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Inclusion of life coaching to supplement business coaching for young professionals at a state-owned company in South Africa

Pumelela Nikiwe Nozuko Gongo

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

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ABSTRACT

This research explores whether and how life coaching can be included as a supplement to business coaching of young professionals in training (YPTs) within the context of a South African state-owned company (SOC). Business coaching is meant to provide them with the requisite skills and competencies aligned to their qualification and choice of career in the business world. These skills would enable them to perform at entry or first-line management level in the workplace.

This research relied on a qualitative thematic analysis methodology using semi-structured interview data through purposive sampling obtained from current YPTs (between 2018 – 2020), past YPTs (prior to 2018), and process owners of the YPT programme.

The YPT programme content consists of hard skills and the technical skills needed for the task and job at hand, plus the soft skills required to function in the business's social and interpersonal environment.

Including life coaching as a supplementary process for business coaching would enable a holistic and integrated developmental approach, including the requisite competencies required for optimal workplace performance and personal life.

The research finding provided evidence that there is a lack of formal structure and progress monitoring, together with inconsistent implementation of the YPT programme in this SOC, as indicated by members of all three participant groups.

More importantly, this research found that all three participant groups agree there is a need to include life coaching in the programme.

Although soft skills are essential for YPT development and other life skills are gained by YPTs, this is done rather informally and is unstructured: it also does not represent the full spectrum of the life-coaching field.

This study confirmed the assumptions that life coaching is needed to enhance the current YPT programme. While business coaching is adequate for the professional development of YPTs, it lacks the personal development or life skills aspects relevant to such a significant life event.

The research also found that the YPT programme does not involve specific *coaches*, as defined in the literature, but instead *mentors* …and that these terms are used interchangeably among participants.

The research identified that a broader analysis of the overall efficacy of the YPT or graduate in training programme should be conducted across South Africa in collaboration with institutions seeking to improve graduates' employability, thereby alleviating not just the national skills shortage but improving the economic infrastructure. This type of research could also offer a framework for companies to use and ensure their programmes are relevant, adequate, and operated formally with specific outcomes.

KEYWORDS

Business coaching, executive coaching, life coaching

DECLARATION

I, Pumelela Nikiwe Nozuko Gongo, 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: Pumelela Nikiwe Nozuko Gongo Signature: 

Signed at Pretoria on the 25th day of June 2021.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

APA	American Psychological Association
COMENSA	Coaches and Mentors of South Africa
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
CYPT	Current YPT
EE Act	Employment Equity Act
EMCC	European Mentoring and Coaching Council
FNB	First National Bank
GIT	Graduate in training
HCPC	Health and Care Professions Council
HPCSA	Health Professions Council of South Africa
ICF	International Coaching Federation
NYDP	National Youth Development Programme
PO	Process owner
PYPT	Past YPT
SAGDA	South African Graduate Development Agency
SAGEA	South African Graduate Employers Association
SOC	State-owned company
YPT	Young professional in training

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research was to explore whether life coaching can be included as a supplement to business coaching of young professionals in training (YPTs) at a South African state-owned company, and if so, how this can be undertaken. The study results added to the body of knowledge on the combination of life coaching and business coaching for young and recently graduated employees in an organisational setting. Life coaching as a supplementary process to business coaching would enable a holistic and integrated developmental approach, including the requisite competencies required for optimal workplace performance and personal life.

Jarosz (2016) cites many benefits and positive results for an individual who experiences life coaching. The benefits include a greater understanding of oneself, improved time management skills, and increased self-esteem. These benefits would be essential for the growth and development of a young professional in a business environment. De Haan (2019) further argues that irrespective of what type of coaching is delivered to an individual, the overall intent is meeting the client's objective.

The research indicates whether life coaching should form part of the development programme, which is currently structured to provide these young professionals with the technical and functional skills to perform at entry or first-line management levels in the workplace.

Kirdök and Harman (2018) argue that issues such as technological developments and rapid changes in the workplace significantly impact young people's lives and their ability to make important life decisions. This could affect their careers and occupational choices; therefore, life coaching could be a valuable tool to assist them to navigate the world of work.

As stated in the coaching literature, a distinction is often made between business, executive, workplace, and life coaching. The first three focus on work or team goals, whereas life coaching usually occurs outside the corporate environment and is concerned with an individual's whole life.

Green, Grant, and Rynsaardt (2007) stated that it would also provide value in developing hardiness and resilience for young professionals and assisting them to deal with corporate demands, peer, and family pressure, and achieving their personal goals.

1.2 Context of the study

According to Kahn (2011) and Stout-Rostron (2014), business coaching involves constructive engagement and dialogue with employees or any institution's members to inspire positive actions to promote success. Kahn (2011) and Stout-Rostron (2014) further posit that the relationship is between the coach, the client, and the organisation. The relationship focuses on achieving positive results for the individual, team, and organisation.

Maritz (2013) suggested that approximately 44 000 business coaches were operating worldwide at the time of writing, with South Africa ranking seventh in the countries with the highest number of coaches. However, there are differences in the coaching utilised. Senior and executive managers typically undergo executive coaching to develop their strategic and organisational leadership capability. Further down the hierarchy, middle, lower-ranking managers, and non-managers undergo business coaching or performance coaching aligned to performance management processes, used to develop individual and team contributions to the achievement of business strategy (Gruman & Saks, 2011).

Underhill, McAnally, and Koriath (2007) and Griffiths and Campbell (2008) claim life coaching is a holistic approach where clients seek to make preferred changes

after examining their lives and are supported in this task by a coach. Life coaching, primarily conducted outside the workplace, assists individuals to achieve their life goals. These might include determining goals to achieve a personal vision, developing work-life balance, managing finances, and gaining a healthy life perspective in general.

Kintu, Kitainge, and Ferej (2019) state that the transition from formal training to professional work is a significant life event and challenge. This transition period is highly stressful for the new professional. It is further claimed that the transition from being a student in a safe environment to becoming a professional, with set demands and outcomes, is jarring. Once at work, the young professional learns new ways of organising life and managing time successfully while adapting to new tasks and responsibilities, gaining social acceptance from new colleagues and supervisors, and learning how to balance work and private life can be incredibly stressful (Hettich, 2000; Kuron, Lyons, Schweitzer, & Ng, 2015; Murphy, Blustein, Bohlig, & Platt, 2010).

Archer and Davison (2008) state that almost one-third of employers (30 percent) have problems with graduates' generic employability skills such as teamwork, communication and problem-solving. They further assert that employers are also disappointed with the graduates' attitude to work (25 percent), self-management (33 percent), business awareness (44 percent) and foreign language skills (49 percent). In addition, employers are increasingly going global. Hence, varied skills such as cross-cultural literacy, global awareness, communication, economics, and understanding the cost of doing business are required (Stewart, Wall, & Marciniec, 2016).

As demonstrated, employers look for young professionals' ability to display the competencies required to perform in the workplace, not how they conduct themselves outside the workplace. The discussion above explains why business coaching is the most utilised intervention instead of life coaching.

In a paper presented at an International Conference on Higher Education, Tamrat and Teferra (2019) further support the argument that this phenomenon is not unique to South Africa. Other African countries such as Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, and Ethiopia also have high graduate unemployment rates caused by the lack of skills and competencies required by prospective employers. There is an understanding of the need for business coaching to increase the employability of recent graduates. Organisations have implemented graduate internship (YPT) programmes structured to ensure maximum exposure to the organisation, leadership, values, and culture. These unit exposures include the business unit for which the YPT is in training—for example, Finance or Human Resources—and provide additional training and development opportunities to prepare graduates for the workplace. To increase the programme's effectiveness, coaches and mentors are assigned to assist with young professionals' development and growth (Mabiza, Mahlalela, & Mbohwa, 2017; Pheko & Molefhe, 2017).

The South African Graduate Development Agency (SAGDA), an institution formed by unemployed graduates in 1997, analysed graduates' employability and noted a gap between recently graduated students' skills and employers' actual requirements. Internship programmes would help bridge this gap, thus opening employment opportunities to recent graduates and increasing the possibilities of their absorption in those organisations after completion of the internship period.

Arguably, both employers who provide work opportunities and the graduates who take up these opportunities recognise the effects of having spent much of their lives in educational institutions. The transition from university to the corporate world is complicated. Business coaching, if not supplemented by life coaching, might not be sufficient.

1.3 South African context and coaching

Organisations use coaching in various situations, with this now an established practice, whether classified as business, leadership, or executive coaching. The

intention is to improve employee, team, and organisational performance in several ways, including but not limited to shortening the learning curve in a new organisation or function, career planning and boosting job satisfaction (Grover & Furnham, 2016).

The Young Professional in Training (YPT) Programme has been operational for more than 20 years in the organisation considered in this research project. It was previously termed a graduate in training (GIT) programme. The move from “graduate” (associated with a university education and a direct teacher-student relationship) involves changing the perception of the world of work and an adult-to-adult relationship by using the term “young professional”.

The programme aims to develop young professionals in non-technical fields by providing them with work experience and skills. It is anticipated that by the end of the programme, the trainee will have a solid foundation in a specific business area and will be able to describe specific skills and competencies attained in that field. Such trainees are not guaranteed full-time employment after the expiry of their contracts but may be employed by the organisation if there are vacancies in their host departments (Mabeba, 2019).

This context provided a background to the topic. The research study sought to discover whether the inclusion of life coaching can enhance business coaching for young professionals and would be beneficial overall. By the end of the development programme, the intention is that the organisation will have gained a well-balanced individual with high self-mastery who can effectively contribute to the organisation.

1.4 Research Problem

This research aimed to determine whether including life coaching in the business-coaching programme for young professionals would significantly impact and help them acquire the skills and competencies to deal with work and life challenges. Young professionals enter the development programme from varied social

backgrounds, from a highly complex social and economic South African environment to a similarly complex state-owned enterprise, a microcosm of the countrywide system. It may benefit both the young professional and the organisation if more effective capacitation mechanisms are implemented to ensure young professionals' success.

A perspective from the systemic, organisational, and individual levels, if provided, can highlight the impact these have on a young professional entering the world of work and so show why life coaching is essential.

From a systemic and individual perspective, the South African socio-economic landscape still requires many gainfully employed African professionals—including recently graduated young professionals—to deliver on the expectation of economic assistance for the extended family. Organisations should recognise that education and, ultimately, high-earning jobs compete with many other priorities in underprivileged households. Failure to access education will continue to relegate much of the population to low living standards. Tertiary education can open access to the labour market and provide an opportunity to break away from the replication of poverty and lack of advantage (Mdepa & Tshiwula, 2012).

Since most black candidates come from disadvantaged backgrounds, after three or four years of undergraduate study, their families and communities expect them to earn an income and "pay back" something to the families and communities invested in them. These expectations include helping with siblings and extended family's education, buying, or improving the family home, and contributing to the family's improved social and economic standing (Sadler & Erasmus, 2005). These family expectations may conflict with a student's ambitions, for example, wishing to proceed to a post-graduate degree.

From an organisational perspective, many black South African families are non-professional, mainly because they do not necessarily have the educational background or have limited access to organisations' upper levels. This lack of

exposure effectively limits understanding of the business environment's family or social context, which is still run mainly according to Western principles. Therefore, adults already in the business environment cannot serve as role models or adequately explain business requirements to a young black professional. Role-model behaviours include, for example, assertiveness without aggression, using language to express thinking with clarity, general organisational etiquette, and a general understanding of how business works (Pheko & Molefhe, 2017).

It is essential to understand these elements because they explain the young professional's seeming incapacity or lack of understanding of decorum or context. The organisation must consider young professionals' social environments and personal perspectives when developing programmes and content.

1.5 Research questions

1.5.1 Should life coaching be included as a supplement to pre-existing business coaching?

1.5.2 Is business coaching adequate for YPT development?

1.5.3 Do process owners of the YPT programme recognise the need for life coaching?

1.6 Significance of the study

The study is significant for determining whether life coaching is required to supplement business coaching in young professionals' development life cycle to facilitate their integration into the corporate environment after completing the development programme. Sparrow (2007) supports the argument that in the main, coaching in the workplace emphasises fundamental aspects of conduct, competence and the personal attributes needed to ensure optimum work performance and contribute to organisational success. The primary focus is on the success of the organisation. However, aspects of employees' lives outside

their work affect their output. If there is no concerted effort to address these aspects, the organisation might not realise prospective employees' full potential.

