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Factors in South Africa inhibiting the progression of black executives in their careers and the role of coaching in their development

A research report submitted by

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to explore what factors are inhibiting the career progression of black executives in South Africa and to investigate how coaching can contribute to their development.

A qualitative approach was chosen for the research methodology, to explore the inhibiting factors and perceived coaching needs in depth. A discussion guide for semi-structured interviews was derived from a theoretical framework developed from the literature review.

Thirteen interviews were conducted with senior black male executives in the private sector, many of whom were managing directors of large corporations, but all of whom operate at the level of functional manager or higher, according to the Charan and Drotter pipeline model (Charan, Drotter, & Noel, 2011). The sample was split into executives who were coached and not coached to create some triangulation.

Interviews were recorded, transcribed and uploaded into Atlas CAQDAS software for analysis. A codebook was created deductively for the initial coding, with 140 codes, 22 categories and four themes being developed from the subsequent analysis.

Regarding inhibiting factors, the findings showed that black executives experience high levels of racism. Achieving a critical mass of black executives would create an opportunity to adopt a blend between the current common Eurocentric management style and an Afrocentric one. Aspects of black culture can be detrimental to executives' effectiveness, particularly the ability to confront other executives as superiors or colleagues. Experience gained overseas seems to limit this effect.

Creating a positive support environment for the black executive is important for the creation of a pipeline of executives. Having a supportive family background, and maintaining a positive attitude is key. Educational background no longer appears to be an inhibiting factor, as most executives have attended historically white institutions (HWIs). Most respondents had co-opted unofficial mentors at work during their careers.

A distinct lack of visibility through substitute networks for the historical Anglo American model from schools and universities makes sourcing black male recruits

difficult. Lack of experience is a limiting factor, and observations were unanimous in condemning the destructive effect of job-hopping on black executives' careers.

Talent management practices were surprisingly positively reviewed; coaching is seen as beneficial for creating a pipeline.

Fifty areas for application of coaching were identified and grouped under the Katz (1974) model of skills needed for managerial practice, namely conceptual skills, human skills and technical skills.

40% of the findings revolved around human skills, both interpersonal and intrapersonal. The most important topics include: enhancing leadership, performance management, managing corporate politics, building networks, leadership style and team leadership.

In the intrapersonal category, topics noted were: raising self-esteem, coaching for performance, raising self-awareness, emotional intelligence, coaching through strengths, and coaching for transitions.

South Africa still suffers from a historical legacy, where numerous factors are inhibiting the full participation of black executives in top management at the level required to achieve a sustainable political and economic environment. Coaching was found to be a suitable leadership development tool for many applications identified in the research.

DECLARATION

I, John Hugh Linton Myres, 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 University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Hugh Myres

Signed at ……

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GLOSSARY

The research uses specific terms, which are defined below:

Term	Meaning
Senior management	Senior management in this document refers to any individual in a leadership position operating at the "manager of managers" level or higher as defined by Charan *et al* (Charan, Drotter, & Noel, 2008).
Top management	Term used in the Department of Labour's commission for employment equity annual reports to designate managers who correspond with the top level in grading scales such as Patterson, Peromnes or Hay. Alternatively companies submitting their EE9 form can choose their own differentiator versus senior management.
Executive	A term commonly used for senior management, defined by the online Oxford dictionary as "a person with senior managerial responsibility in a business".
HR	Human resources function or department.
AA	Affirmative action, policies intended to promote access to education or employment aimed at a historically non-dominant group. Motivation for affirmative action policies is to redress the effects of past discrimination and to encourage institutions to be more representative of the population.
BBBEE	broad-based black economic empowerment is a programme from the South African government to redress the inequalities of apartheid by giving previously disadvantaged groups (black Africans, coloureds and Indians who are SA citizens) economic opportunities previously not available to them (Jack, 2007).
Ubuntu	An African leadership model that relies on consultation, collective decision making and community approach (Booysen, 2001; Mbigi, 2005).
Previously disadvantaged individual (PDI)	As defined in the DTI BBBEE guidelines, namely individuals unable to vote prior to the 1994 elections, being African, coloured and Indian races.
Black	In this study refers to African only, not Indian or coloured.
Talent management	In this study, a set of processes to ensure an adequate supply of employees into the talent pool, including succession management.
EAP	economically active population which is based on the Quarterly Labour Force Survey published by Statistics South Africa and includes people from 15 to 64 years of age who are either employed or unemployed and seeking employment

