ work to South Africa by Ngambi (2002) clearly shows that in South Africa at the time, the legacy of apartheid remained firmly entrenched in the minds of leadership, management and workers (Ngambi, 2002). With little to no purposeful change introduced into the diversity landscape since this research, it could be argued that a repeat of this study will not yield a different outcome to the original research of 2002. The mind set in the South African workplace is trapped in the discrimination-and-fairness perspective, as efforts are still focused on “righting the wrong” that occurred. It is only once South Africa progresses from this paradigm to that of legitimacy, which centres on the case for diversity, and finally a movement to learning-effectiveness paradigm,

which promotes a valuing diversity paradigm, that workforce diversity will benefit all (Booyesen & Ngambi, 2004).

2.2.5 Inclusion

Similar to the way in which multiculturalism and diversity are regarded as one and the same, this also holds true for inclusion and diversity. Diversity is a prerequisite for inclusion, which refers to the need to create a diverse well-represented workforce, which will then thrive in a workplace in which inclusivity creates the crucial connection that will attract diverse talent, encourage participation, foster innovation and ultimately lead to business growth (Sherbin & Rashid, 2017).

Inclusion refers to the bringing together and harnessing of diverse forces and resources of peoples' differences in such a way that is beneficial. Inclusion places the concept and practice of diversity into action (Roberson, 2006). Inclusion requires the creation of an environment of involvement, respect and connection in such a way that the richness of ideas, background and perspectives are harnessed to create value. Within the organisational sense, this value is regarded as delivering business value (Roberson, 2006).

Recommended levers that support inclusivity in the workplace include inclusive leaders, authenticity, networking, visibility and clear career paths. Inclusive leaders form part of leadership that demonstrates behaviours that ensure that their team members speak up and are heard; make it safe for employees to propose novel ideas; empower their team members to make decisions; and take advice and implement feedback, whilst sharing credit for the team's success (O'Donovan, 2018). Authenticity refers to diverse employees being allowed to express their true authentic self without feeling the need to repress parts of their personality in order to be accepted in the workplace. Networking and visibility refer to opportunities that are deliberately created by a senior sponsor, allowing a marginalised minority to increase their success within the organisation through extending their network, making them more visible and thereby enhancing their realm of influence. Finally, in order to address challenges of representation, a

need exists to unblock career paths for under-represented groups in the workplace (Sherbin & Rashid, 2017). These recommended levers affirm the need to address matters of representation and diversity management so that practices of inclusivity can be established and entrenched.

2.2.6 Diversity training

Diversity training initiatives have increasingly become part of many organisations' diversity management programmes. Effectiveness of these interventions has, however, been called into question (Pendry, Driscoll, & Field, 2007). Diversity training is academically linked to reducing workplace inequality. Diversity training is regarded as having many purposes, which include facilitating the integration of minority groups into the workplace, usually by attempting to entrench the skills, knowledge and motivation to work productively alongside one another in spite of their identifiable differences. The methods applied include a mix of education, videos and other didactic forms of learning and interactive approaches such as role-playing, simulations and exercises (Pendry *et al.*, 2007).

Diversity training is promoted as being able to resolve problematic workplace relations, as well as being a medium that can harness the creative potential of diversity, and thereby enhance organisational effectiveness (Pendry *et al.*, 2007). Diversity training in a classroom setting is instructor led. Diversity training practitioners are not necessarily specialists, nor do they hold deep expertise in diversity frameworks. Instead, their strengths lie in imparting a message to an adult audience. Pendry *et al.* (2007) provide evidence that diversity trainers would benefit from a deeper appreciation of social psychological theory and research at the design stage of diversity training initiatives (Pendry *et al.*, 2007). Diversity training is not conducive to deeply introspective self-discovery and personal acceptance that is required to bring about change. Human (2005) argues that managers that attend diversity workshops are competent and professional delegates. These delegates have learned to say what they believe the facilitator wants them to say. They are enthusiastic attendees at workshops

who listen attentively and participate in role-play, only to forget all the content once they are back at work (Human, 2005).

What is, however, required is a personal change that involves a change of heart and a long-term commitment to the process of personal development. Facilitators are given on average two days in which to attempt to explore the need for genuine change, and to impact the development process. The change that these diversity interventions are intended to bring about are seldom accompanied by changes in demands on managers, either in terms of the company culture or the reward systems (Human, 2005).

Human further questions whether or not cognitive complexity can be taught (Human, 2005). Behaviour modelling workshops are “quick fixes”, since they change behaviours that can be imitated in the absence of genuine commitment and change of heart (Human, 2005; Thomas *et al.*, 1996).

A critique of managing diversity approaches has been that it mostly focuses on training, and increasing cultural understanding and therefore has failed to bring about sustainable behaviour change (De Beer, 2011). Diversity training relies on group immersion in educational sessions about diversity. Participants undergoing such training are left with an increased knowledge about diversity, but no ongoing support to internalise and apply the knowledge that they have received (De Beer, 2011).

Recent meta-analysis of 40 years of diversity training evaluation has shown that diversity training can deliver results, especially when it targets awareness and skill development, and occurs over a significant period of time (Lindsay, King, Mambere, & Cheung, 2017). The success of diversity training has also been linked to the characteristics of those who are trained, and the specific outcomes that are measured when the training concludes. Two other characteristics that are directly linked to the effectiveness of diversity training include perspective talking and goal setting. The former pertains to a process of mentally walking in someone else’s shoes, while goal setting refers to setting measurable and challenging goals, which relate to diversity in the workplace. An experiment with

158 undergraduate students showed that goal setting within diversity training lead to more pro-diversity behaviours three months after the training intervention. An overall improvement in pro-diversity attitudes was recorded nine months after the training (Lindsay *et al.*, 2017).

The characteristics evidenced in effective diversity training mirror the key requirements of coaching. Perspective talking or talking in another person's shoes, is an approach that is used to bring to the fore an awareness of how others may experience a situation (Brown-Schmidt & Hanna, 2011). A key principle of coaching, targeted at managers, is that it provides support, which is required to develop in a managerial role (Scheepers, 2012). A key skill of managers is the ability to be aware of and ideally identify with the diverse workforce that is being lead. Goal setting is regarded as a central focus of coaching (Grant, 2012). Goal setting is critical in coaching, as it is through the goal setting process that the coachee clarifies what exactly they need and want to get out of the coaching process and relationship (Rogers, 2012). The argument could, therefore, be made that diversity coaching is the next evolution of diversity training to bring about personal change within leadership.

2.3 Diversity Coaching: a means of creating self-awareness of workplace diversity

The literature review for this research departs with an analysis of academic literature, which defines diversity coaching. A distinction is drawn between diversity coaching and diversity training, with a specific focus on the difference between approaches, the intended outcome, and the perceived successes and limitations of both processes. The concept of unconscious bias, as a method applied within diversity coaching, is introduced. A link is drawn between self-awareness gained through coaching, and how this self-awareness brings about change with a specific focus on how changes translate into changes in decision-making amongst coached individuals. This component of the literature review concludes with the first research proposition of this study.

2.3.1. What is diversity coaching?

Coaching focuses on building a partnership between the coach and the coachees in order to inspire them to maximise their personal and professional potential. Coaches empower their clients to become the expert of their own lives and experiences. In order for coachees to undergo change, they should take personal accountability for their development (Scheepers, 2012). This broad definition, which summarises the essence of coaching, is applicable to coaching that focuses on any goal, inclusive of diversity coaching goals. Applying Scheepers' (2012) definition of coaching to diversity coaching implies that the intention of diversity coaching is to maximise the personal and professional potential of the client in order to create self-awareness of the views that they hold regarding differences between people (Scheepers, 2012).

Diversity coaching aims to provide access and exposure to critical, relevant and timely knowledge of diversity (Motsoaledi & Cilliers, 2012). In keeping with the essence of coaching, diversity coaching offers on-going support, which is required to realise lasting and meaningful change in workplace behaviour.

Diversity coaching is neither designed nor intended to change an employee's belief structure, but rather to enable bias-free workplace behaviour and decision-making. During diversity coaching a coachee has an opportunity to think through, articulate and confront the thoughts and beliefs that motivate workplace behaviour and choices in a caring and instructive dialogue with a coach (Motsoaledi & Cilliers, 2012). Diversity coaching of a one-on-one nature can facilitate a coachee's self-actualisation and personal action plan to make a difference by embracing diversity within the workplace. Diversity coaching creates a safe space from which to correct, test new skills and process feedback along the way (Motsoaledi & Cilliers, 2012).

2.3.2 Difference between diversity training and diversity coaching

A distinction is made between diversity training and diversity coaching. The former is regarded as a "distinct set of instructional programs aimed at facilitating

positive intergroup interactions, reducing prejudice and discrimination, and enhancing the skills, knowledge, and motivation of participants to interact with diverse others” (Bezrukova, Spell, Perry, & Jehn, 2016, p. 6). In achieving defined learning outcomes of the training intervention, diversity training focuses on training context and the delivery of training grounded in motivation and learning theories (Bezrukova *et al.*, 2016).

In contrast, diversity coaching is grounded in the practice of executive coaching, as characterised by a “short-term interactive process that aims “to improve leadership effectiveness by enhancing self-awareness and the practice of new behaviours” (Kombarakaran, Yang, Baker, & Fernandes, 2008, p. 79). Executive coaching is a targeted and purposeful intervention through which coachees develop and maintain positive changes in both their personal and leadership behaviour (Athanasopoulou & Dopson, 2018). Coaching, as a process, facilitates gaining “new skills, perspectives, tools and knowledge through support, encouragement and feedback in the organisational context” (Kombarakaran *et al.*, 2008, p. 79)The coaching process involves a partnership between the coach, the coachee and the coachee’s sponsoring organisation (Kombarakaran *et al.*, 2008).

2.3.3 Diversity coaching in the South African context

The constant societal change underway, and how it impacts all members of society presents a strong argument for the importance of coaching. The changes over the past two decades in South African have had a radical influence on people professionally, as well as in their private lives. This has impacted the way in which knowledge is generated, how individuals construct views of self and identity, and make sense of their lives (Stelter, 2009). The South African workplace mirrors that of broader South African society, and within the workplace diversity coaching focuses on identifying how unquestioned views and attitudes impact workplace diversity management, which relates to progressing the ideals of transformation for the country.

Coaching allows for a dialogue that strengthens the client's ability to reflect (Scheepers, 2012). Living successfully in a globalised world requires the acceptance and appreciation for multi-versality – the ability to regard different worldviews and perspectives of others as a means of enriching one's own attitude to life and work (Stelter, 2009). During periods of reflection coaching affords a coachee the opportunity to become more aware of differences in perspectives. Diversity coaching in the South African workplace has the intention of creating an awareness of difference in perspectives that are held about peoples' differences, and how these in turn influence decision-making on matters, which relate to transformation. Coaching of this nature, focusing on personal and social meaning making, widens the client's individual horizon, and requires a process that includes different life contexts of the client (Stelter, 2009).

2.3.4. Does self-awareness acquired through diversity coaching bring about personal change?

Dotlich and Cairo (1999), as referenced in Maltibia and Power (2005), provide four goals of coaching, which highlight how these goals drive personal change. The goals are self-awareness, performance improvement, performance breakthrough and organisational or systems transformation. Each of these aspects are assessed with by applying diversity coaching.

- *Self-awareness* refers to how the client gains insight into their behaviour, attitudes, strengths and weaknesses, as well as how their attitudes impact others (Maltbia & Power, 2005). In the practice of diversity coaching, the focus of self-insight and awareness relates to views about the differences between people based on their demographic profile and/or social standing. Self-awareness infers that one is not naturally aware of these views and, therefore, they are regarded as the unconscious views that are held. Coaching that focuses on personal and social meaning making widens the client's individual horizon. Such coaching requires a process that includes different life contexts of the client (Stelter, 2009). Within the realm of diversity, unconscious views are regarded as carrying bias and, therefore, are regarded as unconscious bias.