This study will also contribute to the development of an integrated curriculum. It adds to the development of specific life skills and competencies required for young professionals instead of relying solely on general studies of what organisations expect from their professionals. Such programmes are not new to the organisation.

Trainees are assigned mentors/coaches to provide meaningful work and ensure they gain total exposure in the organisation. They also attend additional developmental programmes, e.g., on personal branding and office etiquette, during this period. However, there is no formal or structured programme to develop them to effectively understand the organisational culture and what in many instances are the "unwritten rules of the workplace" and other work-life challenges. Thus, integrated with business coaching, formal life coaching would be appropriate to complete these young people's holistic development.

The study also hopes to prove or disprove the need to provide life coaching in a business context.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

- The research study focused on the inclusion of life coaching as a supplement to business coaching for young professionals in one State-Owned Company (SOC).
- The study included only the YPTs who participated in the programme in the five years between 2018 and 2020.
- The study excluded other types of trainees who did not participate in the Young Professionals in Training programme or Graduate in Training programme.
- The study excluded other coaching interventions.

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1.8 Definition of terms

Business Coaching: Coaching to enhance individual performance for effectiveness in the organisation can be done formally or informally for subordinates by either a manager or supervisor (Grover & Furnham, 2016).

Coachee: The person who receives coaching (Valerio & Deal, 2011).

Executive Coaching: This is a one-on-one relationship between a professional coach and an executive. Its purpose is to enhance the coachee's behavioural change through self-awareness and learning, thereby contributing to individual and organisational success (Passmore, 2013).

Graduate in training (Young Professional in Training)*:* A recently qualified university or technology graduate with a fixed-term contract to gain workplace exposure and experience in the organisation (Orrell, 2004).

Life Coaching: Life coaching is a structured coaching approach aimed at assisting individuals seeking to make significant changes and reach their personal goals by scrutinising and assessing their lives and exploring more personal issues, for example, work-life balance, managing finances and developing new career directions (Grant & Zackon, 2004).

1.9 Assumptions

- There was a willingness among the selected sample to participate, being honest and open in their responses.
- Programme owners would be willing to participate in the study.
- Life coaching should be supplementary to pre-existing business coaching.
- Business coaching is adequate for YPT development.

- Owners of the YPT programme recognise the need for life coaching.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter's literature review will expand on the research report's fundamental concepts, particularly business and life coaching, which are the key themes of this study. The literature review will include the various interventions related to coaching and the multiple categories of coaching. The study participants' social context is essential to explore where it significantly affects life and business coaching related to the trainees' workplace experience. The chapter will end with an overview of the literature review and attempt to answer the research question.

2.2 Background discussion

Recent graduates recognise the difficulty of adjusting to the corporate world after spending much of their lives in educational institutions. They require socialisation into the workplace to acquire the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours needed to participate effectively in an organisation (Eisner, 2010).

Business coaching and mentoring for these young people then becomes critical. However, business coaching without life coaching might be inadequate because the combination should positively benefit both the individual and the organisation to produce the intended outcomes.

Kuron et al. (2015) and Van Aardt (2012) argue that youth unemployment challenges in South Africa are closely related to young people's inability to obtain employment, owing to their lack of experience. Higher education institutions have concentrated on preparing students for a job's technical requirements rather than offering a holistic preparation for the business environment. Bhorat (2004) notes that many graduates have qualifications that are not sought by employers, in addition to exhibiting a lack of readiness for the workplace. At the same time, they lack the vital skills needed to handle workplace pressures and demands. Another

possible explanation is that while some graduates are still not competent to handle workplace demands, the scarcity of job opportunities adversely influences South Africa's economy. More jobs are being lost than created.

Another critical aspect is that these young people are part of Generation Y or Millennials, whom Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) define as a demographic group following Generation X (born 1966-1979). Solnet, Kralj, and Kandampully (2012) use a range between 1980 and 2000 to define the birth years of this generation. Their impact is growing fast: by 2025, Millennials will form 75 percent of the global workforce. There are arguments that these young people bring a different dynamic to the workplace, wholly different from the norm set by the Baby Boomers (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010). They expect teamwork across the various hierarchical levels, frequent and constructive feedback, work-life balance, openness to suggestions and expressing opinions, opportunities for leadership development, participation in charity and volunteering, as well as meeting their financial needs and job security (Myers & Sadaghiani, 2010; Ng, Schweitzer, & Lyons, 2010).

The discussion above acknowledges that although a lack of preparedness to enter the workplace leads to unemployment for recent graduates, other issues contribute to the phenomenon. However, this study is confined to business and life coaching as contributory factors in the research project.

2.3 Definition of coaching

The relevant literature explored the definition of coaching, noting that there is no universally accepted specification. However, a consistent thread recognises that any coaching intervention includes a relationship between coach, coachee and the organisation if it is happening in the workplace and, if not a workplace initiative, a relationship involving just the two individuals. The intention remains

the same: enabling the coachee to develop skills and competencies to cope within and outside the workplace (Jackson, 2005; Grant, Passmore, Cavanagh, & Parker, 2010; Hamlin, Ellinger, & Beattie, 2008).

The absence of a universal definition is attributed to the fact that although coaching has become a widely used intervention in many organisations, there is no statutory body in any country where coaching is regarded as a profession (Lane, Stelter, & Stout-Rostron, 2010). Examples of statutory bodies regulating coaching include the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) in the United Kingdom, while an example of a non-statutory regulatory body is the American Psychological Association (APA). However, there are non-statutory professional coaching institutions with global membership that have gained respect. These institutions provide accreditation for their members and apply rigorous standards and principles to maintain their statuses (Schutte, 2019).

The Association for Coaching (in the United Kingdom), the International Coaching Federation (ICF) in the United States of America, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA) are examples of reputable organisations that are widely recognised and accepted.

A common thread across the coaching fraternity refers to coaching as being primarily about the coach facilitating and creating an environment where the client is encouraged to make changes or achieve desired goals.

Ives (2008) provides a clear description below of the features common to most coaching approaches. These include:

- A systematic process designed to facilitate development (change), whether cognitive, emotional, or behavioural.
- Intended for a non-clinical population.

- An individualised, tailor-made approach.
- It aims to encourage coachees to take charge of their lives.
- Creates a relationship within which the client agrees to be held accountable for choices made.
- Designed to access the inner resourcefulness of the client, and build on the client's accumulated knowledge, experience, and intuition; and
- They are focused on achieving a clearly stated goal rather than problem analysis (Ives, 2008).

Ives (2008), quoting Whitmore (1992), a pioneer in the coaching field, illustrated the point made above by proposing that coaching is about assisting people in realising their potential and optimising their performance instead of telling them what to do.

Bresser and Wilson (2010) provide a similar definition, proposing that the purpose of coaching is to facilitate self-directed learning, empowering, improving performance, and enhancing personal growth.

The ICF (coaching federation organisation n.d.) also defines coaching as collaborating with clients in a challenging, probing, and inspiring process that enhances their personal and professional potential. It is about creating an environment for the client to thrive and attain desired goals. Moen and Skaalvik (2009) elaborate on the definition by stating that questioning and active listening skills are the fundamental processes in coaching that aim to achieve self-actualisation by facilitating learning and developmental processes to promote the wellbeing of the coachee while keeping the coachee actively involved in the process.

2.4 What coaching is not.

No consideration of coaching can be complete without briefly discussing what coaching is not. Coaching is neither therapy nor mentoring. Bresser and Wilson (2010) provide a clear explanation of the differences, stating that coaching is not therapy, focusing therapy generally on an interpersonal health challenge or an identifiable health issue that interferes with a client's level of life-functioning. Therapy looks at past issues and seeks to repair the damage of the past. In contrast, orientation in coaching is forward-looking, focusing on goals, unexploited potential and identifying the visualisation of success for someone who seeks to obtain fulfilment in life and work.

Although supporting the argument that coaching is not therapy, De Haan, Grant, Burger, and Eriksson (2016) argue that both belong to the class of a helping relationship, focusing on goals, untapped potential, and critical success factors in someone who seeks to obtain fulfilment in life and work.

Similarly, as with the discussion on coaching versus therapy, it is vital to highlight the similarities and differences between coaching and mentoring. Mertz (2004) describes a mentor as someone who is available for the performer to learn from, while a coach is someone with whom the client learns. The coach concentrates on helping the employee learn how to achieve more. The mentor aims to be available for the employee to use as a resource (Maclennan, 2017).

Khakwani, Aslam, Azhar, and Mateen (2012) offer a similar perspective on the difference between coaching and mentoring. Coaching is seen as a tailored intervention to develop the individual's professional and skill needs. Mentoring in an organisational context is a practice where mentors always help their protégés navigate the work environment and improve performance on challenging assignments that are important for their career development (Jenkins, 2013). A successful mentoring relationship tends to develop interpersonal relationships.

As can be deduced from the discussion above, there could be a great temptation for coaches to unintentionally veer into these areas while thinking that they are still in a coaching discussion. This deviation could leave a lasting impression on the coachee's wellbeing and the credibility of coaching as a development tool. Overall, the aim is for the coachee to become self-sufficient by internalising the coaching tools and techniques.

2.5 Coaching categories

The discussion above sought to explain what coaching is not. However, it is necessary to delve into the various approaches to coaching and identify the similarities and differences relating to these concepts. This discussion will further explain why life coaching as a supplement to business coaching is the preferred combination of coaching intervention in the development programme for young professionals in training (YPTs).

The primary focus of coaching is on facilitating goal achievement for the client in both work and personal life. The focus is on the coachee, with the coach's role being to facilitate the client's development based on the primary stated needs (Khakwani et al., 2012).

Bond and Seneque (2012) argue that broad coaching categories are utilised in the various literature relating to coaching, depending on either the organisation or the individual. These categories include coaching, executive coaching, business coaching and life coaching. However, the only significant differences between these categories relate to the coaching intervention's focus and emphasis (Ives, 2008).

It is crucial to start the discussion by briefly describing the various concepts and processes that impact coaching discussions, literature, and academic settings. These concepts are particularly pertinent because there is a constant reminder of what coaching is and what it is not and how coaches must be cautious and

safeguard against moving into other areas, such as therapy and mentoring (Bachkirova, 2007).

2.6 Life Coaching

According to Grant (2003), a prolific contributor in the coaching industry, life coaching has grown substantially since 1998, with the appetite for coaching growing significantly.

Grant (2003) defines coaching as a systematic process in which both coach and coachee work as partners to obtain results that will enhance the coachee's life experience and goal attainment in the personal and professional life of a typical, non-clinical client. A skills shortage has consistently dogged the South African business landscape and made it difficult to achieve growth targets and, thus, the ability to compete in the global market (Kock & Burke, 2008).

This inability to achieve targets highlights the need for a skills development strategy to improve the country's skills shortage (Ngetich & Moll, 2013).

The coaching relationship's critical aspect is that the coach is a facilitator while the coachee is responsible for goal attainment. What is also significant is that the relationship is not therapeutic. This further emphasises the difference between coaching and therapy.

Williams (2012) offers another perspective when he compares life coaching to a computer operating system. Although the interaction is at one level, the whole system is working below the surface. Similarly, life coaching works with the whole person, particularly in a whole-person, client-centred coaching approach. Williams (2012) also argues that while coaching has grown to incorporate various specialised applications, any specific focus of a coaching relationship has a connection to other areas of a person's life.

Williams (2012) further posits that whether the coaching discussion is about career transition or leadership development, consideration of the coachee's personal life, significant relationships, personal wellness, or stress levels could and should come up in the conversation. Coaches should be willing to open such conversations.

Sparrow (2007) suggests that life coaching with a focused role provides an opportunity for making sense of one's life and the fundamental values and meaning expressed through choice and action within business coaching.