HWI	historically white universities
HBI	historically black universities, typically from the previous so called homelands
NDP	National Development Plan developed by the National Planning Commission, headed by Trevor Manuel in the Office of the Presidency
GLOBE	Global leadership and behaviour effectiveness study, originally created by Hofstede (Hofstede, 2006)
SOE	state-owned entity

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

In South Africa, fast-tracking black executives has become common practice to meet promulgated affirmative action targets. However, efforts so far to implement affirmative action programmes have been ineffective in meeting demographically based targets. This has created a perception in some quarters that blacks are incapable of performing at the required level. In some cases, competent blacks feel that they have not been appointed or promoted on merit, and whites feel discriminated against in spite of their own perceived competence (Jack, 2007).

The purpose of this research is to establish what factors in South Africa are inhibiting the progression of black executives in their career and how they perceive that coaching can help them develop as more effective leaders. By identifying what perceived factors affect executives in accelerating their leadership development, one can establish for which needs coaching can be used effectively.

1.2 Context of the study

One of the many legacies of the apartheid era has been a significant imbalance in the proportion of black managers operating at more senior leadership levels in the private sector relative to black people in the economically active population (Republic of South Africa, 12th CEE Annual Report, 2012).

This has been caused, among others, by a poor education system, deliberate exclusionary policies and the consequent lack of experience gained by potential black executives (Ajani, 2010; Daniels, 2007; Jack, 2007; Kim, 2010; Matandela, 2008).

To address this issue, the government introduced a range of legislation and policies. The most significant of these were the Employment equity Act 1998, and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 2003 (BBBEE) with the associated Codes of Good Practice on BBBEE, policed by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

These were intended to promote:

- Equal opportunity and fair treatment in employment by eliminating unfair discrimination;
- Affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups, to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce;
- The constitutional right to equality, increase broad-based and effective participation of black people in the economy, increase employment and more equitable income distribution; and
- Introduction of a national policy on broad-based black economic empowerment to promote equal opportunity and equal access to government services.

Since their implementation, compliance with the DTI guidelines has become important for larger companies to become increasingly 'empowered', as defined by the BBBEE scorecard. Higher scores enable companies to compete directly for government business, or secure business from companies doing business with the government through the ripple effect evident in the procurement chain. The legislation and associated policies strongly encourage companies to focus on changing the racial profile of their workforce, particularly at management level, as this is one of seven dimensions defined in the BBBEE act (Jack, 2007).

This requirement is particularly difficult to achieve at higher levels of management, due to the relative paucity of experience most blacks have managed to accumulate at this level since 1994 (Wöcke & Sutherland, 2008), although there are also other global, educational and cultural factors at play (Kim, 2010). Vuyo Jack (2007) summed up one aspect of the issue in this way:

> Rectifying the shortage of Black management will start by changing the perception of Black and White people of Black intellectual capacity. The availability of people to train is not a problem, because skills can be learned. Neither is the ability of Black people the problem. The perception of Black people is the problem (p. 435).

Moreover, for the South African economy to grow at rates which can reduce unemployment levels, a greater supply of management skills is required (Pauw, Oosthuizen, & Van Der Westhuizen, 2008).

This shortage of black executive skills is exacerbated by the fact that South African companies increasingly compete on a global basis, whether the company operates in overseas markets or solely in South Africa. Globally, companies have recognised that talent management has become a key factor in maintaining their competitive status (Bolt & Hageman, 2009; Cappelli, 2008; Charan, et al., 2008; Cohn, Khurana, & Reeves, 2005; Conger, 2008; Hayes, 2009; Schweyer, 2004). This global demand has put further pressure on the supply of skilled senior executives, particularly those with attractive skills. Such pressures have contributed to the loss of skills to emigration, and this effect has been accelerated when the management of diversity within the corporation has been handled inappropriately (Bohlman, 2010; Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009).

Despite all these pressures, and significant progress by some companies, at the national level, representation of black executives at senior management level is still only at 20% of the desired target after 19 years of democracy (Republic of South Africa, 12th CEE Annual Report, 2012).