- *Performance improvement* refers to the way in which the coachee improves his/her individual performance in such a way that it contributes towards the effectiveness of the organisation. Such effectiveness could result in any number of measures including, but not limited to, an increase in revenue or improving employee productivity (Maltbia & Power, 2005). Performance improvement attributed to diversity coaching would result in the coachee making decisions that are more embracing of diversity and inclusion.
- *Performance breakthrough* occurs when the self-awareness of the coachee translates into an elevation of performance to new levels that result in a substantial change in their own and others' perceptions of capabilities (Maltbia & Power, 2005). In diversity coaching, specifically within the workplace, a manifestation of performance breakthrough would be decision-making, which relates to diversity that positively drives the organisation's transformation agenda.
- *Organisational or systems transformation* is evidenced through a coachee's fundamental change in behaviour and attitude (Maltbia & Power, 2005). These changes include changes to the value system and the coachee's emotional intelligence in such a way that new opportunities are created for both the coachee and the organisation (Maltbia & Power, 2005).

2.3.5. Does self-awareness acquired through diversity coaching result in changed behaviour?

Kotter (2018) proposes that human change can occur at various levels. These include:

- *An attitude shift*, in which self-acceptance, acceptance of events, reduction of blame of the self and other, and patience, are developed;
- *Experimentation with alternatives*, in which one shifts attention, starts to let go, searches for other options, tries new behaviours, does something different and reinvents the self;
- *Skills development*, where one develops skills that include tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty, resilience and the evaluation of goals and outcomes;

- *Support* is the expressing of feelings, reaching out to others, expanding a social world and resolving conflicts;
- *Cognitive restructuring*, which results in a shift in perspective, reframing problems more constructively, confronting self-deception, challenging negative beliefs, and looking at the bigger picture; and
- *Meaning making*, in which one explores new ways of understanding life and situations, searching for higher purpose, and making connections (Kottler, 2018).

Diversity coaching aims to bring about change at all of the levels, as proposed by Kotler (2018); however, it is within the last two listed levels of change, namely cognitive restructuring and meaning making, that the research intends to assess if diversity coaching is able to bring about self-awareness that has the potential to change behaviour in the workplace.

2.3.6. Unconscious bias as applied in diversity interventions

Bias is deemed to occur at two levels, namely explicit and implicit. Explicit bias, or conscious bias, is a reflection of human perceptions at a conscious level, while implicit bias, also referred to as unconscious bias, is unintentional and occurs at a level lower than conscious awareness (Golbeck *et al.*, 2016). Implicit stereotypes are regarded as shaping biases across various elements of society. This study specifically aims to assess how implicit bias manifests within the South African workplace, and how this is brought to the conscious level through a diversity coaching intervention.

Unconscious bias or hidden bias has started to become forefront in the work of diversity. Traditional paradigms have assumed that patterns of discriminatory behaviour in organisations are conscious. More recent developments in the field of diversity have highlighted the influence of unconscious bias on actions, which relate to discrimination (Ross, 2008). This view has led to a belief that there are people that are inclusive and by default “good” people, and biased people who are “bad”. Many diversity programmes have been designed based on this

premise. The intention is to identify the bad people and fix them. The belief is that fixing the bad people will eradicate the bias. Such an approach is based on the notion that people make choices to discriminate owing to underlying negative views towards a group, or they regard their own views as superior over others. This view has, however, evolved based on the realisation that people make choices that discriminate against other individuals or groups without the realisation that they are doing so. These actions may also be against their own conscious belief that they are being unbiased. Unconscious bias impacts diversity within the workplace through the choices that people make, which seem to be driven by overt prejudice, even when they are not (Ross, 2008).

Awareness of personally held biases is a critical step towards reducing prejudice and discrimination (Perry, Murphy, & Dovidio, 2015).

The use of a narrative approach in coaching is a useful approach for the facilitation of the coaching dialogue with the aim of strengthening a sense of coherence in the coachee's self-identify, whilst coupling various events and integrating past, present and future as a complete whole (Stelter, 2009). Exploring narratives and storytelling of one's own personal journey is a critical component in diversity coaching.

Criticism of using unconscious bias as a training method includes that of Noon (2018), who argues that unconscious bias training, as the latest fashion in diversity interventions, is based on an unproven supposition (Noon, 2018). Noon asserts that it is improbable that such training will irradiate racism in the workplace as consciousness about such bias will not bring about a change in behaviours by either managers or employees. He further argues that if unconscious bias training were to have the theoretical potential to change behaviour, then such change would depend on the type of racism that exists, and would further be influenced by the structural restraints that has the potential of being counterproductive to pro-diversity interventions (Noon, 2018).

Noon's paper, entitled "*Pointless diversity training: unconscious bias, new racism and agency*", departs from a generalisation on unconscious bias, as it pertains to

race, which is the core focus of his critique of the effectiveness of diversity training. The generalisation is that the large majority of the population are suppressed racists or has a strong racial preference, which is informed by the Implicit Association Test (IAT), the results of which showed that 78% of participants show implicit bias, with 85% of Whites being biased against Blacks (Noon, 2018).

Noon (2018) argues that there is a “huge leap from knowing about bias to acting differently”, which is advocated by unconscious bias training initiatives (Noon, 2018). Noon proposes that sociologically influenced perspectives on diversity should be deployed to examine the variety of racism that reinforces the bias, and whether or not unconscious bias training can influence this bias. Unconscious bias on race departs from the point of view that almost everyone is a suppressed racist or, at worst, holds a strong racial preference (Noon, 2018).

This study does not focus on the nature or extent of unconscious bias views, but rather an assumption is made that all participants have inherent bias, and to determine whether or not these bias perceptions are brought to the conscious through a diversity intervention.

More recently, a meta-analysis of the effects of diversity training (covering 260 studies published over the last 40 years) established the argument that while there is evidence of diversity training success in the short term, and especially when combined with other initiatives, there is ‘no compelling evidence that long-term effects of diversity training are sustainable in relation to attitudinal/affective outcomes’ (Bezrukova *et al.*, 2016: p1243).

Notwithstanding the criticism of unconscious bias interventions, if it is assumed that awareness of bias by individuals can lead to a change in their actions, or at least can have a consciousness-raising effect that might start the process of change, there remains an uncertainty regarding the willingness of an individual to change. Quillan, as reference by Noon (2018), asserts that ‘implicit biases are more strongly linked to subtle behaviours that are difficult to control such as nonverbal behaviour in interaction, whereas explicit biases are more strongly

related to verbal statements.’ The assertion is therefore that, despite a person feeling motivated to behave differently, the impact that this change will have on his or her behaviour will be minimal (Noon, 2018).

2.3.7. Research Proposition 1

Diversity coaching creates a safe space within which participants can gain insight into their behaviours, thereby enhancing self-awareness that has the potential to change and positively impact matters of diversity in the workplace.

2.4. Does self-awareness of unconscious bias impact a change in decision-making that promotes the achievement of transformation?

The purpose of the research question that this research intends to answer is to provide evidence of changes in decision-making as a result in self-awareness, which is gained through a process of diversity coaching. Specifically, the decision-making changes that are assessed pertain to matters of transformation within South African workplaces. Decisions that would support the transformation agenda would include a change in decisions that relate to race, gender and disability within the realms of B-BBEE scorecard elements. These include, but are not limited to, Employment Equity, Socio- Economic Development and Skills Development.

The measurable outcomes of diversity programmes provide a basis from which to assess the impact that improved self-awareness on matters of diversity has on the workplace. One such organisation is GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), which implemented an Accelerating Difference programme as part of their diversity and inclusion initiatives. The aim of the programme was to increase the promotion rate of women to more senior levels within the organisation through coaching, sponsorship and dialogue. Measurable outcomes of the programme include that 46% of the 2013 participants in the programme reported that they were promoted by at least one level compared to the 26% of men on the same grade across the

organisation (Mook, 2017). Participants in the programme were also more likely to stay with the organisation, as indicated by a 79% retention rate, compared to the 69% of women and 71% of men who did not attend the programme. Employees that report directly to managers who attended the programme indicated an improvement in their managers' effectiveness at a rate three times faster than a control group (Mook, 2017).

To successfully create a culture of inclusion, employees at all levels must understand how it factors into their own work, decision-making, problem solving, business opportunities and business growth. Coaching, therefore, takes the lessons learnt through training interventions and enables clients to turn them into plans with actionable goals that can bring about personal development and growth.

Decision-making change in the context of this research equates to a behaviour change amongst the study's respondents. A theoretical model that provides context for whether human behavioural change can occur is the Trans theoretical Model (TTM) for change (Velicer, Prochaska, Fava, Norman, & Redding, 1998). TTM is an integrative model for behaviour change, which integrates key constructs from various other theories to describe how a problem behaviour is modified, or how positive behaviour is acquired. (Velicer *et al.*, 1998). TTM is premised on stages of change to integrate processes and principles of change (Prochaska, Redding, & Evers, 2008). Used extensively to explain human behaviour in relation to health, the model explains intentional change that focuses on the decision-making of the individual. The model involves emotions, cognition and behaviour. TTM posits that health behaviour change involves six stages of change namely pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance and termination (Prochaska *et al.*, 2008).

Applying the stages of change that underpin TTM to diversity coaching, the aim of diversity coaching is to bring about self-awareness that would influence the first three stages of pre-contemplation, contemplation and preparation. The research aims to assess whether stages of action, maintenance and termination

of undesirable behaviour are influenced, post attendance at a diversity coaching intervention.

2.4.1. Does awareness of unconscious bias result in decision-making change?

In 2016, a study was conducted of the meta-analysis of 260 independent samples, which assessed the training outcomes of diversity training across the measures of training context, design and participants (Bezrukova *et al.*, 2016). The effects of diversity training were examined regarding cognitive, behavioural, attitudinal learning and trainee reactions. Cognitive learning assessed the extent to which attendees on the training programme acquired knowledge about culture diversity issues, while behaviour learning relates to the development of skills or implicitly identified skills and behaviours (Bezrukova *et al.*, 2016).

The results of the study showed that, in general, diversity training is associated with better training outcomes (Bezrukova *et al.*, 2016). Against the hypothesis set by Bezrukova *et al.* (2016), namely whether the effectiveness of training varied systematically as a function of a specific training outcome, diversity training had the greatest impact on participants' reactions, followed by cognitive learning, behavioural learning and attitudinal learning. Assessing how effective diversity training outcomes are maintained over a period of time, the relationship between the study effect, size and length of the time between ending the training and post-tests, were administered. The research found that while reactions to training and attitudinal learning appear to reduce post training, cognitive knowledge of matters such as differences between cultures, was maintained over a longer period, following the training. The Bezrukova *et al.* (2016) study determined that diversity training programmes are ineffective in changing attitudes, as the attitudes that are intended to be impacted by diversity training are generally strong, emotion-laden and strongly linked to individual self-identify and resistance to change (Bezrukova *et al.*, 2016).

The work of Bezrukova *et al.* (2016) supports similar work such as the 2004 work of Majumdar, Browne, Roberts and Carpio, which found that cultural sensitivity

training improved not only the knowledge and attitudes of health care providers, but also improved positive health outcomes for the treated patients (Majumdar, Browne, Roberts, & Carpio, 2004). In 2009 Kulik and Pepper sought to measure cognitive, affective and behavioural learning, following a diversity training programme intervention, as well as the transfer of strategies in the workplace. Of the learning outcomes that were assessed, it was found that skill learning is the “only significant predictor of transfer strategy use” (Roberson, Kulik, & Pepper, 2009).

Bezrukova (2016) also found that awareness and behaviour-based diversity training is more effective when delivered as combined initiatives, rather than running them separately. The results of the study, which coded training and behaviour as one and the same, determined that training would only be effective if self-awareness is present, thereby asserting that creating awareness on an issue or need for change in behaviour increases the likelihood of behavioural changes (Bezrukova *et al.*, 2016).

2.4.2. Research proposition

Diversity coaching increases self-awareness, which results in a change in behaviour and ultimately influences a change in decision-making. However, being made aware of a bias does not necessarily give rise to, or result in a change in decision-making.

2.5 Summary

The literature departs from the transformation context within the South African workplace with specific reference to challenges that pertain to diversity that prevail. This context includes a highly regulated legislative framework that prescribes practices to address discrimination within the workplace. Diversity coaching is one of the initiatives, which is currently used to bring about improved self-awareness regarding beliefs and attitudes that are held within the workplace with reference to that, which make South Africans different from one another.

The literature review provides an academic argument that supports the effectiveness of diversity coaching in creating self-awareness. The literature review further focused on the concept of unconscious bias and its use within diversity coaching. An analysis of research in the field argues that while improved self-awareness is achieved through coaching interventions, an increased self-awareness of one's unconscious bias will not necessarily result in a change in behaviour or decision-making.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an outline of the research methodology, which was used in this study.