Sparrow (2007) further suggests that this more embracing form of coaching can open the conversation about how one's values match or mismatch those of the organisation in which the coachee is working and the personal and organisational impact of that match or mismatch.

The coaching intervention's crucial aspect is that it facilitates all aspects of an individual's life, usually outside the workplace: the organisation's benefit is not the highest priority (Green, Grant, & Rynsaardt, 2007).

Popescul (2017) provides another perspective on life coaching, where she proposes that life coaching offers solutions ranging from minor personal improvements to a complete life change. According to Popescul (2017), depending on what an individual seeks, with life coaching, these changes can vary from work performance to changing the workplace altogether, moving to a different field or taking up an entrepreneurial path in a field the individual has favoured since childhood.

From the arguments above, we can deduce that life coaching is significantly different from other coaching types because this intervention intends to develop the coachee beyond the workplace.

2.7 Business Coaching

Kahn (2011) and Stout-Rostron (2014) state that business coaching is a constructive engagement and dialogue with employees or members of any institution to inspire positive actions to promote success in the organisation. Kahn (2011) and Stout-Rostron (2014) further state that the relationship between coach and client focuses on achieving positive results for the individual, team, and organisation.

The above definition does not differentiate business coaching from any other type of coaching in organisations or describe how it conducts such coaching. For example, Grant (2013) and Scoular (2012) describe it as coaching for performance or results that can be undertaken formally or informally by a manager or supervisor for subordinates, using cognitive and behavioural techniques to achieve specific objectives to improve organisational effectiveness.

The definition by both Grant (2013) and Scoular (2012) above resonates with the business coaching intervention conducted for YPTs because the expectation is for them to contribute effectively in the functional departments to which they are assigned.

Although the focus in these examples of business coaching refers mainly to the organisation from a corporate perspective, where the relationship is employer-employee-organisation, it extends to where a coach works with businesses, owner/managers, and employees to achieve their personal and business-related goals (King & Eaton, 1999).

2.8 Executive Coaching

According to Sherman and Freas (2004) executive coaching's growing popularity responds to compelling demands from organisations where the need to maintain a competitive advantage against global competition requires effective leadership.

During the early 1970s, organisations fixated on efficient business processes as the most critical component for improved productivity and profitability (Ghemawat, 2002). However, it became evident that increasing globalisation required a different set of skills and competencies, mainly communication and relationship-building, to influence and energise employees and assist them in dealing with change, adapting to rapid change, and managing diversity (Mdluli & Makhupe, 2017).

To illustrate the growing trend of executive coaching throughout the world, Page and de Haan (2014), in the 2012 *International Coaching Federation Global Coaching Study*, wrote that the number of professional coaches stood at about 46 700 and was growing (De Haan, Nieß, & Researchers, 2020).

Sherman and Freas (2004), writing in the Harvard Business Review, confirm how widespread coaching is as a development programme. It is a $1 billion industry in the United States alone and was valued at $2 billion worldwide.

Underhill et al. (2009) further expand on the reasons for executive coaching, writing that the ever-increasing pace of change requires organisational leaders to develop quickly and in the context of their current jobs. Coaching became a preferred intervention, offering an individualised development and organisations opting for in-house coaching, inspiring managers to train themselves to deliver effectively (Milner, McCarthy, & Milner, 2018). Competent leadership is a crucial strategy for high-performing organisations, and the requisite competencies can be developed through coaching. Berglas (2002), in his article on executive coaching, argues that the business priority is profitability and executive coaching is a necessary tool to assist the leadership team in increasing performance and organisational effectiveness.

Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) elaborate on this definition, defining executive coaching as a formal relationship where the coach has the requisite skills to create measurable change with a senior employee in the organisation.

The coach must provide feedback, create behaviour modification opportunities, and make the coachee accountable for these changes.

Grant (2014), who has contributed many articles on coaching, adds another dimension, stating that organisations increasingly use executive coaching as a critical executive development process when undergoing change, such as rationalising, mergers and acquisitions. Grant (2014) further proclaims that these organisations require senior managers and leaders to manage change, performance, and culture in the changed organisation.

A growing number of organisations now acknowledge the potential benefits of workplace coaching as a key human capital development tool for mitigating the human capital risk associated with workforce changes and human resource management challenges, such as talent development, retention, and succession planning (Young & Hexter, 2011). In addition, workplace coaching is a critical programme to invest in to achieve success, especially in highly competitive markets, whether it is about product, service or labour for organisations that desire to succeed (Cascio, Boudreau, & Church, 2017).

In this discussion, the common thread is that executive coaching's primary rationale is to enable senior leadership in the organisation to acquire the skills to effectively optimise individual and organisational performance and enhance their ability to operate in environments that are complex, volatile, and unpredictable (Kovacs & Corrie, 2017).

Concept	Author	Findings
Coaching	Grant (2003), Jackson (2005), Hamlin, Ellinger, and Beattie, (2008), Grant, Passmore, Cavanagh, and Parker (2010), and King and Eaton (1999).	The primary focus of coaching is on facilitating goal achievement for the client in both work and personal life.
Life Coaching	Williams (2012), Green, Grant, and Rynsaardt (2007), Popescul (2017), Sparrow (2007), and Boysen-Rotelli (2021).	Life coaching is about coaching the whole person to set and achieve personal goals. Achievement of these goals provides an environment and opportunities for the individual to thrive.
Business Coaching	Kahn (2011), Stout-Rostron (2014), Scoular (2012), and King and Eaton (1999).	Constructive engagement and dialogue with employees or members of any institution to inspire positive actions to promote success in the organisation.
Executive Coaching	Sherman and Freas (2004), Grant (2014), Ghemawat (2002), (Mdluli and Makhupe (2017), Underhill et al. (2009), Kovacs and Corrie (2017), Milner, McCarthy, and Milner (2018), and Berglas (2002).	Globalisation which impacts competitiveness and rapid organisation change requiring skills and competencies to manage change and driving the need for executive coaching.

	Cascio, Boudreau, and Church (2017), and Young and Hexter (2011).	Coaching used as a talent management tool and for human capital development.
	Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001).	Organisational effectiveness, profitability, and efficiency.

From the literature review, it can be argued that executive coaching is only concerned with organisational goal attainment and does not include any aspects of other coaching categories, for example, career or life coaching. However, in most instances, the coach is asked to advise on different parts of the coachee's life (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

The literature further indicates that because there is variation among the various coaching categories, emphasis on the coaching must vary based on the primary client. For example, in executive coaching, although the relationship is among three players (organisation, coach and coachee), the client is the organisation because the intent relates to organisational effectiveness and leadership capability (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001).

Overall, the distinction between the various categories is determined by the client's needs and focus.

2.9 The need for graduate training programmes

Boninelli (2004) and Pop and Barkhuizen (2010) argue that organisations spend enormous amounts trying to attract and retain key talent. One mechanism used is to invest in internship programmes for high-calibre graduates. However, these organisations cannot utilise such graduates effectively because of their lack of practical skills and experience. In addition, other companies often poach suitably

skilled employees because of the skills shortage; new graduates lack the requisite skills; and employers face the challenge of providing support and promoting appropriate forms of work experience for these recent graduates (Pop & Barkhuizen, 2010).

To further illustrate that graduate development programmes have been around for a while, Thom (2014) recounts how Germany introduced the first graduate trainee programmes designed to create a pool of well-qualified and highly motivated corporate professionals after the Second World War. These graduates were developed to assume management and leadership positions and generate sustainability for Germany.

Dodge and McKeough (2003) further explained that an internship, as an undertaking, focuses on providing real work experience for recently graduated individuals whose priority has been getting through university: such individuals lack the practical experience required in the world of work. Dodge and McKeough (2003) also explain that internships represent an opportunity to bring in bright and energetic people for an employer and are needed to add new talent to the organisation.

Mabiza et al. (2017) provide a concise explanation of the purpose of graduate programmes, this being to allow the graduates to gain work experience in a professional environment to enhance academic and professional knowledge with clear objectives, including:

- Providing graduates with the opportunity to obtain work.
- Experience in the relevant field.
- Providing work exposure to graduates.
- Creating a pool of skills sets readily available for permanent employment.
- Reducing the number of unemployed graduates.
- Assessing a graduate’s ability as an employee; and

- Graduates' development and increasing their confidence level.

In context, the political, social, and economic environment in South Africa under apartheid and afterwards provided a backdrop that made graduate development programmes essential to ensure a sustainable economy.

McGrath and Akoojee (2007) attribute the skills shortage in South Africa to the apartheid system that intentionally excluded black people from participating equally at political, economic, and social levels, thereby denying them access to appropriate and equal skills development programmes and initiatives required to alleviate the skills shortage.

McGrath and Akoojee (2007) further quote Erasmus and Breier (2009) as blaming the racially divided education system under apartheid and the flawed education system that fails to generate the necessary skills for the country's economy. This situation is worsened by the outflow of skilled professionals to other parts of the world, including the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia.

Breier and Erasmus (2009) further concurred by blaming skills shortages on an education system that still suffers from decades of neglect and dysfunction dating back to apartheid, when Black people were intentionally subjected to systemic educational disadvantage. They also point to the flawed education system that does not generate the skills necessary to grow the country's economy.

In essence, Breier and Erasmus (2009) believe that both the quantity and quality of education provided to most South Africans in the past lacked substance.

This inability to achieve targets and meet the global economic demands, together with increasing poverty, highlighted the need for a development strategy to improve the country's skills shortage (Ngetich & Moll, 2013).

2.10 The South African legislative framework contributing to YPT programmes post-1990.

The intent behind the introduction of such labour legislation as the 1995 Labour Relations Act (South Africa, 1995) and the 1997 Basic Conditions of Employment Act (South Africa, 1997) was to redefine the South African labour environment, implement progressive labour conditions and enable greater participation of most of the population in the economy and improve access to the workplace.

The 1998 Employment Equity (EE) Act (South Africa, 1998a) was designed to develop and sustain principles of equity, anti-discrimination, and diversity across the business landscape and to ensure organisations reflected the diversity of South African society while contributing to maximising the potential of employees.

This Act also requires organisations to create and maintain a work environment that supports the attraction, development, advancement, and retention of black people (African, Coloured and Asian), including white women and people with disabilities (South Africa, 1998a). In addition, organisations are obliged to employ young graduates to meet their equity targets. In the beginning, the focus was mainly on numerical representation (Cédiey (2001).

The EE Act (South Africa, 1998a) together with the affirmative action measures did not stimulate strong commitment to applying the obligatory initiatives and prescripts of the Act, nor was it regarded as a strategic imperative by business; as a result, it became a matter of legal compliance rather than substantive compliance (Thomas, 2002).

The 1998 Skills Development Act (South Africa, 1998b) was promulgated to establish national development and skills programmes across various sectors. This legislation was designed to ensure that structured learning was institutionalised and that all employers would create developmental opportunities for employees and thus increase the skills and competencies of the workforce (Steyn, 2004).

Organisations have travelled a long way in embracing the transformation imperatives, and development programmes have contributed to integrating these young professionals into the workplace.

2.11 Millennials in the workplace

Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) believe that the Millennials' workplace concept has gained momentum in recent years. By 2025, Millennials will constitute a surprising 75 percent of the global workforce. Moreover, these young people bring a different workplace dynamic, which completely differs from the norm previously set by the baby boomers (Pinzaru, Mihalcea, & Zbuchea, 2017).

The Millennials expect teamwork across the various hierarchical levels, frequent and constructive feedback, work-life balance, openness to suggestions and expressing opinions, opportunities for leadership development, participation in charity and volunteering, and meeting their financial needs and job requirements (Stewart, Oliver, Cravens, & Oishi, 2017).

Several research studies have stated that higher learning institutions increasingly identify the need to improve their graduates' employability to bridge the gap between academic studies and business requirements (Helyer & Lee, 2014; Humburg, Van der Velden, & Verhagen, 2013; Nauffal & Skulte-Ouaiss, 2018).