3.1 Research approach

The research study adopted a qualitative approach. The qualitative method of research allows for a thorough understanding of human behaviour, as it provides a detailed account of behaviour and beliefs within the context in which they occur (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

Qualitative research is expressed in words, and makes use of non-numerical data to explore how people behave, experience and understand their realities. This research approach allows for the linking of beliefs to form or prove a hypotheses (Alshenqeeti, 2014).

Compared to quantitative data, qualitative data is regarded as better suited to present a true picture of people's experiences, a day of life, attitudes and beliefs (Holborn, Langley, & Burrage, 2009).

A qualitative approach allows for a questioning engagement to take place between the researcher and the respondents. The outcome of such an engagement results in an in-depth understanding of the respondents' experiences. This level of understanding cannot be achieved through quantitative methods of study (Morrow, 2007).

Qualitative research makes use of the researcher as a research instrument, which is regarded by some as a limitation of the approach (Yin, 2015). In order to ensure accuracy of the research, a researcher conducting qualitative research is required to examine his/her own beliefs and views on the subject matter to determine if these views will in any way impact the data collection and research design method. Yin (2015) recommends the use of a reflective journal for the

duration of the research, which serves as a “research lens” and means of introspection (Yin, 2015).

3.2 Research design

A constructivist–interpretivist paradigm was adopted for this research. This paradigm is a common within social sciences studies, which are aimed at understanding the world of lived experience from the point of view of those who have lived it. This paradigm focuses on the lived reality and meaning attached to specific situations of the population that is analysed (Schwandt, 1994). Individual reality is created by the mind, and can manifest differently as a result of different social realities, organisational cultures and experiences. It is possible to find similarities within the individual realities of others (Highfield & Bisman, 2012), and this research aims to draw connections between these individual realities. The study departs from the premise that multiple realities could be present in the minds of research participants, which is a distinctive characteristic of the constructivist–interpretivist paradigm (Ponterotto, 2005).

A constructivist paradigm is relevant for this research, as the intention of the research is to understand the lived experience through the decision-making of persons who have undergone diversity coaching by means of interpretation (Schwandt, 1994). The constructivist paradigm is an optimal choice for this research, as it allows for the analysis of multiple realities and for intangible mental constructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The primary aim of a constructivist study is to understand or reconstruct (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). For the purposes of this study, the researcher hoped to gain a deeper insight and understanding of the perceptions of individuals who have undergone diversity coaching. Knowledge in this form of research design is one of individual reconstructions, while authenticity and trustworthiness depend on the accuracy of the reconstructions (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

3.3 Data collection method

The primary source of data collection was interviewing. More specifically, the interview format that was used was a semi-structured interview. An interview guide was designed making use of themes directly related to addressing each of the research questions.

Interviews were set up at a time and place convenient for each participant. Interview venues were chosen to ensure that participants felt comfortable to share of their knowledge and personal experience.

Interviewing, as a data collection method, allows participants to share their first-hand experience, attitudes and beliefs. Through a process of direct engagement with the interviewee, the interviewer was able to record direct quotations that supported the assessment of findings and provided an accurate depiction of views, thoughts and events that were evaluated (Yin, 2015).

Alshenqueeti (2014) argues that interviewing is a valuable data collection method because “it builds a holistic snapshot, analyses words and reports detailed views of informants, and also because it enables interviewees to speak in their own voice and express their own thoughts and feelings”. As noted above, a constructivist–interpretivist paradigm informed this research. As meaning is often deeply hidden, interviewing, as a data collection method, complements this paradigm, since the engagement during an interview can allow meaning to surface through reflection (Schwandt, 1999).

The advantages of interviewing includes a return rate with fewer incomplete answers than if a questionnaire were sent to respondents. An interview also allows for a controlled answering order to questions. The disadvantages of interviewing is that it is time consuming and may contain potential subconscious biases and inconsistencies (Alshenqueeti, 2014).

3.4 Population and sample

3.4.1 Population

The core population that was selected to participate in this research was sourced from various organisations within South Africa. The key requirement for selection as a respondent in the research was that each respondent had to have either:

- partaken in a coaching-related intervention with the expressed focus on diversity or unconscious bias; or
- become self-aware of their own unconscious bias through a coaching intervention.

A secondary population group included human resources and transformation specialists within companies that offer coaching related interventions on matters of diversity. Coaches who offer diversity coaching were also included in this population. This population was engaged to provide an independent view on changes in decision-making that have been evidenced within the workplace as a result of diversity interventions.

3.4.2 Sample and sampling method

The sample sourced for the study was made up of two categories. The first category included diversity coaches who deliver group and individual diversity coaching interventions that contain a focus on unconscious bias. Also included in this category of the sample were transformation specialists accountable for designing and implementing diversity coaching interventions in the South African workplace. A total of 4 research respondents were included in this category.

The second sample category of the study were individuals who had participated in diversity coaching interventions within the corporate workplaces in South Africa. A total of 9 participants were interviewed within this category.

No demographic profiling was assigned to the sourcing of participants for the study as race and gender were not directly relevant to the research. Demographic attributes of participants were however recorded for identification of trend analysis.

Table 2 outlines the respondents' profiles in respect of those who participated in the research.

Table 2: Research respondent sample

Respondent type	Number to be sampled
Coached respondents: middle, senior and executive management level	9
Human resources, transformation specialists and diversity coaches	4
Total number of respondents	13

Non-random sampling methods of convenience and snowball sampling were used to collect data for this research.

Convenience sampling is a method by which individuals who fit the sampling criteria of the research are identified in any way possible (Emerson, 2015). Convenience sampling is often criticised for resulting in choosing respondents who are readily available, and can thereby result in producing an unknown degree of incompleteness, as the respondents may not be the most informative sources. This sampling method is also prone to introducing unwanted bias (Yin, 2015). In the context of this research, the impact of convenience sampling was managed through the researcher's engagement with the Human Resources and Transformation Specialist within the respective organisations as means to refer respondents who have undergone diversity or unconscious bias interventions. An additional method of sourcing respondents was through the professional network of the researcher. Companies and coaches that the researcher know and who provide work in the area of diversity coaching were approached to refer potential respondents for the study.

Snowball sampling is a method that involves the researcher asking both prospective and participating research participants to advise of any acquaintances that meet the criteria for selection (Emerson, 2015). Purposeful snowball sampling was applied based on the understanding that interview participants could refer other candidates who have undergone similar diversity coaching or unconscious bias interventions.

A combination of convenience and snowball sampling was applied to support the researcher in obtaining the desired number of respondents that were required to collect sufficient data to address the research question.

Convenience and snowball sampling was deemed to be a suitable method of sampling, as it was predicted that a high probability existed because all respondents would form part of the desired sample group - namely individuals who have previously participated in a diversity or unconscious bias intervention, and who hold positions within an organisation in South Africa in which they make decisions on matters, which relate to transformation. Such decision-making can pertain to day-to-day decision-making such as hiring and promotions, or more strategic decisions such as developing a transformation strategy or ownership of a B-BBEEE pillar or scorecard.

A limitation of both convenience and snowball sampling is the likelihood that potential referred respondents will carry similar biographical and related characteristics as the respondent who referred them (Emerson, 2015). As no specific demographic profile was assigned to the sample, this limitation did not pose a risk to the research. However, where the opportunity presented itself to create diversity within the sampling group, such opportunity was used. This diversity applied to industry, skill set, professional status, race and gender.

3.5 Research instrument

The research instrument used was a semi-structured interview. An interview guide was developed and used during the interview to ensure that the interview remained focused. An interview guide is useful in instances where respondents are unresponsive or provide limited answers (Clegg, Thorpe, & Holt, 2008).

A limitation of the interview instrument is that of contamination, which occurs when the researcher influences the respondent and hereby creates data that may otherwise not have been the view of the respondent (Clegg *et al.*, 2008). Semi-structured interviews, as opposed to unstructured interviews, limit the contamination of data, as it gives the interview process structure. Semi-structured interviews create standardisation and structure that limit interview data contamination (Clegg *et al.*, 2008).

All interviews were electronically recorded, while hand written notes were also made during the interviews. Note-taking has the disadvantage of losing connectivity with the respondent, as it causes the researcher to lose eye contact while scribing the content of the discussion. Hence, the audio recording mechanism via audio taping allowed the researcher to remain connected to the discussion, engaged with the respondent and, therefore, better positioned to probe key components of the discussions. A further benefit of audio-taping is that it allows the researcher to pick up on any non-verbal cues such as body language that may be displayed during the interview.

Interviews were transcribed post recording.

3.6 Procedure for data collection

Data was collected through face-to-face interviews that were held with research respondents, as sourced through the population and sampling method noted in 3.4 above.

The researcher became aware of prospective respondents via introduction by the referring company, or by the person who provided details of the respondent. This initial communication advised the selected respondent of the purpose of the research and requested the respondent to consider participating in the research. Upon confirmation of the prospective respondent's willingness to participate in the research, the researcher made direct contact with the respondent.

The initial contact between researcher and respondent was either telephonic or via email. An introduction to the researcher and a background of the purpose of the research was shared with the respondent. A date and time were arranged with the respondent at a venue of convenience, while specific attention was paid to a venue that was suited to the nature of the engagement. A formal meeting invitation was sent, confirming the date and time of the interview. The respondent was advised that no prior preparation was required ahead of the interview.

A written consent form was sent to respondents prior to the interview, and respondents were asked to provide their consent to participate in the study before the interview commenced. The consent received from respondents confirmed their willingness to provide input, which would be analysed for the purpose of theming data and presenting findings as part of a research report.

Consent was also sought for the researcher to record the interview as means to transcribe the responses for the purposes of data analysis. The consent to record pertained to both electronic recording and note taking. The researcher advised the respondents of the method in which the data will be stored and disposed of upon completion of the research.

As part of the consent, respondents were given an opportunity to withhold any personal information pertaining to their biographical or employment details so that they would remain anonymous.

Interviews, data collection and recordings took place in English.

Three research respondents who were employed in the same organisation, referred to in the research findings as Org F, opted to have a group interview, where all three participants shared of their individual experiences of attending different sessions of the same programme rolled out across the organisation. The data obtained during the group interview was recorded individually for each respondent.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

The collected data was analysed by using thematic analysis, which is the process of identifying themes and patterns within qualitative data (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The goal of the thematic analysis, for the purposes of this research, was to identify themes and patterns that existed in the collected data. The themes that were identified were used to address the research questions that were set out for the research. Thematic analysis requires more than identification of themes. While themes were summarised and organised, the key activity of the analysis lies in the interpretation of the themes in order to give meaning to the lived experiences shared in the interviews (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017).

Themes can be categorised at two levels, namely semantic and latent (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Semantic themes are themes that have a surface meaning within the data, and the researcher does not intend to look beyond what a participant has said or written. The latent level, by contrast, looks beyond merely what has been said, and aims to identify or examine any underlying ideas and assumptions that may lie within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). It is within the latent realm of data analysis that the researcher set out to understand the ideologies and conceptualisations that lie within the data that the researcher collected.

Identifying themes in the research data commenced with the process of content analysis. Content analysis is used as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data. In order to analyse the data, the responses of each respondent, as recorded in the interview transcript, was recorded against the research questions, key themes identified aligned to each

research question and the research interview questions. The data recorded was analysed to identify repetitive statements and sentiments against the key themes. This method of inductive analysis allowed the researcher to identify similarity in responses related to the live experience of respondents which then allowed for patterns in the data to emerge. Research data was then recorded using, where possible, verbatim statements of the participants, as evidence of the theme.

The themes that were analysed were structured to establish a narrative of how coaching interventions contribute to greater self-awareness and insight and, in turn, how such awareness results in a change in decision-making on matters pertaining to diversity and transformation.

3.8 Limitations of the study

Possible limitations of the study were identified as follows:

- Access to relevant respondents;
- Sufficient depth in data derived through the interviews from which to draw themes; and
- Respondents being able to show evidence of change in decision-making through practical application of coaching intervention outcomes.

3.9 Validity and reliability

Validity refers to the degree to which research is accurate, while reliability signifies the likeliness of different research reaching the same outcomes when using the same methodology (Golafshani, 2003).

3.9.1 Validity

Yin (2015) regards validity within a qualitative research method as a means of quality control. The author further asserts that in order for research to be valid, data must have been correctly collected and interpreted to ensure that the

research outcomes are an accurate reflection and representation of what was studied (Yin, 2015).