These graduates need to include soft knowledge, skills, and attributes, such as communication skills, emotional intelligence, and teamwork, enabling them to perform successfully in the workplace. In this context, training programmes have been in existence for many years in numerous South African companies and government departments (Garwe, 2014; Jonck, 2014; Neale-Shutte & Nel, 2013).

2.12 Conclusion

A considerable amount of relevant academic literature deals with coaching and various approaches to coaching. Most significantly, research and scholarly articles focus on executive coaching and the positive impact this category of coaching may have on effective leadership. However, it is equally important to recognise employees' critical contributions below the executive level and how the combination of life and business coaching could benefit the organisation by developing the individual.

Business coaching is generally referred to as workplace coaching by supervisors or managers. The coach's role is clearly defined: to help develop the coachee within the clearly defined task and output-driven coaching parameters relating to the functional department objectives.

A possible limitation of this approach is that unless the department has sufficient capacity, there is insufficient time to take a trainee through the development journey and identify other aspects of the employee's life that might affect future contributions. Trainees tend to be thrown in at the deep end and are supposed to sink or swim.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology adopted.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

South African organisations such as the First Rand Group, Sasol and the South African Revenue Service have highly successful, although very different, coaching programmes. They publicise them as exposure and developmental programmes, but employers' expectations are high, and they demand strong participation and output from trainees.

A typical example of the responsibilities of a graduate trainee is presented below, using an example the Future League Graduate Programme that appeared on the First National Bank website (FNB's Future League Programme, n.d.):

- Deliver exceptional service that exceeds customers' expectations through proactive, innovative, and appropriate solutions.
- The provision of efficient execution of roles and responsibilities through careful and timeous planning, reporting, and updating of all related information in the vital role of learning.
- Participate in the innovation process in the business and contribute toward innovations against objectives.
- Participation in knowledge-sharing and projects to maximise the skills required for the role and relevant career exploration by executing all activities required to be efficient and successful.
- Manage graduate development plan by the completion of training assignments.
- Manage graduate development plan to increase own competencies and skills by the attendance of training.
- Manage own development to increase own competencies; and

- Live the values of the business by demonstrating and displaying the values required in the business (FNB's Future League Programme, n.d.).

The South African Graduate Development Association (SAGDA), an institution formed by unemployed graduates in 1997, analysed graduates' employability and discovered a gap like that identified in the research studies above. This analysis claimed that graduates had difficulty accessing the job market because of the gap between what universities prepared them for, as against the type of graduate wanted by companies (SAGDA's Our Programmes, n.d.).

As a result, SAGDA formed partnerships with companies for internship programmes designed to help bridge the gap while offering graduates employment opportunities and increasing the possibilities of being absorbed into those organisations after completing their internships (SAGDA's Sponsor an Intern, n.d.).

The South African Graduate Employers Association (SAGEA), an organisation whose primary purpose is to link and develop the graduate recruitment industry, conducted the SAGEA Employer Benchmarking Survey 2019 across 94 of the organisations employing graduates in the country. The survey results showed that these organisations focused on developing graduates into leadership positions and mitigating the skills shortage experienced by many businesses. However, while these organisations received many applications, there was often a shortage of candidates with the right skills and qualifications (SAGEA's Benchmark and candidate insights, n.d.)

SAGDA prides itself on interacting with more than 10 000 graduates, having trained, and developed more than 12 000 graduates, successfully placing 9 000 into work experience programmes and securing a 45 percent direct retention rate through contract extensions and permanent employment (SAGDA's Our Programmes, n.d.).

A contrary argument advanced by Van der Berg and Van Broekhuizen (2012) suggested that graduate unemployment in South Africa is relatively low in the international context and that there is little cause for concern about broad trends in graduate unemployment. However, this view does not consider the impact of joblessness on unemployed graduates who spent three years or more at a university, hoping to become economically active and contribute to society and family. In addition, there is the socio-economic burden posed to the country's development priorities (SAGDA's Sponsor an Intern, n.d.).

3.2 Research Approach

This study's approach involved qualitative research, which takes an interpretive, real-life approach to its subject matter. A qualitative research study attempts to make sense of, or understand, incidents regarding the meanings people bring to them. The qualitative approach differs from the quantitative because it relies on linguistic rather than numerical data and uses meaning-based rather than statistical forms of data analysis. This method measures things in words instead of measuring them with numbers (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

Qualitative research accepts that there are different ways of making sense of the world. Thus, a key concern in qualitative research is discovering how meaning is understood by research subjects and the subject's view of the world rather than the researcher's worldview. This approach can be described as a qualitative interpretive approach (Elliott & Timulak, 2005).

3.3 Research Design

When speaking of qualitative research, the inclination is to think that there is only one kind. However, multiple qualitative methods are classifiable into five groups:

ethnographic, narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, and case study (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

A narrative is an interpretive approach in the qualitative research paradigm. Interpretive research attempts to enter the social world of subjects to gain understanding. Participants will share their story through semi-structured interviews, allowing them to provide individually focused, qualitative data and expand on their life experiences. The simple narrative approach takes a small number of research participants' spoken or written texts or stories for analysis. This study used semi-structured interviews to gather focused, qualitative, textual data (Creswell & Poth, 2017).

This method offered a balance between the flexibility of an open-ended interview and the focus of a structured ethnographic survey. The study employed semi-structured interviews with several respondents, with all the main questions asked, and similar wording used across interviews so that the data thus obtained remained consistent.

3.4 Advantages

Using the narrative form, with a combination of semi-structured interviews, allows a respondent to provide information with minimal restriction. It also allows the interviewer to build rapport and thus enable the respondent to feel at ease. Where necessary, the interviewer can ask more questions for understanding and clarity. The use of semi-structured interviews contributed to the objectivity and credibility of the information obtained.

3.5 Disadvantages

The process of transcribing data can be onerous and time-consuming. The researcher could also miss important information by not asking the right questions. In coding and identifying themes, researcher bias could creep in, with a researcher omitting information deemed unfavourable.

3.6 Data collection methods

The first step in collecting data is to obtain formal approval from the university to research the chosen organisation. Then, the researcher used this approval letter to gain formal approval from the company to conduct research and locate and approach the study's proposed population.

Data collection was carried out mostly through telephonic interviews using the Microsoft Teams application were necessary, as the interviews took place during a government-imposed lockdown period necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, very few face-to-face interviews were conducted.

A semi-structured interview guide containing open-ended questions allows participants to tell their stories as comprehensively as they wish while providing the researcher with an opportunity to probe for in-depth understanding without making the interview appear like an investigation (Doody & Noonan, 2013).

3.7 Population

This study's population was drawn from the young professionals in training whom the organisation had contracted for 2018 to 2020. Other participants included were former YPTs before 2018, to whom the organisation had given permanent contracts. In addition, department managers or consultants who manage the YPT programme within the organisation and the coaches/mentors of the YPTs whose

role is to coach the YPTs on technical skills in their assigned departments have participated in the research study.

3.8 Sample and sampling method

Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) argue that data collection is essential when undertaking research, contributing to a better understanding of a theoretical framework. This makes obtaining data, and from whom the data is collected, even more critical. They further state that inadequately collected data will render the analysis pointless and a wasted effort. In this context, purposive sampling becomes the chosen method.

This study used a purposive sampling methodology. This methodology does not require a set number of participants but groups participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question. This method's choice was deliberate because the study was not intended for generalisation across all business-coaching experiences (Sharma, 2017).

Respondent type	**Number sampled**
YPTs in the programme from 2018 to 2020	8
YPTs from before 2018 who are now permanent employees	8
Process owners of the YPT programme	4
Total	20

Table 1: Profile of Respondents

3.9 The Research Instrument

The primary research instrument was a semi-structured interview to obtain as much information as possible about personal experiences of business coaching and further explore whether the inclusion of life coaching would be beneficial to supplement business coaching.

The instrument contained biographical data, including respondents' personal information, confirmation of their contract status and the functional area to which they were allocated. Follow-up questions depended on the responses provided by an interviewee.

3.10 Procedure for data collection

Once approval had been obtained from both Wits Business School and the organisation in question (which included the department responsible for the YPT programme), the researcher contacted prospective interviewee telephonically to discuss its purpose, the approach to research, and gain their consent to participate. Interviews of not more than 60 minutes each were conducted during working hours using a semi-structured interview schedule.

3.11 Data analysis and interpretation

This research used a qualitative thematic analysis methodology. This methodology required reading through the transcripts more than once to understand the data and establish the codes. Then, the researcher clustered the codes to ascertain themes. Development of themes is a common feature of

qualitative data analysis, involving a systematic search for patterns to generate full descriptions capable of shedding light on the phenomenon under investigation. This approach identifies commonalities and differences in qualitative data before focusing on relationships between different parts of the data and drawing meaningful and explanatory conclusions grouped around themes (Walliman, 2017).

Joffe (2012) states that a good thematic analysis should reflect a balanced view of the data and its meaning within a particular context of thoughts. For this reason, most of the data must be presented and the text clusters supporting the researcher's arguments derived from it.

3.12 Limitations of the study

- The study was conducted in one operating division of the business and not across the whole company, so it might need to be expanded to other business divisions to enable better understanding.
- Respondents might be inclined to provide only positive experiences, having been given an opportunity for business coaching in the organisation and wary of discussing the programme's fewer positive aspects.
- Awareness of researcher bias and its potential impact on the study.
-

3.13 Transferability and dependability

Transferability in qualitative research is synonymous with generalisability or external validity in quantitative research. Put simply, transferability implies that results obtained from the research study can apply to similar situations or individuals (Burchett, Mayhew, Lavis, & Dobrow, 2012). With reliability, the

question is: If the work is repeated, in the same context, with the same methods and with the same participants, will similar results be obtained? In this case, the study is limited to a specific and small population: it is hard to show that conclusions and findings could be applied to other situations and populations.

The research was exploratory, testing whether life coaching should or should not be offered as a supplement to business coaching. The study could be replicated in another setting, and the results could be similar or different.

3.14 Credibility

Credibility deals with data accurately reflecting the observed social phenomena (Kemparaj & Chavan, 2013). In this case, consistent self-checking, used in conjunction with audio recorders and interview guides, will be essential techniques for establishing credibility.

3.15 Ethical Considerations

Patel (2012) asserts that ethics in research has been a point of discussion for a long time. However, an ethical approach, which the researcher must consistently maintain throughout any study, is always required.

Critical elements that require serious reflection include maintaining confidentiality, respect, dignity, and non-manipulation of participants. These elements are essential because the balance of power is tilted towards the researcher as the latter fully understands the study's intentions. Using semi-structured interviews involves probing for information, and respondents might inadvertently provide information that could jeopardise their position or present them negatively.

The interviewer must exercise judgement on how the information is used and divulged. Other issues to think through include minimising the risk of harm, protecting interviewees' information, and ensuring that interviewees are sufficiently informed about the study's purpose and how the information provided will be used (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2000). These considerations were given priority during the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the research findings in the context of the relevant literature. The semi-structured interview data was obtained from the research study participants, comprising current YPTs, past YPTs and process owners of the YPT programme. The proposed number of interviews was 20. However, only 16 respondents participated in the research because of various work environment limitations.

Respondent type	Code Name	Sample	Respondents
YPTs in the programme from 2018 to 2020	CYPT	8	6
YPTs before 2018 and now permanent employees	PYPT	8	7
Process owners of the YPT programme	PO	4	3
Total		**20**	**16**

Table 2: Profile of Respondents

This research aimed to address three research questions:

1. Should life coaching be included as a supplement to pre-existing business coaching?

2. Is business coaching adequate coaching for YPT development?

3. Do the process owners of the YPT programme recognise the need for life coaching?

Each research question had specific interview questions, and after that, themes were extracted and presented under each research question, followed by a discussion of the findings.

Research Question 1: Life coaching as a supplement to pre-existing business coaching

Q2 and Q4 – “What type of coaching was received?”

Q7 – “If you had an opportunity to design the business coaching aspect of your development programme, what and how would you do it?”

Q5 – “Who does the coaching?”

The main themes extracted were.

- Structure of the programme
- Parties responsible for the training
- Content of the programme

Research Question 2: Business coaching as adequate coaching for YPT development

Q1 – “Describe your experience of the YPT programme.”

Q6 – “What are the expected outcomes of the programme?”

The main themes extracted were.

- Perceived satisfaction
- Challenges experienced.
- Expected outcomes.

Research Question 3: Process Owners' recognition of the need for life coaching

The main themes extracted were:

- Embracing Diversity
- Self-confidence
- Work-life balance

4.2 Thematic analysis of data

From the thematic analysis conducted on the semi-structured interview data for each participant group, extracted themes are presented under each research question, followed by a discussion of the research questions' findings.

The study includes verbatim responses to illustrate and add contextual understanding to the themes. The questionnaire was designed to respond to the research questions, and themes were extracted based on participants' responses.

4.3 Life coaching as a supplement to pre-existing business coaching

Four of the interview questions were used for the thematic analysis of this research question:

Q2 and Q4 – "What type of coaching was received?"

Q7 – "If you had an opportunity to design the business coaching aspect of your development programme, what and how would you do it?

Q5 – "Who does the coaching?"

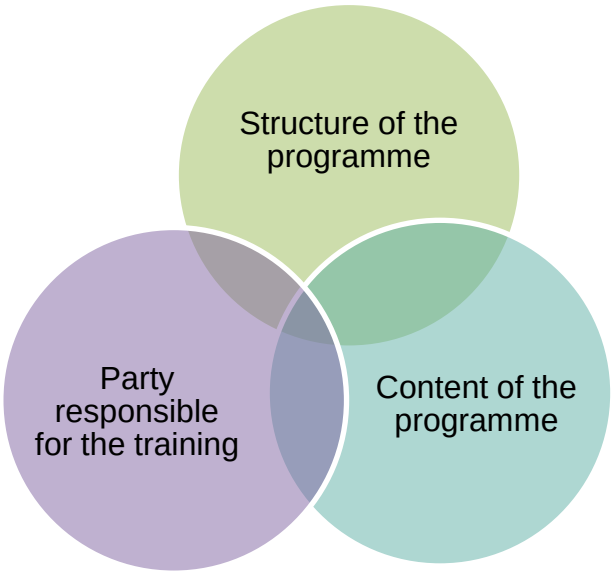


Figure 4.1 Themes: Should life coaching be a supplement to business coaching?

From these questions, three main themes were extracted.

4.3.1. Structure of the programme

Current YPTs

For the most part, CYPTs indicate that they follow no formal structure or programme. One CYPT also said no assessments were done, contributing to the perception that the YPT programme is not formal.

> *CYPT3: "I have been crying about this from day one. There is no proper planning for us."*

Based on the above, and given their direct experience in the programme, CYPTs suggest that properly structured coaching programmes be implemented.

> *CYPT3: "Plan the programme before you get a YPT."*

One suggested that the YPT programme should be person-specific – designed for each YPT based on a need's assessment. Another suggested that additional training should be provided if needed or when requested.

> *CYPT2: "Do a needs analysis on what type of coach a YPT needs, e.g., business coaching or life coaching."*

Two CYPTs considered it essential for the company to clarify and manage expectations related to the programme. They suggest the company should clearly state the full scope of duties for the incoming young professional:

> *CYPT1: "Candidate needs to understand the full scope of duties, clarify expectations. Clarify expectations of that person and explain that you will not be busy the whole day."*

Two CYPTs identified the need for coaching agreements and that the company should put reviews in place. One CYPT suggested that the company benchmark the programme for best practices against other YPT programmes.

> *CYPT4: "There must be a structure to the programme, and reviews must be done."*

> *CYPT5: "Make sure there are reviews and that they are mandatory."*

Past YPTs

Like the CYPTs, the PYPTs indicated that they followed no formal programme. One PYPT specifically mentioned that no assessments were required.

> *PYPT6: "Initially unplanned, no formal structure, no mentor under HR, no order or plan."*

PYPT7: "No systematic approach to a particular graduate, you get sent to whoever needs the work done."

Given their experiences, most PYPTs would like to see the YPT programmes structured and appropriately implemented. One PYPT suggested that expectations by, and of, the YPT need to be clarified and managed appropriately. One PYPT also suggested individual-specific coaching based on needs assessments.

PYPT2: "YPTs are different and cannot use a blanket approach."

One PYPT highlighted the need to conduct proper assessments.

PYPT7: "I only relied on six months' assessments."

Process Owners

The POs believed their programmes are structured, whether in timelines, such as 12-to-24-month programmes, or the types of training received – internal and external. However, one PO believed the company implements the programme inconsistently. One PO mentioned that no portfolio of evidence was required, although another PO said feedback from peers and management formed part of the assessment.

PO3: "The programme is inconsistently done – company intention is clear, but implementation is inconsistent."

PO2: "24-month programme with the purpose of skills-transfer aligned to the government Youth Development Programme."

In agreement with CYPT and PYPT, the three POs recommend that the company establish a good programme, to include, as mentioned by one PO, proper support by the company for mentors or coaches.

> *PO2: "Structure approach and provide workplace readiness programme."*

A fundamental change in the programme structure that POs would like to see is better on-boarding and work-readiness training of YPTs. As with the CYPTs and PYPTs, one PO suggested that an individual's needs assessment should form the basis for a YPT programme and coaching.

> *PO3: "Do a needs analysis and get clear reasons on why you are getting a request for a YPT, then do a curriculum design, then walk the journey with them."*

One PO mentioned the need for a proper exit strategy for the YPTs aligned with the National Youth Development Programme (NYDP) to increase employment likelihood after completing the YPT programme.

> *PO3: "There must be an exit strategy after the programme and increase the partnership alignment with National Youth Development programme for future placements of the YPTs."*

4.3.2 Parties responsible for training/coaching

This term refers to the individuals responsible for the development programme of the trainee, including business coaching. The intention is to ensure that an employee with the right skills is accountable for the trainee's development within the 24-month programme.

Current YPTs

Two of the CYPTs mention that their line managers were their coaches. However, most interview data refer not to coaches but rather to interviewees' term mentors. Mentors are spread across different departments and are responsible for either hard- or soft-skills training, a fact mentioned by three CYPTs. One CYPT mentioned that the Learning and Development Department is responsible for hard skills or work-related training and the manager.

> *CYPT3: "Not have an assigned coach – we are technical people, and most of the people do not have capacity."*

> *CYPT4: "Not assigned a mentor, mixed for the first three months – just threw a lot of work at me."*

> *CYPT2: "Mentoring based on different departments."*

Past YPTs

As with the CYPTs, mentors rather than coaches were used, but one CYPT did have a line manager-coach. There is a lack of clarity about separating the roles of coaches and mentors. Mentors are in different departments and responsible for either hard- or soft-skills training. One PYPT said the whole team acted as coaches; thus, only one coach was allocated. Furthermore, one PYPT indicated there was no coach at all, and only the assessment practitioner guided assessments.

PYPT1: "Had no formal allocated coaches – all the people I reported to for work, typically line managers and coached based on performance outputs."

PYPT4: "One individual in the team was the coach, but the other people in the team were also coaching."

PYPT5: "The whole team on the work that needs to be done. Gave advice and told me to go back to school and get certified. They allowed me to make mistakes and gave advice."

Process Owners

Two POs indicated that the line managers acted as coaches, and one PO said the company does not do coaching but provides mentorship and supervision.

PO1: "There is no coaching, it is only mentoring and supervisory."

Mentors can be from different departments and provide hard or soft skills. One PO mentioned that the company uses external providers to ensure the YPT receives the necessary guidance and training to register as a professional in the engineering field. In contrast, internal providers are for work-related or technical skills training.

Another PO mentioned that mentors are used for gaining the necessary technical skills for professional registration, whereas other mentors are used for life skills training and general support.

PO2: "Internal coaches – line managers, supervisors and discipline experts."

4.3.3. Content of the programme

Current YPTs

CYPTs undergo on-the-job training, which is work-related. Some CYPTs mention that they get to apply what they learned at university. From what the CYPTs said in their interviews, their programme contained training on hard skills, technical and work-related skills, and soft skills such as business etiquette, ethics, how to conduct oneself in a business environment, presentation, and communication skills.

CPYT3: "Learning and getting experience – making theory work to connect with some projects. Experience in the shutdown of the railway line for maintenance work."

CYPT4: "Career coaching most where HR work is done. Coaching on what I have learnt, what to do in meetings, learning the SAP system, understanding the codes, mini-assignments."

CPYT2: "Mentors in the Office of the Chief on how to express yourself, on how to conduct yourself. In the Learning and Development Department based on tasks and job."

One CYPT mentioned that team building was needed, and another CYPT felt it would be ideal to receive training on the complete organisation, not just specific

job-related aspects. Finally, one CYPT would like to see some space given in the YPT programme for innovation by the YPTs.

> *CYPT1: "There must be compulsory team building. You must be taught about the business, structure, vision to execute the mandate properly instead of just focusing on YPT training."*

> *CYPT4: "YPTs need space and opportunities to be innovative and use ideas – sometimes there is nothing to do, and then we are given administrative duties, or there is no budget for training."*

Most of the CYPTs identified a need for the inclusion of life coaching in the YPT programme. This inclusion primarily relates to aspects of personal mastery and how to manage personal finances in the context of their socio-cultural backgrounds.

> *CYPT2: "Also, life coaching because it is harsh growing up. There is an issue of dependency for economical [sic] survival because we are breadwinners and need to send money home."*

> *CYPT4: "There is no coaching on how to manage your own finance and you are expected to pay rent, and there is an expectation from home to send money. You are unable to save."*

CYPT5: "Get a life coach and make sure the programme is business-related. Coming to a corporate space is very overwhelming. Give personal mastery training on how life is at work and to enjoy what you do."

Past YPTs

As with the CYPTs, the PYPTs had received on-the-job training, which consisted of gaining technical skills (hard skills) and soft skills such as business etiquette, presentation, and communication skills. One PYPT said it was possible to apply the theory learned at university to what was expected on the job. Two of the PYPTs received guidance with their programme assessments. Two PYPTs mentioned receiving training on life skills or life coaching-type skills such as confidence-building, managing finances, and dealing with stress or conflict with others.

PYPT1: "…taught me what to do, what to watch out for, how to work with people and how to shut up – life lessons when frustrated with other managers. I would still go to him."

PYPT6: "Various managers giving work aligned to their environment. Immersion into their function and passing on skills of various aspects of that function. No teaching – just do it."

One PYPT mentioned that the programme needs to be more work- or qualification-specific to gain sufficient experience, not just menial labour, such as making photocopies or checking spreadsheets that have already been completed. Accordingly, one PYPT mentioned a need for the inclusion of technical skills training into the programme.

PYPT7: "Managers had no interest in my development. Photocopying. No proper planning on what must be covered – learnt as you go."

As with the CYPTs, the focus of the suggestions made by PYPTs was around life coaching and soft skills. Two PYPTs mentioned a need for developing the whole person instead of merely developing technical or hard skills. Three PYPTs mentioned the need to include general soft skills, such as interpersonal interaction skills, business etiquette and ethics. In contrast, three PYPTs indicated a need for life coaching, which includes aspects of personal mastery, work-life balance, and personal finance management in the context of the YPT's socio-cultural background.

PYPT1: "Develop the person and make sure there is proper coaching of the real person. The way I was brought up did not prepare me for the world of work."

PYPT3: "Coaching on monetary issues would have made a huge difference in my life. The training should not just be about getting the job well done, but on how do I improve myself to be a better person, not just a better employee."

Process Owners

POs mentioned that the programmes consist of work-related, on-the-job training. There is a focus on providing sufficient training for the YPT to register with a professional body. Thus, the focus seems to be more on hard skills and less on soft skills, although business etiquette and ethical conduct are mentioned by one PO as being included in the programme. Similarly, one PO mentioned that life

skills and general support are given as part of the training, but the company does not seem to do this in any formal structure or capacity.

PO1: "24-month programme with the purpose of skills transfer."