Internal validity of this qualitative research was ensured through using the same semi-structured interview guide and questions for all interviews. Recording and transcribing all interviews further supported internal validity and credibility of the study, while probing questions were recorded for each interview that was conducted. The use of the same research instrument for multiple respondent interviews also supported the establishment of rigour within the research (Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002).

3.9.2 Reliability

Reliability in research emphasises the quality of the research method. Reliability is, therefore, concerned with the consistency and repeatability of the measures of the research (Neuman, 2013). Reliability was achieved in the research through the structuring of the interview guide, which allowed for open-ended questions, thereby not limiting the responses. The open-ended nature of the questions allowed respondents to recall their experiences, whilst providing any information that they believed to be pertinent to their experiences of diversity coaching.

3.10 Demographic profile of respondents

The research intended to provide data and outcomes that are reflective of the country's demographics. While this was the departing intent, it was identified that two factors posed a challenge in achieving the desired demographic profile of respondents. The first factor related to the limited pool of respondents that may be available and willing to participate in the study. The second factor was whether the demographic profile of leaders in the South African workplace, the population sample from which respondents was sourced, would influence the profiles of the research respondents.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the findings of 13 qualitative semi-structured interviews, which were conducted to obtain evidence in response to the research study's questions. The research findings have been analysed and themed against each research question, and corresponding research proposition.

Additional research findings that fall outside of the direct realms of the research questions and propositions are also included in this chapter. The content of this chapter forms the basis from which research findings are discussed in Chapter 5.

4.2. Research respondents

4.2.1. Research respondent categories

Two categories of research respondents were sourced as part of the study. The first category of respondents included professionals who are diversity coaches or facilitators and who work in the field of diversity and transformation. Human resources and transformational specialists whose roles include identifying the need for and implementing diversity initiatives also formed part of this category (Category A). The intended quantum of four research respondents for this category of research respondents was successfully sourced and interviewed. Research Participant Coaches are referred to by the abbreviation RPC, and the corresponding number in the sequence in which they were interviewed. Research Participant Coach 1 (RPC1) and Research Participant Coach 2 (RPC2) own and manage their own businesses, which offer diversity and transformation facilitation and coaching. Research Participant Coach 3 (RPC3) and Research Participant Coach 4 (RPC4) occupy permanent roles within organisations and are accountable for identifying and implementing diversity and transformation programmes.

The second category (Category B) of research respondents was sourced from individuals who have attended and participated in diversity coaching sessions and/or diversity programmes and interventions. An initial sample of 12 respondents was planned; however, as a result of saturation being reached, a total of 9 respondents’ interviews were recorded and analysed in the research findings.

To ensure the respondents’ anonymity, they were categorised by using either Research Participant Coach (RPC) or Research Participant (RP), followed by a number that represented the order in which the interviews were conducted. For example, RP4 represents a research participant from the category of diversity coaching attendees and was the fourth respondent that was interviewed in this category. Organisations were named alphabetically from Org A to Org F.

4.2.2 Industry categories

The coaches that were interviewed work across all industries and represented views based on the clients with whom they have engaged.

The majority of coaching participant respondents represented the financial services industry, including retail and corporate banking and the insurance sector. A smaller number of respondents represented views from the energy sector.

Table 4: Summary of respondents, as represented by the category of respondent, industry and organisation

Research Respondent Category		Industry	Organisation
Category A: Coach/ Facilitator /Transformation Specialist	RPC1	Executive coach; Diversity specialist	Org A
	RPC2	Executive coach; Diversity specialist	Org B
	RPC3	Financial services: Transformation specialist	Org C

	RPC4	Financial services: Transformation specialist; Organisational effectiveness	Org D
Category B: Coachee having attended diversity session	RP1	Financial services	Org E
	RP2	Financial services	Org E
	RP3	Energy	Org F
	RP4	Energy	Org F
	RP5	Energy	Org F
	RP6	Financial services	Org E
	RP7	Financial services	Org E
	RP8	Financial services	Org D
	RP9	Financial services	Org E

4.2.3. Representatives of Employment Equity Committees

Three of the research participants, namely RP6, RP7 and RP9 serve on their organisation's Employment Equity committee or forum.

4.3. Diversity coaching intervention characteristics

All research participants in Category B attended a diversity coaching intervention as part of an initiative within the organisation where they are employed. The diversity coaching interventions, although operated by various service providers and held at different times, shared similar characteristics, which are summarised as identified themes below.

- **Coach/facilitator:** Diversity sessions are designed and operated by diversity specialists who are experienced coaches and/or facilitators. All four research participants within Category A noted that they were either chosen or selected coaches who are skilled coaches and facilitators that deliver work within the space of diversity. RPC1 referred to herself as a “facilitator”, while RPC2 noted that she uses her four coaching qualifications to deliver diversity coaching interventions.
- **Diversity coaching session are co-facilitated:** RPC1 and RPC2 both provide and facilitate diversity coaching sessions, and both confirmed that

their sessions are always co-facilitated. RPC4, a transformation specialist who designs and implements transformation and diversity programmes within a large corporate, places key emphasis on the appropriate selection and matching of facilitators for interventions and audiences. This is necessary in order to facilitate the achievement of the desired outcomes of the intervention.

- **Duration of diversity intervention:** On average, initial contact sessions in a group setting are held for either one full day or for two consecutive days. The duration of group diversity coaching sessions, which an organisation initiates is determined by various organisational factors; a key one being the duration of time that employees can be absent from their core work duties. The details of a programme that RPC4 designed and implemented stood out as an anomaly, as it ran for five days: *“split out into different interactions so they go for two days, and then they break, and then they go for a follow up session, and then they break, and then go for the final session”* (RPC4). Feedback from attendees of this particular programme was that the process was too long, and that not all had the time to complete the programme because of its length. However, RPC4 also had experience of running a two-day programme with a follow up session for half a day, which was eventually reduced to a one-day programme and a half day follow up.
- **Follow up sessions:** Initial diversity contact sessions are generally followed by a follow up intervention. The session is facilitated by the original facilitator. RPC2, who facilitates a “Transformation beyond Compliance” session, recommended that a follow up session should be held two or three weeks after the first intervention; however, this is determined by the client. These follow up sessions run for two hours, and are a *“diversity dialogue on a diversity issue that keeps rearing its head”*. She noted that during the diversity session *“people really open up and people are moved and touched”* and, *as a result, they leave feeling “deeply impacted”*. Hence, the follow up session allows for an opportunity to *“reconnect and just ask them what has happened, what shifts have come about since the intervention, and what has worked and what has not worked with what you have tried to apply, based on what you discovered about yourself and others”*. The follow up is also aimed at *“getting to help them embed the learning, coaching them in how best to use what they*

have learnt, and then also constantly guiding, because when there is a difference that isn't elegantly named and sorted, that's one of the easiest ways of escalating conflict" (RPC2).

- **Composition of session:** Attendees that attended facilitated group coaching sessions mostly comprised of their natural work teams; however, this was at the organisation's discretion. RPC2 noted that *"with natural teams it is not always possible for a whole team to be away from their department for the whole day or two days in succession"*. RPC1 recommended that sessions should be held within natural working teams, as the session is aimed at supporting the team function more optimally regarding matters of diversity. In support of this learning outcome, an assessment of diversity within the team is included. She noted that part of the

"workshop is evaluating how well are we doing in the different elements of diversity, so it makes sense if it's a natural team, otherwise it's just theory. Ultimately, at the end of the day, they need to go back and see how they will work together now that they had this journey together" (RPC1).

RPC4 stated that a key learning element that derived from developing and implementing diversity interventions was being unclear of who should attend the sessions. He mentioned that natural teams are *"probably quite homogeneous so you won't get the rich dialogue"* that is required in a diversity session. When one is not deliberate about creating diversity amongst the session attendees, *"the conversation is going to be skewed and going to be easier to avoid talking about the issues that are uncomfortable"*. He noted further:

"I always tried to diversify the composition of the groups, especially being deliberate because if it is about widening people's worldview or broadening people's worldview, I'm most inclined to want a much more racially diverse group to have different voices to start the journey" (RPC4).

- **Voluntary or compulsory:** The trend that was identified was that organisations want all employees earmarked to attend the diversity sessions,

but do not formally label the sessions as compulsory. The limitations of this approach are discussed in 4.5.3 below.

- **Triad coaching relationship:** Facilitated diversity coaching intervention sessions are a triad coaching relationship, with the organisation initiating, shaping and funding the intervention, which is delivered by a trained coach or facilitator and attended by employees as the coachees. Feedback from participants is obtained post session, and the organisation measures shifts in behaviour after the intervention.
- **Business rationale:** Group diversity coaching sessions are initiated by the organisation and are generally attended by senior executives and their direct reports. The next tier of teams also undergoes a session of a similar nature. Various reasons related to matters of diversity were cited as the reason why diversity sessions were held. RP2 noted that the diversity sessions that she attended were in response to “*an event last year*”. The sessions were a kind of “*triage as to what is the real problem*”. The session that she attended was held four months post the “*event*”, and was an opportunity for Exco members to discuss the event. RP8 shared the experience of attending an immersion session, which aligned to the organisation’s transformation mandate. The programme focused on inclusion and was aimed at supporting dialogue within the organisation to promote inclusion. The immersion session focused on participants’ views regarding socio-economic challenges within South Africa. Irrespective of the motivation behind conducting a diversity session, RPC4 noted that it is critical that the context be created so that attendees know and understand why they are attending the session. In the absence of this, limited benefits are derived from attendance. In the absence of attendees understanding the rationale for the programme, employee feedback and perceptions will be less than desirable. An example of this type of feedback is shown below:

“great programme very informative... you know educational’ but that the real corridor talk would be that employees would be heard saying “I don’t know why we were there” (RPC4).

- **Incisive questions:** In delivering facilitated diversity sessions, RPC2 stated that she “*will apply my general processes*”, referring to her “*coaching toolbox*”

when delivering diversity and transformation focused interventions. She specifically referred to the use of “*powerful and incisive questions*” as the coaching skill that she applied when directing engagement on diversity and transformation issues.

- **Method and process of diversity coaching:** RPC1, who is an executive coach and diversity facilitator, said that diversity coaching as “*very organic*” and “*process driven*”, and that coaches and facilitators “*simulate*” and “*reflect back on what people are saying without using words*”.

4.4. Research findings: Self-awareness, unconscious bias and transformation

The first research question of this study sought to examine whether diversity coaching brings about self-awareness of unconscious bias and, if so, if this awareness has the potential to influence decision-making on matters of transformation in the workplace. The research proposition pertaining to this research question suggests that diversity coaching creates a safe space within which participants can gain insight into their behaviours, thereby enhancing self-awareness that has the potential to change and positively impact matters of diversity in the workplace.

Research findings were summarised against themes that aligned to the research proposition of the first research question. The themes include:

- Diversity coaching creates a safe space;
- The role of unconscious bias activities in diversity coaching to create awareness; and
- Evidence of self-awareness was created as a result of diversity coaching.

4.4.1. Diversity coaching creates a safe space

The analysed data related to the nature of the diversity intervention, showing a strong correlation between the principles and methodology that were applied in executive coaching, and that of diversity coaching.

The characteristics of diversity coaching, as analysed through this research, indicate that diversity interventions, although not structured as a one-on-one coaching session, share the same basic criteria, intention and outcomes as one-on-one executive coaching sessions. The experiences of participants provide evidence that diversity coaching sessions that were held with multiple attendees create an opportunity for delegates to share of their views and opinions, thereby creating a safe space for dialogue on matters of diversity.

- *“People got to speak freely and openly because the context was created for me to be in a safe space and speak openly which is important”* (RP1);
- The session *“fostered and created an environment of honest engagement”* (RP1);
- The facilitators *“created a safe space to chat”* (RP7); and
- The facilitator *“kept it impersonal.... people could say what they really wanted to say which is where I think the magic happened”* (RP9).

4.4.2. Role of unconscious bias activities in diversity coaching to create awareness

Diversity sessions that Category B research participants attended involved a focus on unconscious bias. The nature of the diversity interventions that research participants attended included classroom-based facilitated sessions, sessions that were part of a leadership accelerator programme, and immersion sessions that were held at various locations within Johannesburg.