PO2: "Assessment outcomes of presentation and communication skills as well as the technical skills."

According to the POs' interview data, the central aspect they would change or include in the current programme content relates to soft skills and life coaching. All three POs mentioned that the programme should include soft skills such as ethical conduct and business etiquette. Accordingly, this would consist of life coaching related to confidence-building, a work-life balance, independent thinking, personal brand management and personal financial management.

PO2: "Provide soft skills because there is a tendency for group mentality, and they need independent thinking."

PO3: "Provide life coach and emphasise work-life balance and not to overstress themselves about work."

PO1: "There is a lack of respect from Model C YPTs and need training on lifestyle – they finish their money and have no money to move around. No training in financial management."

Thematic analysis of Research Question One, as shown in the graph below and across the CYPTs and PYPTs mainly, indicates that the programme is not

structured correctly. The lack of differentiation between mentors and coaches contributes to the lack of structure because there is no proper guidance on achieving the objectives. However, technical skills, or on-the-job training, is achieved through the programme, albeit haphazardly. The graph further illustrated that there is an opportunity to introduce both life skills and soft skills.

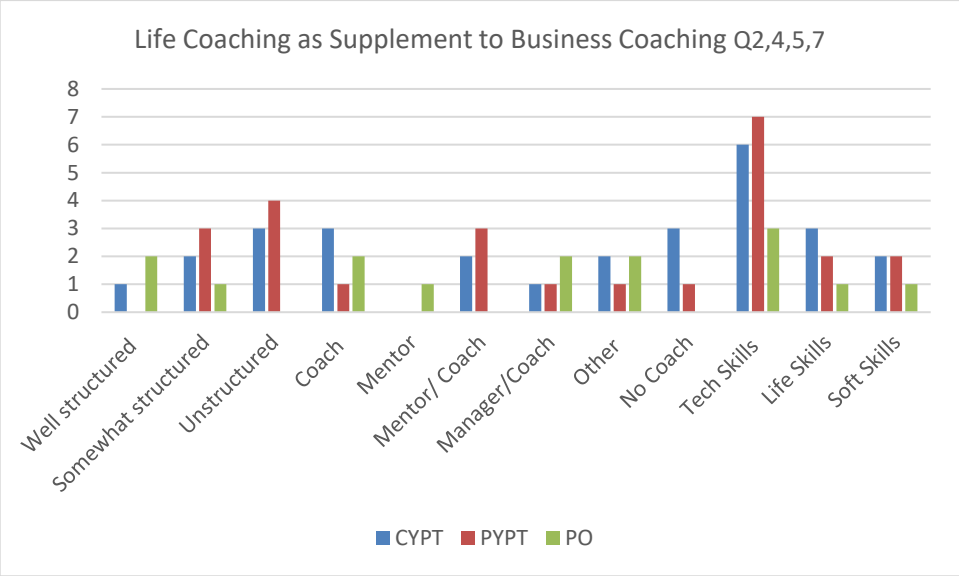


Figure 4.2: Graphic illustration of the themes (Structure, Parties providing training and Content of the programme.

Connor and Shaw (2008), Sturges and Guest (1999), and McDermott, Mangan, and O'Connor (2006) claim that the programme's objectives must be suitably analysed and promises conveyed to the incoming graduates: their expectations must be considered when developing a trainee programme.

Further, these researchers conclude that organisations find it challenging to understand the graduate's needs and expectations clearly. Therefore, the programme might be developed with good organisational intent but may not adequately aligned with the graduates' expectations. This could lead to losing the graduates and decreased work satisfaction levels for the new entrants.

According to Mabeba (2019) YPT programmes aim to develop young professionals in technical fields. At the end of the programme, the student should have a solid foundation in specific business areas. The YPT programme content consists of hard skills, which are the technical skills needed to do the job at hand, and soft skills required to function in the business's social and interpersonal environment. Although soft skills are essential for YPT development and other life skills gained by YPTs, the findings suggest that this process is done rather informally and unstructured and do not represent the life-coaching field's full spectrum.

Sparrow (2007) asserts that various aspects in a person's life, outside the work context, influence work performance or output. Addressing these aspects is necessary for a business to realise the full potential of the prospective employee.

The question to be asked is whether it should be formally included in the development programme curriculum.

A Process Owner (PO) referred to "Model C YPTs". This terminology stems from the three school models, namely A, B and C, introduced in 1990 on the initiative of the then-Minister of Education, Piet Clase. In Model C schools, Clase transferred authority to the school, parents, and school governing bodies to admit black students whilst remaining true to Christian beliefs and mother-tongue instruction. These schools would continue to receive a state subsidy to cover salaries of staff appointed within state prescripts, usually amounting to about 80 percent of the operating expenses of schools (Christie, 1995).

Similarly, in most cases, the YPT programme does not consist of specific coaches (in the word's theoretical sense) or mentors. These mentors are seemingly left to their own devices to decide what the YPT should learn and experience.

For the technical YPTs it appears that the focus is mainly on getting them to a point where they can register as professionals. Ellinger, Beattie, and Hamlin (2014) suggest that organisations use managers and supervisors as coaches to

facilitate the learning and development of the coachees, however, they will give them tasks related to their departments because departmental needs trump trainee developmental goals.

The findings indicate that YPTs gain some life skills, but they do this informally and in an unstructured manner. This finding does not represent the full spectrum of the life-coaching field. The present research found a need to include life coaching into the overall programme across all three participant groups. Equally important, though, is the finding across all three participant groups suggesting the need to include life coaching as part of the YPT programme. However, this must be done carefully, considering the reality of the programme's current structure and content to ensure effective implementation.

The following section presents the findings for Research Question Two.

4.4 Business coaching as adequate coaching for YPT development

This research question is answered by a thematic analysis of two interview questions, these being:

Q1 – "Describe your experience of the YPT programme."

Q6 – "What are the expected outcomes of the programme?" Three main themes were identified to answer this research question.



Figure 4.3 Themes: Is business coaching adequate for YPT development?

4.4.1. Perceived satisfaction

Current YPT

Most CYPTs indicated positive feelings about their YPT programme experience, apart from one who indicated that it was not good at all. One PYPT mentioned dissatisfaction with doing menial work – work that was not qualification-related or excellent exposure to the business. On the other hand, those who were satisfied related this because they received adequate exposure to the business and qualification-related exposure.

CYPT1: "Not good at all. Working under different MDs, did a lot of work like fraud risk assurance, then after five months the MD changed and then I was idling for 2 months."

CYPT2: "It was a good experience, learnt so much from varsity to corporate world."

Past YPTs

Like the CYPTs, most of the PYPTs were satisfied with their YPT programme experience, except for one who felt it was not good as there was no structure, no rotation, and everything was overwhelming.

> *PYPT3: "Was overwhelming, didn't do rotation, and took pressure, so many things to do. Tampered with my confidence – have to learn on your own."*

Three of the PYPTs mentioned being satisfied with the level of business exposure and qualification-related exposure. However, some PYPTs said they had quite a bit of menial work to do, which did not give them sufficient exposure.

> *PYPT5: "Learning curve, not just of experience working, working with different people – engaging the people at different levels."*

> *PYPT7: "Not received any coaching. Had to ask if handed a task and just get the task done."*

Process Owners

None of the POs explicitly mentioned whether the YPT programme was experienced by them or by the YPTs as being good or not good. However, one PO mentioned that YPTs should not be used merely to do menial work but must receive work-related and qualification-related exposure.

4.4.2. Challenges faced.

Current YPT

Only one CYPT mentioned that there was a challenge. This challenge related to being overwhelmed and overloaded with work.

Past YPTs

Two PYPTs also experienced the challenge of feeling overwhelmed and being overloaded with work. One also mentioned that the expected outcomes of the YPT programme were clear, making this challenging.

Process Owners

YPTs coming straight from university and not being work-ready is one challenge identified by a PO. Also mentioned is the challenge of YPTs not understanding the necessary business etiquette. The differences between YPTs caused by them coming from different universities is another challenge identified by one PO. A challenge that one PO believes the YPTs in his company experience relates to the frustration felt by students when they cannot perform, owing to external circumstances delaying a project and stopping them from seeing projects through to fruition.

PO1: "Trainees come from different universities and sometimes are taught differently. When they come to the company it becomes a challenge. There is no work-readiness programme."

PO2: "Biggest complaint from the graduates is that we start and stop because the socio-political environment influences our environment …and sometimes the project is not completed, and they get frustrated."

4.4.3. Expected outcomes.

Current YPT

One CYPT indicated that people expected a permanent position once they completed the YPT programme.

> *CYPT4: "You must hire YPTs from underprivileged or less-fortunate to ease the burden on the economy. Have a retention strategy – why are you not hiring us?"*

One CYPT said there was an expectation of professional registration once they completed the programme. Three CYPTs expected the programme to contribute towards them becoming marketable and employable.

> *CYPT4: "First, to be able to know enough to be employable and enough to put into practice."*

All CYPTs agree that the overall outcome of the YPT programme was to gain work-related experience, which includes technical skills related to the qualification and soft skills such as confidence and independence.

> *CYPT5: "Gained experience as an HR professional – expectations will be met, learnt a lot but need more training. To do thing independently without being taught, engagement with customers."*

Past YPTs

Like the CYPTs, the PYPTs mentioned that they expected a permanent position once they completed the process. However, the young professionals are also expected to register as professionals and become marketable and employable with the skills and experience gained. As with the CYPTs, the PYPTs mainly

mention gaining work-related experience and skills, including hard and soft skills, as the programme's primary expected outcome.

> *PYPT3: "How presentations are done, how memos are written."*

> *PYPT5: "You come out competent even if you are not absorbed by the organisation, able to do work, able to compete with other trainees from other organisations. Grow not only in the workplace but how to handle yourself, how to treat people, communication, and confidence in the corporate world and outside world."*

Process Owners

The perception that the programme's expected outcome is to register as a professional is stronger (mentioned more) in the PO group than with the CYPTs and PYPTs. One PO mentions becoming marketable and employable as an expected outcome. Mainly, and similarly with the other participant groups, the programme's primary expected outcome is gaining work-related experience and skills, comprising both hard and soft skills.

> *PO1: "Provide skills transfer. Qualify as a candidate in the profession and become a professional in the field of work."*
>
> *PO2: "They must fulfil the requirements for Engineering."*

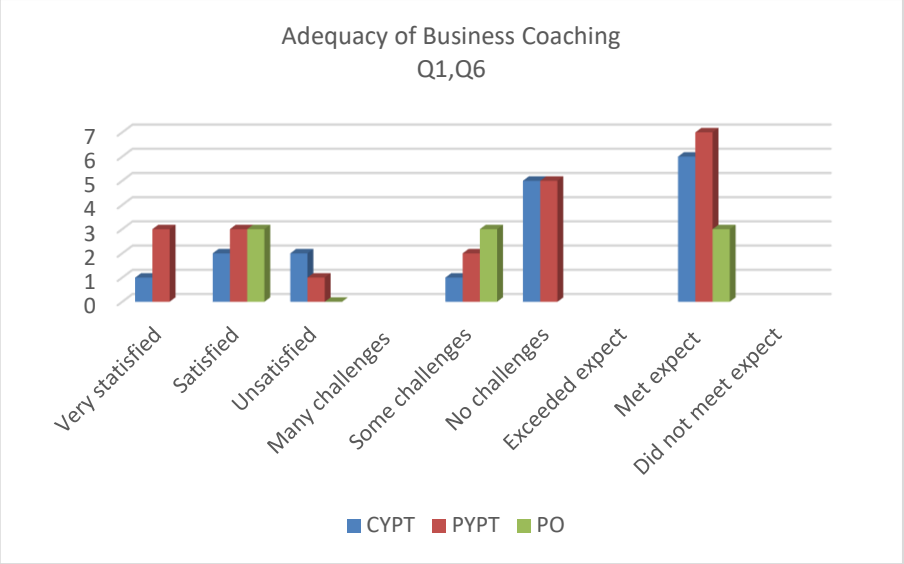


Figure 4.4: Graphic illustration of the themes (Perceived Satisfaction, Challenges and Expected Outcomes).