The intention of including unconscious bias as part of the diversity coaching methodology, as expressed by RPC1 is *“about shifting people’s consciousness”* with the intention of *“shifting what people are looking at and helping people see differently and becoming comfortable about some of the unconscious bias that they hold”* (RPC1). She mentioned that once unconscious bias is brought to the surface, then *“hopefully that should translate into behaviour that is different”*. She believes *“that behaviour change happens at a subconscious level”*, and that when

people shift it is *“like a light bulb moment happens”*. She further shared that once delegates have seen something, they cannot *“unsee it”* (RPC1).

When reporting on the impact of unconscious bias on the success of diversity interventions, RPC4 noted that *“we did not anticipate the kind of reaction we got from the program”*. He linked the awareness that most gained in the session to the activities that focused on identifying unconscious bias around privilege. The sessions were structured so that participants would *“talk and debrief and talk about what that means and what’s emerged for them”*. The realisation that *“employees derived on matters of diversity is what lead to the programme, which had started out as a pilot, being regarded as successful and rolled out to the rest of the business units within the organisation”* (RPC4).

RP8’s experience was attending a session that was deliberately intended to *“take you out of your current comfort zone”*, and included travelling to various parts of Johannesburg so that employees *“can experience other people’s lives”* with the aim, post the immersion exercise, being to *“talk through what do we as employees need to do for the world to transform”*. The session focused more on social issues than on race and gender. Unconscious bias was noted as the *“biggest part of the immersion exercise”*, which RP8 had experienced. She stated that unconscious bias is the *“foundation of it... around how we look at people and unconsciously we just assume”* (RP8).

RP9, who has attended multiple sessions that focus on diversity owing to his role as a member of the employment equity forum of his organisation, shared of his experience attending a one-day workshop, where the first half of the day focused on racism, and the second half of the day focused on unconscious bias. The session involved *“quite directly going from race to race and pointing out to each race and gender what typically unconscious biases are for that race”*. The outcome of the session was that it *“created a lot of awareness for everyone and that we all need to create more awareness of our unconscious biases”*. He said that he believed that after the session attendees were *“a lot more informed and aware and just more open to your own biases”* (RP9).

The positive impact and influence of unconscious bias, as a technique, which is used in diversity coaching, was not unanimous amongst all research participants. RP2 viewed unconscious bias as *“a deliberate attempt on the part of the people that have felt discriminated upon to ‘conscientise’ those who actually don’t understand that there is a problem”*. She opined that it is a concept that applies to *“those who weren’t aware that there was any kind of discrimination in the ecosystem in which we operate”*. Hence, she regards the use of unconscious bias as being *“about educating people who do not believe that there is a problem on some of the core components of the problem”* (RP2). Despite this view, RP2 was able to identify her own unconscious bias that emerged during a diversity session, which she described as follows:

“I didn’t have much appreciation for sexual orientation and how that sexual orientation.... the things that they have to overcome and the experiences that they have to overcome and the jokes that they have to overcome in the environment. I guess I never understood that there was another burden” (RP2).

RPC3 described her experience of the effectiveness of unconscious bias activities within a diversity session, as she had implemented such interventions for more than a decade: is

“In order for them to actually work, they can’t be once-off. There has to be multiple engagements because as human beings experience these interventions, they also evolve, and it’s almost like different iterations depending on where you are in their career, where they are on a personal level, on a social level, because they uncover a lot about what they are not conscious about in all these different settings; so it’s not just in a work environment, because they bring whatever they are experiencing from a subconscious perspective, also from outside the work environment and that also impacts on how they engage, they interact, how they make decisions” (RPC3).

RPC3 mentioned that the success of unconscious bias programmes can be attributed to multiple engagements with the same audience. *“However, as organisations don’t always have the funding to run multiple iterations of unconscious bias training, it is generally left to one intervention to bring about self-awareness and behaviour change”* (RPC3).

4.4.3. Evidence of self-awareness

Category A participants, represented by coaches who deliver and design diversity interventions, identified shifts made within the delegate groups through the follow up coaching sessions that were held following the diversity intervention. The experiences of these coaches are presented below:

- Following attendance at a session run by RPC1, delegates were asked to make a commitment to their teams in relation to diversity. *“The commitment is about ‘this is me, in this team and this is what I bring’. It must be observable’*. RPC1 mentioned that in terms of evidence of this commitment, *“more often than not it becomes about engagement”*, and that delegates commit to engaging more with their colleagues; and
- The follow up sessions that were held after the diversity coaching intervention *“gives us the insight of how has their lens changed in the workplace and more often than not people who are normally marginalised start saying things like they feel more seen and heard; people that have more dominance start saying it’s really given me a little more empathy”* (RPC2).

The experience of all the Category B participants was that the diversity interventions that they attended allowed for them to voluntarily share of their experiences and self-awareness of unconscious bias that was brought to the conscious during the intervention. A consistent trend that was identified was that during diversity interventions, all the Category B participants were confronted with identifying their personal unconscious bias. The research respondents shared the following examples of self-awareness that they gained from attending the diversity session:

- RP1: Self-awareness was shared, as *“I had a view that white people are very privileged”*; however, because of the diversity session that he attended, he changed his views to *“so I think as much as we as black people have been victims, many white people who also suffered in their own way. And I think I’ve got a sense of appreciation of that and it made me understand and approach my engagements with white people differently as opposed to trying to accuse or trying to say you’re privileged, be more sensitive and have a bit more empathy”*. He also noted that as a result of attending the diversity session, he became aware of his *“privilege as a man”* (RP1);
- RP1: Recalling a role-play exercise that they did during a diversity programme, he noted: *“I found it very, very useful and even the role playing around swapping your role. So, I had to play a white woman. Someone else had to play a black gay man and they were different, so you had that empathy that you also had to play as part of the experience”* (RP1);
- RP3: Self-awareness was as a result of the knowledge gained - *“I think the more you know the more knowledge you gain whether you want to or not because you just were there, and you were present. It changes how you view things. So.... It broadens your horizons more”* (RP3);
- RP4: Self- awareness pertained to how she judges people;
- RP5’s experience was realising that she makes assumptions about the lives of others, and then compares these to herself. She mentioned that *“you know your life is not good or you’re not good enough and you might be in a better position compared to other people, so don’t underestimate yourself as a person. So, you know just be appreciative of what you have because you don’t know what other people have gone through or are going through”* (RP5);
- RP8 shared how evident it was to her while undergoing an immersion intervention that she was judging people who chose to live a life differently to how she lives hers. Part of the programme was to understand the *“back story”* of people whom you judge based on your frame of reference and bias. The programme included a debriefing component after each socio-economic variable that delegates were exposed to. *“Post every immersion*

that we would go to we would all sit and debrief. The debriefing involved identifying perceptions that were held ahead of each immersion, and *“what has changed since then”*. Sharing was not compulsory and *“if you wanted to share, you could share; if you didn’t want to share, you didn’t have to”*; however, people willingly chose to share of their pre and post perceptions. She said that with this experience she noted that many of her *“white counterparts”* that participated in the immersion exercise developed a self-awareness related to how similar people are, and whom they had previously thought to be so different (RP8);

- RP9’s described his diversity session experience as an opportunity for people to be *“brutally honest for the first time”*. Attendees became aware of their actions, which had negatively impacted others and had caused them pain. He stated that it was within this discomfort that people started to show signs of changing. He mentioned that he overheard someone saying: *“Next time I am going to do it different so that I don’t make someone feel like that again”*. In respect of his own self-awareness, he realised that *“I need to be cautious and curious and enquiring and not make assumptions because there are so many things that is normal to me and I can’t just accept that is normal to everyone”*. The shifts that he underwent when confronted with his unconscious bias, was that *“one of the big biases that I had was I understood equality, but I didn’t quite understand equity..... I thought if the playing field was equal then we are equal”* (RP9).

4.5. Research findings: Being aware of bias does not necessarily give rise to a change in decision-making

The second research question of this study examined whether self-awareness of matters of unconscious bias can result in a change in decision-making, as evidenced by a change in behaviour on matters that promote the achievement of transformation in the South African workplace. Research, which creates the research proposition for this research question, suggests that being made aware

of a bias does not necessarily give rise to or result in a change in decision-making.

The research findings, which were obtained from the interviews, identified key themes, as summarised below:

- Diversity coaching participants become consciously aware of unconscious bias;
- Evidence of behaviour change post attendance of a diversity coaching intervention; and
- Challenges in bringing about behaviour and decision-making changes.

4.5.1. Evidence of behaviour change

Upon realising their unconscious bias and achieving a state of greater self-awareness on how unconscious bias impacts diversity and transformation in the workplace, research participants were asked to share evidence of how their behaviour changed, if at all, following the diversity intervention. Evidence of a behaviour change was specifically requested as a workplace example.

Evidence of behaviour change, as experienced by Category A and Category B research participants, is summarised separately below.

Category A research participants

- RPC1's diversity sessions require that the participants make a personal commitment at the end of the session. While the commitment is personal, "*you are making a pledge to the team as well*". Hence, while the commitment is a "*personal reflection*", it is a commitment to the team. During the 12-week follow up session the engagement is aimed at determining if any shifts occurred. The commitment that the attendees made is then reviewed, while they each hold one another accountable for feedback on their experience of any changes in relation to the commitment. RPC1 stated that "*within teams where there has been (a) concerted effort*", they acknowledge that their previous behaviours "*is not sustainable*", and that these "*teams have gone on to become more*

productive and more like a family". RPC1 noted that the changes are quite significant and *"sometimes I don't believe it when I go back and people have actually changed"*. The commitments that participants make are aligned to the philosophy that *"this is me, in this team and this is what I bring"* - the commitment must result in something *"observable"*. RPC1's experience has been that when a commitment such as *"I will respect more"* is made, this is unpacked to determine *"what respect means in the context of the team"*. She mentioned that delegates are pushed to pledge commitments for which observable outcomes can be experienced. The most prevalent theme of commitment, as evidenced through RPC1's experience, is that of engagement. Delegates make commitments such as *"I will engage more with my colleagues"*. Group commitments related to engagement that have been set include having *"10 minutes of not talking about work"* during formal team meetings. The intention and outcome of these commitments are that individual members of the team *"connect so that that I understand your way and I understand where you at"*. The experience in such circumstances has been positive, because *"once people start talking beyond assumptions they make of the packaging of the person, they just connect at a human level"*. The commitment to engage helps to demystify previously held views, and *"it humanizes the masses and levels the playing fields"* (RPC1);

- The process of making personal commitments that will impact the team, as implemented in RPC1's coaching interventions, results in the act where *"people vouch for each other"*. Where changes are evidenced by members of the team, they provide feedback such as: *"I spent a bit of time with so and so and I actually observed they do this and this a little bit more – like greeting, something small like greeting"*. This carries weight for groups that have identified greeting as an important aspect of team dynamics. In respect of analysing the concept of greeting as a key component of creating an inclusive workplace, RPC1 notes that *"the issue of greeting becomes a rallying point where people suddenly realise it's not just about greeting, it's about seeing my humanity and others demystifying the fact that non greeting for me is not about disrespect it's about saying I am going*

to engage with you when I need to engage with you". Such conversations help to slow the team down and allows them to see each other for who they are as individuals, and *"then productivity improves"*. The commitments have resulted in improving relationships at work where a culture of *"we can trust each other"* is developed; and

- RPC2 obtains feedback from delegates through completion of a feedback form, following each session. The outcome of the feedback is shared with the client to assess whether or not the intervention is working, and for purposes of their *"own internal feedback process"*. According to RPC2, the feedback that was received thus far for large scale specific intervention has been *"phenomenal – people are saying we need more of this"*, while those divisions that have yet to be scheduled for the intervention are *"calling HR and saying when are we going to go"*. She equates this feedback as evidence that *"the shifts are clearly happening, slow though they might be because it is a process, but we know there are definite shifts happening"*. She adds that *"people are opening, a lot more receptive"*.

Category B research participants

Category B participants identified the following personal behaviour changes that they experienced after attending a diversity session:

- RP1: *"I am more patient now. I think I'm more tolerant"*;
- RP1: *"What I used to do in these town halls..... I used to put my hand up and challenge you know quite directly and sometimes quite vigorously.... And the response I got sometimes, many times actually, was not satisfactory. So, the approach that I took subsequently was to sit down one on one in a room with the senior white leader here that I've had these engagements with, and I had a more reconciliatory and open approach. And I think, defences fell down.... I found that yielded results and defences were down and there was sincerity in the conversations"*;
- RP1: *"be more patient with people.... Listen to understand and listen to also inform and educate"*;

- RP3: *“I got tools in terms of how to engage with people and how to work.... make sure you give credit where it is due, open up opportunities for all kinds of staff”*;
- RP3: In referring to two appointments made – *“we looked broader and we made different choices and we had different criteria”*; and
- RP4: *“I a(m) lot more open to learning from other people versus telling them my view”*.

4.5.2. Change in decision-making

Research participants were requested to consider whether there was evidence of any direct or indirect decision-making changes from their own personal experience, or in respect of what they had observed from others who attended the diversity intervention.

The evidence that they provided of decision-making change is summarised below, and these reflect the research respondents’ experiences.

Research Category A

RPC4

RPC4 identified the changes that occurred to be changes in business results, and that these were evidenced in *“some slight improvement in climate surveys and scores and people talking about it and personal stories and obviously some improvement in the scorecard”*. However, he noted that in spite of some changes, there were still challenges in the system, hence the interventions *“did not shift the system completely”*.

RPC4’s experience following diversity coaching intervention was that the session gave employees a voice and a new narrative. Hence, employees use this new-found position to address structures and systems, and the business with which they are dissatisfied. *“Now that employees have a voice they will hold you accountable”*; however, he mentioned that often business is not ready to deal with employees who have found their voice in challenging the status quo, which impacts business change. *“The change happens probably six months after people have been for these interventions”*, he said, hence he anticipates that

change will occur in the months to come because of the organisation's interventions. He advocates that the process is a "*catalyst for change that you may not even be able to see*". Even for those who may have appeared to return to their old ways "*there's consciousness ... it's probably a 1% shift or 2%*".

RPC4 shared further evidence of behaviour change, which included changes that were evident after rolling out the programme to about 30% of the total workforce. He noted that "*we started seeing some of the trends and the shift in some of the leaders that were starting to emerge and what we also realised is that it's good to have an integrated view of these programmes*". The integrated view that he referred to is the integration between the intervention and the people's practices. According to him, "*if they (people practices) are not doing what they are supposed to do, you are actually dead in the water because then you're running a programme, a talk shop but with no impact*". The processes that he cited as examples of what needs to be fixed, include the company's recruitment, talent management and succession processes. He cited fixing how meetings operate as an example. "*If I'm not fixing how I run my meetings on a day to day to make sure everyone's voice is heard, you are not going to actually be able to see success essentially*". He stated that diversity coaching interventions can only be successful if:

"you take people through the programme but be mindful that the engine of your business is still your people practices..... it's what happens in recruitment, it's what happens in your bonus time, it's what happens to recognition schemes.... Required that level of rigour in testing whether we're moving in the right direction" (RPC4).

Research Category B

RP1

RP1's experience is as follows:

"From a decision point of view I wouldn't say I see anything at the moment because we're in different parts of the business because we're a very

diverse group. But I would say from an engagement point of view I sense sincerity".

With regards to behavioural change that results in decision-making change, RP1 noted that:

"I also can't say it's because of this one session; there could be other contributing factors that influence that. But I do see some movements in the right direction behaviourally".

RP3

The diversity intervention attended by RP3 did not deliver on the impact that she assumed it would. She mentioned that any change that may have been brought about through the intervention *"lasted for maybe a week or so and then people went back to the same"*. However, she did not attribute this to the intervention, but rather to *"a big cultural issue that is amiss"* in the organisation. She stated that in order for a diversity intervention to work, *"you need to address the actual problem and they (management) haven't done that"*. She identified the actual problem as the employees' *"lack of faith in the company"*.

RP8

The close out plan following the immersion experience that RP8 attended included the development of *"task teams or work groups"*, which were established to address areas of inclusion identified for employees, and to amend programmes aligned to the organisation's transformation agenda.

RP8 said that the programme that she attended impacted her personal decision-making, which she attributed to her role, and owing to the nature of her role it is

"more prevalent than in other people's roles In my role it's the need to know that everybody comes with a back story and has impacted on how I engage even in my consultations with people".

A change in her behaviour includes

“not judging before I actually listen to them and understood what is happening in their lives, which impacts the value that I give to their lives and the advice that I would give” (RP8).

She reported that there was a change in her overall engagement, which was the key change in her behaviour and hence decision-making.

RP9

RP9's reflections of the unconscious bias that he became aware of resulted in changes in the way that he engages with his role on the employment equity forum.

“Because now you know things you didn't know before.... So from that perspective, just being confronted with all matters of employment equity and diversity has taught me a lot and has broken a lot of, I guess, unconscious myths or stuff that I believed about other races and cultures and genders”.

In applying the learning to his everyday work, he added that his

“mind-set is pro-diversity, pro-equality, pro-equity and that means that inherently I want to know more, understand more”.

He applies what he has learned to how he reacts to conflict when it arises in the workplace, and rather than participate in the conflict he now gets into a more personal conversation and aims to understand *“why are we missing each other here”*, for example.

Asked whether unconscious bias awareness can help to propel people to behave differently and to make decisions differently in the workplace, RP9's response was:

“Yes, I definitely think there is benefit. I don’t think it’s a silver bullet but I think it’s a starting point. For any behaviour change, the first step is awareness, but then you also need some motivation to change and then you need repetition or reinforcement to practice it because it clearly doesn’t come naturally. I think awareness is a great start but you have to back it up..... Definitely awareness is a great start but it won’t get you there in itself. You can’t workshop yourself into diversity. There is a lot more to it”.

Reflecting on changes in decision-making after attending a diversity workshop. RP9 noted that he cannot ascribe such changes only to the workshop, but rather that it is a “*culmination of all the life experiences*” that he has been exposed to, which relate to diversity. He was able to share a specific change in how he approached a challenging situation with an African lady who also occupies a seat on the employment equity forum. She always questioned everything that was tabled at the forum, and RP9’s approach would always be one of confronting her.

“Normally I would just confront her, tell her why it’s unacceptable for me and move on; be abrasive – well not abrasive but firm, make my appoint and move on and tell her it’s not going to work like this and more than go on. But then something in me said ‘maybe you just don’t understand where she is coming from. She must be like this for a reason. There must be something driving this behaviour’ and after we had another heated argument about I invited her for coffee. I said ‘let’s go have coffee. Let’s talk about who you are and what you do when you are not in the EE forum. So I got to know her a bit and just that conversation in itself changed her attitude towards me in a big way but I also had a lot more context of where she was coming from”.

4.5.3. Challenges in bringing about behaviour and decision-making changes

Participants cited various reasons why a change in behaviour and decision making in the workplace occurs following a diversity coaching intervention. The key themes that were identified included:

- Readiness to embrace change;
- Demographic profile of attendees;
- Voluntary versus compulsory attendance at diversity sessions;
- Organisational cultural challenges; and
- The need for diversity sessions to be integrated into organisational strategic initiatives

Readiness to embrace change

The experience of research respondents is that diversity interventions attract people who are willing to embrace diversity, while individuals who are unconsciously aware of their inability to embrace diversity, opted to not attend or actively participate in diversity sessions. This view is well summed up by a comment that RP2 made:

“People have to admit that there is a problem in order for the problem to be solved” (RP2).

RP9 supported this assertion by commenting that:

“You are preaching to the converted. Everyone who wants to talk about diversity and wants to do something about it who is already open to the conversation, they are the ones who are going to attend. The ones, who because of their own bias, their close mindedness; they would say ‘oh I don’t need this. I am not a racist. There is nothing I can do about it’.”

The “psychological readiness” of people to “work with this stuff” was linked to the reality of whether or not changes would occur after a diversity intervention. “People need to be at the level of readiness to be on the journey” (RPC1).

RP9 believes that not all people are ready to embrace diversity, as they do not fully appreciate its importance.

“People need to really understand and fully appreciate its importance. They need to do it out of their own accord and they need to do it sincerely and authentically” (RP9).

“For it to be truly effective, the heart needs to be in it” (RP9).

RP6 shared a similar view to that of RP9. Her experience is that individuals attended the session because they were told to, and not because they wanted to, hence their unwillingness to engage with diversity matters, was evident. She noted that:

“People went into those sessions with an open mind but a lot of those people sent into those sessions not with an open mind” (RP6).

According to RP6, the unwillingness of wanting to engage with diversity matters, and not being ready to travel a road towards self-awareness and self-discovery, are reasons for the limited impact on transformation.

“You don’t know what you don’t know and you don’t feel what you don’t know” (RP6).

Research respondents shared a passion for diversity and, therefore, all voluntarily attended such sessions.

“I signed up for it even though it wasn’t mandatory for my area because I am passionate about it” (RP7).

The research respondents perceived that attendees at diversity sessions are not the ones that should be attending, and that those that need to change are not impacted as much as those who are open to the change.

“It takes the person that is receiving that information and it takes a readiness of the person to receive the information” (RP2).

Demographic profile of attendees

Attendance at diversity interventions was dominated by mostly Black employees. Reflecting on attendees at these sessions, RP1 noted that:

“When you attend these things its mostly black people that you see. Many white people avoid transformation because of the sensitivity that it brings”
(RP1).

RP9 used the following descriptor when answering a question regarding the demographic representation of attendees at the diversity programme that he attended:

“It was representative of our country but not representative of our workforce. So you would see a lot more AIC colleagues than you would see white colleagues”.

As RP9’s workforce at his organisation was dominated by White employees, the diversity intervention that he attended was not well represented by this demographic. When asked why he thought his White colleagues did not attend the session, he noted the following:

“If I had to guess, I would say there are a lot of white people that can’t be bothered. They think it’s over and they think they can carry on with it without having to think or worry about transformation while the AIC candidates want to go, because they have a stake in it, they can benefit from it”.

RP1’s experience of White people attending the session and embracing an engagement about diversity is shown below.

“White people tended to be very defensive; they tend to think that is was an attack because of the historical facts of this country are so painful that many of them felt guilty about you now that impact that had broadly on black people”.

Voluntary versus compulsory attendance

Diversity sessions are communicated as an invitation to attend. The trend seems to indicate that organisations want all employees to attend, but attendance is not compulsory and hence not enforced. RPC4 noted that *“in some cases you can argue yes and no”* in reference to whether sessions are voluntary or compulsory. RPC4’s organisation positioned the diversity session as an invitation from leadership.

The immersion intervention that RP8 attended originally had invited 40 persons; however, only *“15 people ended up going through the process”*, as the process was voluntary. She, however, quantifies that the immersion was part of a broader company transformation initiative, which focuses more on inclusion than on race and gender. She noted that an invitation was sent to those who had not yet attended the session, but were part of the target audience, hence it was a matter of *“we have got people that we want to go through this process, let’s invite them. Whoever can come, can come; if they can’t, they can’t..... So it’s mandatory but also voluntary at the same time”*.

Mixed views exist regarding whether diversity interventions should be compulsory or voluntary. RP3 believes that enforcing a compulsory session does not support the creation of a lasting and sustainable behavioural change.

“A lot of training is also deemed compulsory, and similar to like an addict that is told you have to go to rehab, if it’s something that they feel they need to do, people go and attend, they tick the register, they have been to the session, but they don’t go out and consciously start practicing the things that they have been enlightened about with regards to how they interact with the certain things; you know, what triggers them, what blocks them, what empowers them, what inspires them, what brings out the elements of discrimination that they have inside of them that they are not aware of, so no change materialises (RPC3).

RP6, who participated in a pilot diversity intervention that occurred in response to an executive walk in her organisation, found the session to be extremely beneficial; however, he believes that not enforcing attendance is a limitation to the further roll out of the programme:

“...only issue for me though is when they rolled it out, it was still by choice and I don’t think something like that should have been by choice if you are fundamentally trying to change the way of a culture within an organisation”.

RP7’s experience of a diversity intervention was a compulsory session for the division in which she works. As a result of the session being compulsory, she said that *“some people were just there to tick a box”*. She sensed *“tenseness on the day and a bit of rigidity”* (RP7). This tension she believes manifested because not all attendees wanted to be present at the session and, therefore, *“obviously you are not dealing with link-minded people who are here to fix a solution in an inclusive and transformational way”*.

RP9’s opined that transforming the workplace through coaching interventions should be mandatory to ensure that all employees, irrespective of their willingness to engage on such topics, should attend. He stated:

“Getting diversity right - the recipe is exactly the same as any other culture or behaviour change that you want to do. You have to be very strategic, very methodical and very disciplined in what you do. You can’t just talk until it fixes itself”.