The findings of this research question indicated a general sense of satisfaction with the YPT programme.

Although there are some challenges to the YPT programme, most YPTs—current and past—are satisfied with their overall experience. Although some would have preferred an offer of a permanent position at the end of the programme, most YPTs are satisfied that the expected outcomes were met. They became marketable and employable. The YPTs who require professional registration were able to register as professionals, and most importantly, they gained valuable work-related experience in both hard and soft skills.

This is in line with the objectives outlined on the First National Bank website (FNB's Future League Programme, n.d.), which relate to marketability and employability and gaining valuable work-related experience covering both hard and soft skills. This outcome is a significant positive finding. Archer and Davison (2008) state that in addition to employers' dissatisfaction with graduates' attitudes to work, self-management and business awareness, employers also encounter

problems with graduates' generic employability skills, team-working, communication and problem-solving.

According to Mabeba (2019), the programme aims to develop professionals and provide them with work experience and skills, leaving them with a solid foundation in a specific field and related competencies. As a result, the young professionals achieved the expected outcome of gaining valuable work-related experience and hard and soft skills. For instance, engineering students who require professional registration could register as professionals with the relevant professional bodies.

Permanent employment was an expected outcome for some of the young professionals. However, while YPT-type programmes do not guarantee full-time employment after the expiry of contracts, if there are vacancies, the organisation can choose to employ a student, according to Mabeba (2019).

McDermott et al. (2006) conducted a study examining graduates satisfaction levels after being recruited by organisations. This study claimed that graduates want their work to be stimulating and challenging for the highest satisfaction levels and that development opportunities are of high importance.

Given these findings, although the YPT programme is presented and administered as a formal programme within the organisation, its business coaching aspect represents the *informal* part of the business coaching definition given by Grover and Furnham (2016), who state that business coaching can be informal or formal, carried out by managers or supervisors, with the primary aim being to enhance individual performance in the cause of organisational effectiveness.

Grant (2013) and Scoular (2012) further support the definition given by Grover and Furnam (2016) of the business coach where they describe it as coaching for performance done formally or informally by either a manager or supervisor to achieve a specific objective in the workplace.

Underhill et al. (2007) and Griffiths and Campbell (2008) claim that life coaching is a holistic approach, with clients seeking to make changes after examining their lives and being supported in this by a coach. Some scholars state that the transition from formal training to professional work life is a significant life event presenting challenges to individuals. This period is stressful for the new professional: moving from being a student in a safe environment to becoming a professional in a foreign environment is jarring.

Once at work, the young professional learns new ways of organising life and time successfully while adapting to new tasks and responsibilities and gaining social acceptance from new colleagues and supervisors, so that learning how to balance work and private life can be very stressful (Hettich, 2000; Kuron et al., 2015; Murphy et al., 2010).

The following section presents the findings for Research Question Three.

4.5 Process Owners' recognition of the need for life coaching

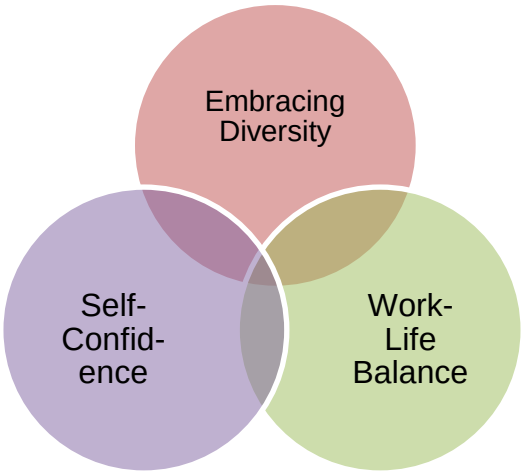


Figure 4.5 Themes: Need for Life Coaching for YPT development.

Research Question One indicated that an aspect the POs would change or include in the YPT programme relates to life-skills training or life coaching. One PO referred to it as “meta-coaching”.

> *PO1: “…maybe include meta-coaching because it has a psychological aspect. Students come to us from different institutions. Lifestyles are different.”*

All three POs mentioned specific aspects that they would like to see included in the YPT programme, with two out of the three POs discussing these aspects in greater detail.

Two POs believe the YPTs come from different universities and different socio-cultural backgrounds. Therefore, there is a need for interpersonal relationship coaching to respect other people as individuals, also respecting other people and the organisation’s time and resources. This seems to suggest that there are different standards at the various institutions. Within interpersonal relationships coaching, attention must also be given to addressing a sense of entitlement that creates disharmony amongst team members.

> *PO1: “There is a lack of respect from Model C YPTs…”*

> *PO2: “…share those resources are not the same. They are selling skills to the organisation but do not understand and feel entitled. For example, [dis]respecting people’s time, and this disrupts the dynamics of the team.”*

Two POs mentioned the need for work-life balance coaching, which includes teaching them how to handle stress.

PO2: "…and emphasise work-life balance, not over-stress themselves about work…"

Confidence coaching is another skill to be developed through life coaching, as mentioned by one PO.

PO1: "YPTs come from different institutions …I know confidence is there, and they relax, but those from the rural environment, there is a lack of confidence."

One PO mentioned that personal branding should form part of the first few months of onboarding.

PO3: "…include culture of the organisation, what is the company about, personal branding, then hand over to business."

Independent thinking was also cited by one PO. Independent thinking relates to the need for these students to learn how to be, and think as, individuals outside the cultural group context.

PO2: "Provide soft skills because there is a tendency for group mentality, and they need independent thinking."

One PO also believes there is a need for motivation and goal-setting coaching to assist YPTs with further studies and personal financial management.

PO1: "Training on lifestyle – they finish [the] money and have no money to move around Johannesburg. There is not training on financial management – getting [their] first salary [then they overspend]. Ask how you behave example to further your studies, work-life balance, and financial management."

According to Pheko and Molefhe (2017) many young professionals in South Africa lack the necessary role models to learn the softer skills needed in a corporate environment: assertiveness, business etiquette, and a general understanding of how business works.

Different universities teach in different ways while focusing mostly on academic issues. Garwe (2014), Jonck (2014), and Neale-Shutte and Nel (2013) assert that academic institutions need to assist with increasing students' employability. Curriculums should include soft skills, such as communication skills, emotional intelligence, and teamwork.

The soft skills referred to here are not representative of all life-coaching aspects or types of life coaching. Grant (2003), Gregory and Levy (2010), and Williams (2012) all argue that life coaching encompasses an individual's life goals and personal vision. The findings from this study indicate a need for soft-skills coaching, which will help the individual's performance within the company, plus life skills that can serve the student both outside and inside the business. Most prominent among the findings are coaching on interpersonal relationships, managing the work-life balance, stress management, developing confidence and independent thinking, and personal financial management.

Personal financial management is of particular importance in the South African context and because of the realities faced by these young professionals. The South African socio-economic landscape still requires many gainfully employed African professionals, including recently graduated young professionals, to deliver economic assistance for the extended family (Mdepa & Tshiwula, 2012).

With most candidates coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, after three or four years of undergraduate study, their families and communities expect them to earn an income and pay back a portion of what the family and community have invested in them. These expectations include helping with the education of

siblings and extended family, buying, or improving the family home, and improving the family's social and economic standing (Sadler & Erasmus, 2005).

Given these findings, it can be concluded that POs recognise the need for life coaching as part of the YPT programme.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION, LIMITATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This final chapter concludes the study and provides a summary of the research findings. The chapter also highlights the restrictions to the study and the findings.

It concludes by discussing the practical recommendations from this research conducted in a South African state-owned company (SOC).

5.1.1. Life coaching as a supplement to pre-existing business coaching

The findings from Research Question One confirm this statement. As per the themes, it was evident that the YPT programme in this SOC is a 24-month formal development programme for recently graduated young professionals requiring work experience, which will enable them to be employable in their field of study and career choice. In this context, the programme fulfils its objective. However, as indicated in all three participant groups, the lack of structure is evidenced in the internal processes concerning implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the trainees when the programme is in place. The participants indicated that the hosting department was not prepared for them, and therefore, there was no specific programme to be followed. In some departments, they were used as an extra pair of hands in the department. In addition, the research indicated that the YPT programme does not involve specific coaches, as defined in the literature, but rather mentors. In some departments, the managers acted as coaches, or employees acted as coaches, or there were no coaches. This lack of consistency further indicates the lack of structure and consistency in the programme's implementation. Additionally, there seems to be a lack of understanding of the definition of coach and mentor because they were used interchangeably by the YPTs. The Process Owners understood the roles of both coach and mentors and specific roles they played in the development programme.

In respect of the programme's content, the YPTs became immersed in the departments to which they were allocated, and they were given real work to do. They received on-the-job training and the practical experience and technical skills to do the job and some soft skills to function effectively in a business environment.

Consequently, life coaching is necessary for developing resilience in young professionals to deal with the business environment's demands. The POs, CYPTs and PYTs all reaffirm the importance of life coaching, or teaching life skills, as part of the YPT programme.

5.1.2. Business coaching adequacy for YPT development

Determination of whether business coaching is adequate for YPT development was based on the three participant groups' experiences regarding their perceptions. The SOC involved in this study does not use any standards or benchmarks to measure what is adequate or not.

The young professionals' general sense of satisfaction is attributable to most respondents feeling that most of the expected outcomes of the YPT programme were met. The lack of structure and immersion in the functional departments, although not ideal, provided them with an accelerated developmental opportunity and with functional competencies and corporate experience and the opportunity to be absorbed into the organisation or gain employment in other organisations. From this, it seems that the YPT programme, as a business coaching programme, is adequate for YPT development.

The programme met expected outcomes and overall satisfaction with the YPT programme, and the YPTs perceived it as being adequate for the students' professional development irrespective of the few challenges experienced. However, considering that becoming a young professional is a significant life event, presenting many challenges and new skills to learn, this adequacy is questionable.

5.1.3. Process Owners' recognition of the need for life coaching

The findings indicate that POs recognise the need for life coaching or some form of life-skills training. The objectives of the development programme—providing young professionals with functional skills, competencies, or accreditation in their chosen career fields—are obvious, and their responsibility is to facilitate that process. However, based on their responses, what is also apparent is that there is a need to provide more than just technical skills for YPTs because they must be fully functional and well-rounded employees.

There is a need for these young professionals to be taught essential life skills because they come from diverse backgrounds, including socio-economic, racial, educational, or cultural realities that place them at a disadvantage when entering the corporate world.

5.2 Limitations

The main limitation of this study is its focus on one integrated operating division within the organisation. Other researchers must, therefore, recognise and acknowledge that the results are not transferable to different organisations. At the same time, the findings are not necessarily transferable to other operating divisions in the SOC involved in this study.

A further limitation relates to the data collection process. In retrospect, the researcher acknowledges that further clarifying questions should have been asked during the interviews to clarify certain unclear aspects. Seeking these clarifications afterwards was attempted. Unfortunately, some participants indicated a lack of time or felt the information provided during the interview was adequate and did not require further expansion.

Another limitation involved the interviews not being carried out face-to-face. Instead, interviews were conducted using the Microsoft Teams application as

necessitated by the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 lockdown. This might have contributed to a lack of spontaneity and affected the natural flow of questions.

5.2.1. Practical implications and recommendations

Both short- and long-term practical implications arise from the study as well as recommendations for future research.

In the short term, this research could be presented to the prominent decision-makers, not merely the process owners. However, if changes are made to the programme (as suggested below in the long-term implications), they must be carried out using the necessary internal channels to generate urgency and buy-in.

Secondly, the researcher proposes a discussion of this study with the head of the division in which the research was conducted. Ideally, from this discussion, the next step would be to set up a workshop where process owners, coaches/mentors, and young professionals discuss short-term changes to the programme. Examples of such short-term changes could include making the YPT programme outcomes specific and clear to ensure understanding across stakeholder groups. Another change would involve identifying the necessary monitoring, evaluation, and assessment tools and setting deadlines to ensure a goal orientated YPT programme.