Organisational cultural challenges

Delegates shared that implementing a diversity programme without considering the cultural challenges, which are inherent in the organisation, impacts achievement of the desired outcome/s of such interventions.

RP1 regards diversity interventions as an integral start to the need to bring about change in his organisation; however, he believes that ongoing engagement on matters of diversity is needed to change the organisation’s culture, and to influence diversity and inclusion:

“So, a start is important, but I think the organisation also needs to be able to create a platform and spaces where those kinds of conversations can happen because they should happen” (RP1); and

“there needs to be more one on one type conversations there probably needs to be more coaching, especially of those that are in a position of privilege” (RP1).

Delegates from Org F referred to challenges within the organisation as limiting the ability of the organisation to entrench practices of diversity and inclusion. The cultural challenges that were identified included:

“I think there’s a big cultural issue that is completely amiss and for those kinds of interventions to work you need to address the actual problem and they haven’t done that, which is the lack of faith in the company”(RP3); and

“Because as much as these interventions are put in place and I am sure they are put in place with good intentions and everything – I think because of the initiative overload specially in Org F coming over the past four, five six years.... we are now ‘Enough! Stop’ And everyone’s just like enough now because there is constantly something but nothing changes” (RP4).

The need for diversity sessions to be integrated into organisational strategic initiatives

In reviewing the success of diversity interventions, RPC4 noted that the “so what” question was missing. The “so what” was “around now that I know that I have blind spots.....what do I do with myself”. He noted that many felt the emotion of anger and that ‘employees are now left with needing to undo what they have known their entire lives. This left employees with a feeling of loss and that they had to mourn this loss. Anger developed in the system” (RPC4).

RPC3 links the limited impact that diversity interventions have on transformation to it not being integrated into the organisation's culture and the strategy. She said the following in this regard:

“So, culture is almost like, isolated as something that is done alongside or outside of a business strategy rather than as a call to driving where the organisation is supposed to go..... despite all these interventions there still persists a culture or behaviours that results in things that go against the very core of what you are trying to achieve”.

RP9 advocates the use of a change model, which can be used to create awareness around the concept. He stated that Limitations to the intervention's success was that *“it wasn't clearly part of a diversity strategy” to those who were in attendance*”.

4.6. Additional research findings

The following themes were identified during the study's research interviews, and these were not directly linked to any of the research or interview questions that were posed.

Interview created a safe space: Participants became increasingly comfortable and eager to talk about diversity matters in their workplace as the interview progressed.

Dissatisfaction with the progress of transformation: Participants held strong views about the lack of diversity and insufficient transformation progress in their organisation.

Multiple diversity sessions attended: Research participants have attended multiple diversity sessions and are highly focused on the need to embrace diversity in the workplace. The research findings may have been different if the research respondents were less focused on embracing diversity.

Off the record discussions: As participants became comfortable during the interviews, they often chose to speak about matters, though 'off the record'. These matters related to diversity in their workplace that did not directly link to the interview questions and were shared as 'off the record' content once the interview ended.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

This discussion chapter interrogates the key themes that emerged from the research study's findings, which were presented in Chapter Four. The content of this chapter aims to validate the research findings against the literature that was reviewed to answer the research questions.

5.2. Demographic profile of respondents

The table below summarises the demographic and industry profiles of participants in this research.

Table 4: Demographic profile of research participants

Research Respondent Category		Industry	Organisation	Race	Gender
Category A: Coach/ Facilitator /Transformation specialist	RPC 1	Executive coach; Diversity specialist;	Org A	African	Female
	RPC 2	Executive coach; Diversity specialist;	Org B	African	Female
	RPC 3	Financial services: Transformation specialist	Org C	African	Female
	RPC 4	Financial services: Transformation specialist;	Org D	African	Male

		Organisational effectiveness			
Category B: Coachee having attended diversity session	RP1	Financial services	Org E	African	Male
	RP2	Financial Services	Org E	African	Female
	RP3	Energy	Org F	Indian	Female
	RP4	Energy	Org F	Coloured	Female
	RP5	Energy	Org F	African	Female
	RP6	Financial Services	Org E	Coloured	Female
	RP7	Financial Services	Org E	African	Female
	RP8	Financial Services	Org D	African	Female
	RP9	Financial Services	Org E	White	Male

No demographic profile was assigned to the research, or to the selection of research participants. This was deliberate as the outcome of the research is not dependant on the views of any specific demographic group.

The demographic profile for Category A's respondents was 100% African, of whom 75% was female. The demographic profile for Category B's respondents was 88% Black, of whom 77% was female.

Research participants that represented Org E were highly responsive to requests to participate in the research, and willingly recommended their colleagues to also participate. Hence, Org E had the highest number of participants represented in the study.

5.3. Self-awareness, unconscious bias and transformation

The first research question that was posed for this research aimed to determine whether diversity coaching provides self-awareness of unconscious bias, which influences decision-making around transformation matters.

In addressing this question, the research departed by sourcing and analysing evidence of the characteristics of diversity coaching sessions as means to validate that the said sessions bare resemblance to one-on-one executive coaching sessions. The characteristics of the group-facilitated diversity sessions, which the research participants attended, show evidence of having the same characteristics as one-on-one executive coaching sessions, with specific reference to creating a safe space for attendees to interrogate their views and uncover bias that they may have concerning diversity matters. The research, therefore, provides overwhelming confirmation that diversity coaching creates a safe space from which attendees can correct, test new skills and process feedback on relevant diversity matters (Motsoaledi & Cilliers, 2012).

Within the safe space created, the research confirms that diversity coaching that includes unconscious bias within its design, brings to the fore awareness of various ways in which people differ. The experience of research participants was that various techniques and methods were used to bring to the fore perceptions that they held about a variety of diversity elements that occur within the workplace. The use of unconscious bias, as a means of framing the underlying beliefs of the perceptions that delegates have, provided a mirror through which delegates could start to make sense of their beliefs and assumptions. RPC1 noted that creating a mirror is a deliberate component of the interventions' design that she runs, as evidenced in her statement that "*part of the design is to help people see the mirror*" (RPC1). The research findings, therefore, validate Stelter's (2009) view that diversity coaching allows for personal and social meaning making through awareness of different life contexts (Stelter, 2009).

Instances where meaning making is compromised was identified as being sessions, where attendees at a diversity session were too homogeneous and,

therefore, there were insufficient inherent differences that were brought into the discussion. Hence, the composition of diversity sessions, with reference to the selection of attendees at the session, should be as deliberate as the design of the programme, as well as the choice of diversity facilitator who leads the session.

All participants, without hesitation, were willing to share details of the nature of self-awareness that they had experienced during the diversity session. The nature of differences identified through unconscious bias by research participants related to ways in which people differ with reference to race, culture, gender and sexual orientation. Awareness of privilege and sexual orientation was also noted within the research findings. The experience of research participants is that the knowledge that they gained on how people differ, provided insight into understanding how they engage and relate within the workplace. Hence, the research findings conclude that a wide array of realisations was made consciously to diversity coaching participants. These realisations confirm that diversity coaching creates self-awareness (Motsoaledi & Cilliers, 2012).

Armed with greater self-awareness, research participants were also able to identify the impact that they have on others as a result of their views and perceptions. The research, therefore, confirms the 1999 work of Dotlich and Cairo, as referred in Maltbia and Power (2005), that employees who attend diversity coaching gain insight into their behaviour, and attitudes relating to their co-workers in the workplace (Maltbia & Power, 2005). Research participants identified that their workplace behaviour was influenced by the unconscious views that they held of the differences between themselves and others. They, therefore, became conscious of the negative impact that they have on others. The research provides further evidence in support of Perry *et al.* (2015) that awareness of personally held bias is a critical step towards reducing prejudice and discrimination (Perry *et al.*, 2015). Given the challenges of South African's history, this is a critical requirement to promote transformation in South African workplaces.

Research participants identify themselves as being pro-diversity and, therefore, they can be regarded as a willing sample group. Through their own admission they are willing and eager to bring about change and promote diversity in the workplace. They comfortably engage in discussions that advance the creation of a diverse and inclusive workforce. Their pro-diversity approach is evidenced by members of the research sample being represented on their company's employment equity committees, and are advocates for workplace diversity. Hence, this sample group could be an attributing reason why self-awareness was created for all research participants.

With reference to diversity session's attendance being compulsory or voluntary, the trend indicated that sessions are voluntary in spite of the organisation's intent that all should attend. In the absence of sessions being compulsory, as a result of the voluntary attendance, research participants made reference to the "*wrong people*" attending the sessions. Such persons were referred to as those that do not wish to engage with diversity matters, with some expressing that White people were the ones who were not willing to voluntarily attend diversity sessions. This assertion aligns to the work of Ross (2008), who notes that diversity interventions that focus on unconscious bias, have the potential to create a default of "good" people and "bad" people. While this author notes that "bad" people are those who have a bias, this research finding adds the dimension that "good versus bad" can also apply to those who are willing to engage with diversity matters as opposed to those who opt not to.

The research disapproves what Noon (2018) advocates, namely that there is a "huge leap from knowing about bias to acting different" (Noon, 2018). Research respondents were able to identify the unconscious bias that they held, and how after becoming self-aware of the said unconscious bias resulted in a change in their actions. The change in action, as shared by the research participants, is indicted as being their new way of being. Research participants seemed to have replaced their prior ways of being with a new way of being. Hence, when assessing the sustainability of the change in action, participants believe that their behaviour change is permanent. As all participants attended diversity sessions

within a relatively recent period, namely within twenty-four months of the research being conducted, recent behaviour change could be a factor to deter the sustainability of the change. This finding, therefore, aligns to Bezrukova *et al.*'s (2016) research, as the research did not find any “compelling evidence that long term effects of diversity training are sustainable in relation to attitudinal/affective outcomes” (Bezrukova *et al.*, 2016, p. 1243).

The research did not provide any evidence of self-awareness on matters of unconscious bias for individuals who may be less willing to engage with diversity matters other than the research participants. All participants regarded themselves as being pro-diversity, and had there been research participants who not voluntarily attended a diversity session, or were less willing to engage with workplace diversity, there may have been a different view on self-awareness created. Regarding the assumption created by the research participants, namely that persons who were unwilling to attend the diversity sessions do not want to engage with diversity, it can be surmised that less self-awareness may have been evident in such a sample group.

In summary, therefore, the research validates that diversity interventions, which have at the heart of their design a focus on unconscious bias, will result in awareness that has the potential to promote improved diversity in the workplace and, therefore, further the transformation agenda within South African workplaces.

5.4. Discussion: Being aware of bias does not necessarily give rise to a change in decision-making

The second research question that this study aimed to assess was whether self-awareness of unconscious bias impacts a change in decision-making in the South African workplace to promote transformation.

As evidenced in the discussion of 5.3 above, the research findings provide evidence to support that self-awareness on matters that have the potential to positively impact transformation in the workplace, arises out of participation in

diversity interventions. More specifically, awareness is created when such interventions include, as part of their design, a focus on unconscious bias. Literature in the field of diversity coaching argues that being aware of a bias does not necessarily result in a change in decision-making as a result of that awareness (Noon, 2018). A change in decision-making in the context of this research equates to a behaviour change amongst the respondents that were interviewed.

A measurable translation of self-awareness into an observable behaviour change was provided by RPC1, who required that delegates in diversity sessions should commit to their co-workers and team members. Commitments are a means of co-workers holding each other accountable to follow through with evidenced behaviour change. Progress against commitments are assessed during a follow up session, which are held a few weeks after the original diversity session. During the follow up session delegates share of the changes in behaviour that have been witnessed in relation to their co-workers' commitments. A key trend in the kind of commitments included that delegates vowed to engage differently with one another. The pledge to engage differently was attributed to a better way of connecting and understanding one another, and thereby be more aware of differences. This awareness has the potential to then better foster diversity and ultimately inclusion within the working team.

Changes that were evidenced were assessed against the TTM model for change, with specific reference to the stages defined as action, maintenance and termination of undesirable behaviour (Prochaska *et al.*, 2008) In practical terms, this would mean that upon becoming aware of an unconscious bias that impacts transformation, research respondents would act differently (action), in a consistent manner (maintenance), and cease to continue with the prior behaviour identified (termination).

The research found that research respondents within both Categories A and B, were able to provide evidence that employees acted differently after becoming conscious of their unconscious bias. Within Category A respondents RPC1,

RPC2 and RPC4 provided strong evidence that support a positive answer to this research question. RPC 4 provided evidence of the outcome of a process that he manages as “*creating a level of consciousness that people start speaking out when they see things, they start noticing behaviour because you have given them a language*”. He further mentioned that an increase in Employee Relations (ER) issues had been noted following diversity interventions, which he identified as an unintended consequence of providing employees with insight on matters that deeply steeped in unconscious bias. He made reference to a “*rise in social consciousness in the business*”, and that employees who had attended the diversity programme were more willing to call out line managers who they had witnessed as doing or saying things that were deemed to be wrong. This evidence supports that the action phase, as per the TTM model, was evident within Org D. Evidence to suggest that this action is ongoing and sustainably maintained within Org D, was limited. RPC4, who as part of his role is accountable for measuring the outcome of diversity interventions, stated that he often tells senior leadership to not “*rush for this magic, it’s just creating awareness, let’s not rush* (RPC4)” when asked to provide evidence of the change, as he is confident that the change will show evidence in time to come.

Category B respondents were also able to evidence changes in their behaviour as a result of awareness of their unconscious bias. Examples of such behaviour change was summarised in section 4.5.1, and included that of RP3, who identified that her approach in how two employment decisions were made, was impacted by the self-awareness that was realised. The specific change in behaviour that she noted was that of using different criteria and conducting a broader search for candidates for an appointment made. As a result of this change in approach, she noted that a different appointment decision was made. Other examples of behaviour changes include how employees relate and engage with others in the workplace. These examples confirm that becoming aware of unconscious bias does have an influence on bias, which relates to discrimination (Ross, 2008).

Despite individual changes in behaviour, research findings also provided evidence that diversity coaching on its own does not yield lasting change within an organisation. The experience of respondents from Org F relating to the observable changes in their business as a result of a large scale leadership programmes, including a one-day diversity intervention, was that any change noticed “*lasted for maybe a week or so and then people went back to the same*” (RP3). Hence, the intervention in Org F was perceived to not have had any impact or lasting change. The research findings, therefore, as pertains to Org F, indicates that no impact was recorded in the maintenance and termination phase of the TTM change model (Prochaska *et al.*, 2008). The respondents from Org F, however, do not solely attribute this to the intervention, but rather also to a more systemic cause, which they determined to be that employees had lost faith in the company. Hence, the culture within the organisation required more than diversity intervention to bring about lasting change.

The research findings highlighted various factors that research respondents attributed to limiting the impact that diversity coaching interventions could have on transforming the South African workplace. These factors include the following themes:

- a) Lack of integration and alignment to organisational strategy: implementing a diversity intervention without creating a clear link to how the initiative aligns with furthering the organisation’s strategy and goals;
- b) Organisational culture: diversity coaching is not a remedy to address shortcomings in the organisation’s culture;
- c) Readiness of participant to change: self-awareness requires a level of maturity amongst employees to learn, engage, receive feedback and interrogate their strongly held beliefs and assumptions;
- d) Once off interventions: in order to bring about sustainable change, interventions cannot be once-off events. Diversity management interventions that focus on unconscious bias should be continuous; and
- e) Accountability to drive to change: implementing actions that support the translation of self-awareness into behavioural changes. This supports the work of Human (2005), who purports that diversity interventions are

seldom accompanied by changes in demands on managers, either in terms of company culture or reward systems (Human, 2005).

Decision-making changes that would significantly enhance transformation in the workplace are decisions, which relate to the measures of the BEE scorecard. Such decisions would include, but are not limited to changes in hiring and employment decisions, decision-making regarding procurement for preferential service providers, career advancement and promotion, as well as management and control of organisations. No direct evidence was made available through engagement with research respondents that substantiated an impact on the BEE scorecard as a result of self-awareness, unconscious bias and any corresponding change in decision-making. Factors that may impact this outcome include, but are not limited to:

- a) the role and level of research participants: participants do not all directly make decisions that impact measures of the BEE scorecard;
- b) limited line of sight: participants may not have sufficient exposure to the nature of decision-making on BEE scorecard matters, as they occurred pre and post diversity intervention of the diversity coaching attendees; and
- c) insufficient time lapse: research respondents attended diversity coaching within twenty-four months of conducting this research, which may be insufficient time to evidence a change in decision making that positively impacts point allocation on the BEE scorecard.

Despite an absence of evidence that can directly link self-awareness of unconscious bias to decision-making changes within the BEE scorecard, the research identified evidence of a change in behaviour. For the purposes of this research, a change in behaviour equates to decision-making change and, therefore, the research concludes that diversity coaching results in self-awareness that directly impacts decision-making in the South African workplace.

5.5. Conclusion

The research findings provide evidence that diversity coaching, whilst making use of unconscious bias techniques, is successful in creating self-awareness around

diversity matters. Delegates who attend diversity coaching sessions obtain self-awareness of how people differ as a result of various demographic factors. This self-awareness creates awareness of how employees perceive people who are deemed to be different to themselves, and how they, in turn, respond and react to such differences in the context of the workplace. Awareness of the impact that one has on another is a further lesson that diversity coaching delegates obtain.

As a result of the self-awareness that they gained, diversity coaching attendees noted improvements in how they relate and engage with persons who are different to them. The research, therefore, provides evidence that behaviour changes following self-awareness positively promotes diversity in the workplace.

The research further identified various limitations that impact the effectiveness that diversity coaching could have on the South African workplace. These limitations involve the integration of diversity coaching into the organisational and transformation strategy of the organisation, challenges within the organisational culture, and the readiness and willingness of employees to participate in diversity coaching.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Introduction

This section provides a summary of the research findings and discussions in respect of the research study's questions. The section concludes with recommendations for future research in the field of diversity coaching in the South African workplace.

6.2. Conclusions: Research Question 1

This research provided evidence that diversity coaching creates a safe space for coaching participants to explore their views, beliefs and assumptions on matters that impact diversity in the workplace. Explicitly, the research provided evidence that diversity coaching, which requires participants to explore their unconscious bias, results in self-awareness of matters that can have a direct impact on transforming the South African workplace.

Therefore, the first research question, which probed whether diversity coaching provides self-awareness of unconscious bias that may impact decision making on matters of transformation, was answered affirmatively.

6.3. Conclusions: Research Question 2

The research findings confirmed that increased self-awareness can and will result in a change in behaviour, and ultimately a change in decision-making, which may promote transformation in the South African workplace. This finding is, however, limited to individuals who have an expressed willingness to engage with matters that promote and enhance diversity in the workplace.

The research yielded insufficient evidence to validate that changes in decision making would result in an impact on the BEE scorecard of organisations.

6.4. Recommendations

The research has highlighted various limitations that impact the effectiveness of diversity coaching to translate into decision-making changes within the South African workplace. Below are two recommendations in support of improving diversity coaching and unconscious bias interventions.

6.4.1. Transformation initiatives should be implemented as part of business as usual activities, thereby ensuring that the entire workforce participates. Hence, not only are the initiatives aligned directly to organisational output, but all members of the workforce participate in the learning, and ultimately impact the organisational change, which is desired.

6.4.2. Realisation of unconscious bias and self-awareness should be integrated into a mechanism of self-accountability, which measures individual and team commitments to ensure ongoing individual change in behaviour that supports desired transformation ideals in the workplace.

6.5. Suggestions for further research

A study that tracks a group of delegates as part of a diversity programme, whilst assessing pre-session perceptions, during the intervention outcomes, and various stages post the intervention change in behaviour outcomes, would address the limitations that the research findings of this research report identified. These limitations would be to determine the long-term outcomes of behaviour and decision-making change on matters of transformation in the workplace, particularly of a non-homogeneous team that undergoes a diversity programme. The programme would require multiple engagements, which focus on unconscious as linked to diversity and inclusion.

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APPENDIX A: COMMUNICATION TO PARTICIPANTS AND CONSENT FORM

Good day XXXX

I received your contact details from XXX who has advised that she has sought your permission to provide your details for possible participation in my research.

I am registered for a Masters in Management in the field of Business and Executive Coaching (MM-BEC) at WITS Business School. My student number is 1814274. I am conducting research in support of writing a research report as part of the qualification. I have received formal approval from WITS (protocol number WBS/BE1814274/535) to conduct research on the topic of "Coaching for diversity in the South African workplace". The supervisor overseeing my research is Dr Zanele Ndaba.

Research participants are being sourced from within South African organisations who have participated in a diversity related intervention such as a group facilitated diversity session and/or one-on-one coaching sessions with a specific focus on exploring matters of diversity in the workplace. Interviews with participants will ideally be conducted face to face at a place and time most convenient to the respondents. In the event that a face to face engagement isn't possible, a telephonic session will be set up. Interviews are scheduled to last between 30 and 40 minutes.

Participation in the research will be confidential and no personal or biographical details of participants will form part of the study. The research will focus on understanding the diversity intervention that participants underwent with specific focus on matters of unconscious bias and how, if at all, this awareness has shaped decision making on matters of transformation.

I look forward to hearing from you as to your willingness and availability to participate in my research.

Thanking you in advance for your co-operation.

Regards

Liesel Dentlinger

Consent Form

I agree to participate in the research study Executive development in South Africa: the lived experience of the senior executive. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may decide not to participate at any time.

I understand that my participation will remain confidential.

I agree to the recording of the interview.

.....

Participant signature

.....

Date

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Opening Remarks

Introduction of self and background in the field of coaching and diversity

Confirm that interview will be timed and recorded.

Confirm confidentiality of the information and that recording will be used to support accurate record keeping of content. Records may be reviewed by research supervisor.

Research respondents will be given access to outcomes and findings of research.

Explain that interview will be guided by themes and questions.

Test recording equipment

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Category A: Research Participant Coach (RPC)

DIVERSITY COACHES:

Theme: Diversity Coaching

1. What is your approach to diversity coaching?
2. What approach / process / methodology do you use in your diversity coaching work?
3. Does unconscious bias form part of the process?
4. In what industries / companies have you provided diversity coaching?
5. How are your services normally procured? Who approaches you for the services of diversity coaching?
6. What do you sell your services as? What do you call the work you do?

Theme: Self-awareness

1. What are some of the outcomes of the sessions you have run?
2. Can you share evidence of such outcomes?

Theme: Behaviour change and decision-making

1. Does the approach / process measure change in behaviour of attendees on diversity sessions or for clients who have undergone diversity coaching? If so, how is this measured? Can you share examples /evidence of behaviour change?
2. Does the approach / process measure change in decision-making of attendees on diversity sessions or for clients who have undergone diversity coaching? If so, how is this measured? Can you share examples /evidence of decision-making changes?

HUMAN RESOURCES AND TRANSFORMATION SPECIALIST:

Theme: Diversity Coaching

1. How do you go about determining the need for transformation initiatives?
2. Why did your organisation decide to implement a diversity intervention?
3. How are participants selected?
4. Are the sessions compulsory?

Theme: Self-awareness

1. What are some of the outcomes of the sessions that the organisation has implemented?
2. Can you share evidence of such outcomes?

Theme: Behaviour change and decision-making

1. Does the approach / process measure change in behaviour of attendees on diversity sessions or for clients who have undergone diversity coaching? If so, how is this measured? Can you share examples /evidence of behaviour change?
2. Does the approach / process measure change in decision-making of attendees on diversity sessions or for clients who have undergone diversity coaching? If so, how is this measured? Can you share examples /evidence of decision-making changes?

Category B: Research Participant (RP)

Theme: Diversity Coaching

1. Have you attended any sessions organised by your current or a prior employer related to diversity management? OR Have you been coached in your individual capacity on matters pertaining to diversity management?
2. When was the session? OR When was the coaching intervention?
3. What was the session called? i.e. diversity coaching, transformation workshop etc
4. Who organised the session? OR Who arranged for the coaching?
5. Tell me about the session (probe for: facilitation method, once off/ongoing/part of process, duration, voluntary or compulsory, unconscious bias)

Theme: Self-awareness

1. Did you become aware of any unconscious bias of your own?
2. Was bias shared in the session?
3. Are you willing to share the nature of you bias?

4. Any recollection of biases shared by other attendees?

Theme: Behaviour change and decision-making

1. Once aware of your bias, have you changed your behaviour? Examples?
2. Once aware of your bias, have you made decisions on matters of transformation differently?