Finally, coaches/mentors need to acknowledge the need for life-skills training with these skills, including teaching without a professional life coach in the short term.

As a long-term practical implication, the researcher proposes that the SOC carefully reconsider its current YPT programme. Several indications from this research pointed to a lack of structure for the programme and inconsistent programme application. This inconsistency can leave both coaches/mentors and trainees without clear goals and outcomes.

A proper structure, implemented consistently, will contribute to all students receiving development opportunities equally, instead of leaving coaches/mentors to do what they believe is best. In addition to the long-term restructuring of the programme, the company should consider how life-skills coaching can be incorporated into the system. Life coaching is, as suggested in the literature, a specialist field and some line managers, supervisors and other employees are not expert in this field. Therefore, the company should consider bringing in professional life coaches as part of the programme structure.

5.2.2. Future studies

Young professionals in South Africa form a vital resource for uplifting communities and growing the country's economy. Given the high unemployment rate and the financial difficulties many communities face, the YPT programme aims to assist with professional development and create employment opportunities. This study focused on one SOC: given the findings' importance, the researcher recommends that other researchers conduct similar studies in different SOCs. The results could help with the design and implementation of more relevant and adequate programmes.

An analysis of the overall efficacy of the YPT programmes conducted across South Africa (not only in SOCs) would also be valuable. This research would help develop guidelines that companies could use to ensure their programmes are relevant and adequate, carried out formally and with specific outcomes.

5.3 Summary

This study fulfilled its aims by conducting semi-structured interviews with three stakeholder groups in the YPT programme: process owners, previous YPTs, and current YPTs. This study supported the assumptions that:

- Life coaching is needed to enhance the current YPT programme.
- Business coaching is adequate for the professional development of YPTs but lacks personal development or life-skills aspects relating to such a significant life event.
- Process owners recognise the need for life coaching.

In the short term, the findings of this research should be discussed with stakeholders, including leading YPT programme decision-makers, to create a sense of urgency and buy-in regarding necessary changes. In addition, short-term changes should be addressed, such as clarifying programme outcomes, setting specific evaluation and assessment goals, and identifying which life-coaching aspects coaches/mentors can teach. Such discussions will lay the foundation for a restructuring of the programme in the longer term.

The fact that this research was conducted in one operating division of the organisation might be a limitation. Nevertheless, it sets the scene for future studies investigating YPT programmes across all SOCs and other private companies to identify gaps and create benchmarks.

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APPENDIX A: CONSENT LETTER AND FORM

Dear Participant,

Many thanks for choosing to participate in the research. This research is part of a study requirement for completing a Masters in Management for Business and Executive Coaching at Wits Business School.

The purpose of the research is to explore whether life coaching should be included as a supplement in business coaching for young professionals in training at a state-owned company.

Please note the interview will take between 45 to 60 minutes and will be conducted at the offices as per the confirmed venue and time.

The interview is based on your personal experience of business coaching in the context of the young professional training programme.

All information will remain confidential, and your personal data and the company's name will not be mentioned in the research report. Thank you in advance for your willingness to participate. I look forward to the interview**.**

Sincerely,

Pumelela Gongo
Contact number 083 413 4079
email: pumelela.gongo@transnet.net

CONSENT

I hereby agree to participate in this research project, whose aim is to explore whether life coaching should be included as a supplement in the business coaching for the young professional in training at a state-owned company.

I understand that I am participating freely and without being forced in any way to do so. I also understand that I can stop participating at any point should I not want to continue, and that this decision will not in any way affect me negatively. I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not necessarily to benefit me personally in the immediate or short term. I understand that my participation will remain confidential.

Signature of participant……. Date…….

I hereby agree to the tape-recording of my participation in the study.

Signature of participant……. Date:…….

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH INTERVIEW GUIDE

Research Interview Guide	
SECTION 1: Biographical Information)	
Name of Respondent (optional)	
Race	
Gender	
Language	
Educational qualification	
Institution	
Length of service in the company	
Current position in the company	
Year as a YPT or GIT	
Role in the YPT Programme, e.g., Coach, Process owner	
SECTION 2: Interview Questions (YPTs 2018 - 2020)	
Describe your experience of the YPT programme	
What type of coaching are you receiving in the programme?	
What is your understanding of the different types of coaching: can you name them?	

What are you being coached on (give examples)?
Who does the coaching, and how is it done?
What are the expected outcomes of the coaching programme?
If you had an opportunity to design the business coaching aspect of your development programme, what and how would you do it?
Is there anything else you would like to say that might contribute to the research?
SECTION 2: Interview Questions (YPTs before 2018 and are permanent employees)
Describe your experience of the YPT/GIT programme
What type of coaching did you receive in the programme?
What is your understanding of the different types of coaching, and can you name them?
What were you coached on (give examples)?
Who did the coaching, and how is it done?
What were the expected outcomes of the coaching programme?
If you had an opportunity to design the business coaching aspect of your development programme, what and how would you do it?
Is there anything else you would like to say that might contribute to the research?

SECTION 2: Process Owners/Coaches
Describe your experience of the YPT/GIT programme?
What type of coaching are you providing for the YPTs?
What is your understanding of the different types of coaching, and can you name them?
What are the YPTs coached on (give examples)?
Who does the coaching, and how is it done?
What are the specific outcomes of the coaching programme?
If you had an opportunity to design the business coaching aspect of the development programme, what and how would you do it?
Is there anything else you would like to say that might contribute to the research?

APPENDIX C: THEMES

THEMES EXTRACTED TO RESPOND TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS	
4. Research Question 1: Should life coaching be included as a supplement to pre-existing business coaching? 1. Q2 and Q4 – "What type of coaching was received?" 2. Q7 – "If you had an opportunity to design the business coaching aspect of your development programme, what and how would you do it?" 3. Q5 – Who does the coaching	
Themes	**Direct Quotes**
Structure of the development programme to achieve programme goals	"I have been crying about this from day one. There is no proper planning for us."
	"Plan the programme before you get a YPT."
	"Do a needs analysis on what type of coach a YPT needs, e.g., business coaching or life coaching."
	"Candidate needs to understand the full scope of duties, clarify expectations. Clarify expectations of that person and explain that you will not be busy the whole day."
	"Make sure there are reviews and that they are mandatory."
	"Initially unplanned, no formal structure, no mentor under HR, no order or plan."
	"Not good at all. Working under different MDs, did a lot of work like fraud risk assurance, then after five months the MD changed and then I was idling for 2 months."
	"No systematic approach to a particular graduate; you get sent to whoever needs the work done."
	"YPTs are different and cannot use a blanket approach."
	"I only relied on six months' assessments."
	"Managers had no interest in my development. Photocopying. No proper planning on what must be covered – learnt as you go."
	"The programme is inconsistently done – company intention is clear, but implementation is inconsistent."
	"24-month programme with the purpose of skills-transfer aligned to the government Youth Development Programme."

	"Structure approach and provide workplace readiness programme."
	"Do a needs analysis and get clear reasons on why you are getting a request for a YPT, then do a curriculum design, then walk the journey with them."
	"There must be an exit strategy after the programme and increase the partnership." "Alignment with National Youth Development programme for future placements of the YPTs."
Parties responsible for the Training: Do the YPTs have coaches to assist with their development and the attainment of programme objectives	"Not have an assigned coach – we are technical people, and most of the people do not have capacity."
	"Not assigned a mentor, mixed for the first three months – just threw a lot of work at me."
	"Mentoring based on different departments."
	"Had no formal allocated coaches – all the people I reported to for work, typically line managers and coached based on performance outputs."
	"One individual in the team was the coach, but the other people in the team were also coaching."
	"The whole team on the work that needs to be done. Gave advice and told me to go back to school and get certified. They allowed me to make mistakes and gave advice."
	"There is no coaching; it is only mentoring and supervisory."
	"Internal coaches – line managers, supervisors and discipline experts."
	"Not received any coaching. Had to ask if handed a task and just get the task done."
Content of the programme: to determine the curriculum and the type of coaching if any, included in the programme.	"Learning and getting experience – making theory work to connect with some projects. Experience in the shutdown of the railway line for maintenance work."
	"There must be compulsory team-building. You must be taught about the business, structure, vision to execute the mandate properly instead of just focusing on YPT training."
	"YPTs need space and opportunities to be innovative and use ideas – sometimes there

	is nothing to do, and then we are given administrative duties, or there is no budget for training."
	"Also, life coaching because it is harsh growing up. There is an issue of dependency for economic survival because we are breadwinners and need to send money home."
	"There is no coaching on how to manage your own finance and you are expected to pay rent, and there is an expectation from home to send money. You are unable to save."
	"Get a life coach and make sure the programme is business-related. Coming to a corporate space is very overwhelming. Give personal mastery training on how life is at work and to enjoy what you do."
	"…taught me what to do, what to watch out for, how to work with people and how to shut up – life lessons when frustrated with other managers. I would still go to him."
	"Various managers giving work aligned to their environment. Immersion into their function and passing on skills of various aspects of that function. No teaching – just do it."
	"Develop the person and make sure there is proper coaching of the real person. The way I was brought up did not prepare me for the world of work."
	"Coaching on monetary issues would have made a huge difference in my life. The training should not just be about getting the job well done, but on how do I improve myself to be a better person, not just a better employee."
	"Assessment outcomes of presentation and communication skills as well as the technical skills."
	"Provide soft skills because there is a tendency for group mentality, and they need independent thinking"
	"Provide life coach and emphasise work-life balance and not to overstress themselves about work."

Research Question 2 Business coaching as adequate coaching for YPT development Q1 – "Describe your experience of the YPT programme." Q6 – "What are the expected outcomes of the programme?".	
Perceived satisfaction with the overall programme for 24 months	"There is a lack of respect from Model C YPTs and need training on lifestyle – they finish their money and have no money to move around. No training in financial management."
	"It was a good experience, learnt so much from varsity to corporate world."
	"Was overwhelming, didn't do rotation, and took pressure, so many things to do. Tampered with my confidence – have to learn on your own."
	"Learning curve, not just of experience working, working with different people – engaging the people at different levels."
	"Not received any coaching. Had to ask if handed a task and just get the task done."
	"Trainees come from different universities and sometimes are taught differently. When they come to the company it becomes a challenge. There is no work-readiness programme."
Challenges experienced in the programme	"Biggest complaint from the graduates is that we start and stop because the socio-political environment influences our environment …and sometimes the project is not completed, and they get frustrated."
	"You must hire YPTs from underprivileged or less fortunate to ease the burden on the economy. Have a retention strategy – why are you not hiring us?"
Expected Outcomes of the programme	"First, to be able to know enough to be employable and enough to put into practice."
	"Gained experience as an HR professional – expectations will be met, learnt a lot but need more training. To do thing independently without being taught, engagement with customers."
	"How presentations are done, how memos are written."

	"You come out competent even if you are not absorbed by the organisation, able to do work, able to compete with other trainees from other organisations. Grow not only in the workplace but how to handle yourself, how to treat people, communication, and confidence in the corporate world and outside world."
	"Provide skills transfer. Qualify as a candidate in the profession and become a professional in the field of work."
	"They must fulfil the requirements for Engineering."
Research Question 3: Business coaching as adequate coaching for YPT development	
Embracing Diversity within the context of the development programme	"Maybe include meta-coaching because it has a psychological aspect. Students come to us from different institutions. Lifestyles are different."
	"There is a lack of respect from Model C YPTs."
	"Share those resources are not the same. They are selling skills to the organisation but do not understand and feel entitled. For example, disrespecting people's time, and this disrupts the dynamics of the team."
	"Include culture of the organisation, what is the company about, personal branding, then hand over to business."
	"Training on lifestyle – they finish [the] money and have no money to move around Johannesburg. There is not training on financial management – getting [their] first salary [then they overspend]. Ask how you behave example to further your studies, work-life balance, and financial management."
Work-Life balance during the programme	"And emphasise work-life balance, not over-stress themselves about work."
Self-Confidence based on various life factors	"YPTs come from different institutions …I know confidence is there, and they relax, but those from the rural environment, there is a lack of confidence."