This suggests talent management efforts by South African corporates have so far failed to take into account the unique challenges faced by black executives, and highlights the need for a more focused approach that can assist in attracting and retaining skilled black executives. It is proposed that executive coaching can play an important role in this regard.

Coaching has recorded significant growth in South Africa, as evidenced by the 50% growth in members of the regulatory body Coaching and Mentoring South Africa (COMENSA**)** in one year, highlighted at the Gauteng annual general meeting in March 2011. Accordingly, coaching is now being recognised as a major weapon in the armoury for leadership development (Boyatzis, Smith, & Blaize, 2006; Coutu & Kauffman, 2009; Simpson, 2010; Tompson, 2008; G. Wallis, 2010).

1.3 Problem statement

1.3.1 Main problem

Establish what perceived factors in South Africa are inhibiting the progression of black executives in their careers, and what perceived coaching needs they have for accelerating their leadership development.

1.3.2 Sub-problems

Establish what factors are perceived to be inhibiting the career progression of black executives

Identify those perceived coaching needs of black executives that can accelerate their leadership development

1.4 Significance of the study

The study adds to the body of knowledge in South Africa by identifying the factors inhibiting progress in the careers for black executives, and identifying those needs where coaching can assist black executives selected for fast-track promotion through the ranks of management, given that they may have needs created by unique political, economic and social issues that characterise the South African workplace.

The study provides guidance to a range of stakeholders, including policy-makers, chief executives and other senior leadership, human resource practitioners in companies, aspirant and existing executives, and the coaching industry.

The author's own experience of reactions to the proposed research, in coaching companies and clients alike, indicated a keen interest in the topic. This issue is seen as a major stumbling block to achieve the coveted 'Rainbow Nation' status in South Africa.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

The research covers black males only, as black females may have a different set of unique needs, which would add complexity to the study. As per the definitions, black in this study means African only, not coloured or Indian, as this is where the most significant problem lies in South Africa.

The levels of management studied was only at or above the “manager of managers” level of the leadership pipeline, as defined in Figure 2 on page 8 (Charan, et al., 2011).

The research focused only on the private sector, as it is particularly that sector that has failed to achieve affirmative action targets.

1.6 Assumptions

The research assumed respondents would be honest in answering interview questions. This aspect is particularly important in this research, due to the potential political and racial sensitivity of the topic. The use of skills learned in coaching will be relevant in creating a supportive environment during the interview process, to encourage the respondent to provide their genuine opinion.

The research process assumed that views on coaching would be based on the executive’s personal experience, or perceptions gained from other sources or third-party accounts.

The study also assumed that Charan *et al*’s framework for Passages in Leadership Pipeline is a valid model to use in the context of the research (Charan, *et al*., 2008).

1.7 Outline of the research

This research is broken into six chapters.

Chapter 1 introduces the topic, covers the purpose and context of the study, and outlines the main problems. It then covers the significance and delimitations of the study, as well as a glossary and assumptions.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature to identify previous work on this topic, covering the conceptual framework for the review, examining the need for more black executives given South African history; current supply of management skills; global competition for talent; black participation at senior management levels; leadership development and talent management; factors affecting black executives in South Africa; diversity tolerant cultures, learning theories, ccoaching and leadership development; and lastly, examining previous and appropriate research methodologies.

Chapter 3 covers the research design, methodology and paradigm, including the population and sample, the research instrument (which is covered in more detail in appendix B), the pprocedure for data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and limitations of the study, along with validity and reliability issues.

Chapter 4 details the findings of the field research, with quotations from the interviews provided to support key points emerging from the field research.

Chapter 5 discusses what emerged in the findings, interprets some meaning when compared with the literature review, and thus highlights where new knowledge may have been created.

Chapter 6 sets out conclusions and recommendations for stakeholders and future research.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review provides a platform of established knowledge to compare with the field research. It covers: a brief history of black participation in South Africa; progress in participation level of black males at senior management levels; leadership development and talent management practices globally and in South Africa; which factors are perceived to affect black executives in South Africa; diversity tolerant cultures; learning theories; leadership styles; how coaching has been used to support leadership development globally and in South Africa; and finally, which of the factors coaching could address.

2.2 Conceptual framework

Given that little academic research has been published on accelerating leadership development through coaching in South Africa, this author developed a conceptual framework which guided the literature review and research, as illustrated in Figure 1.

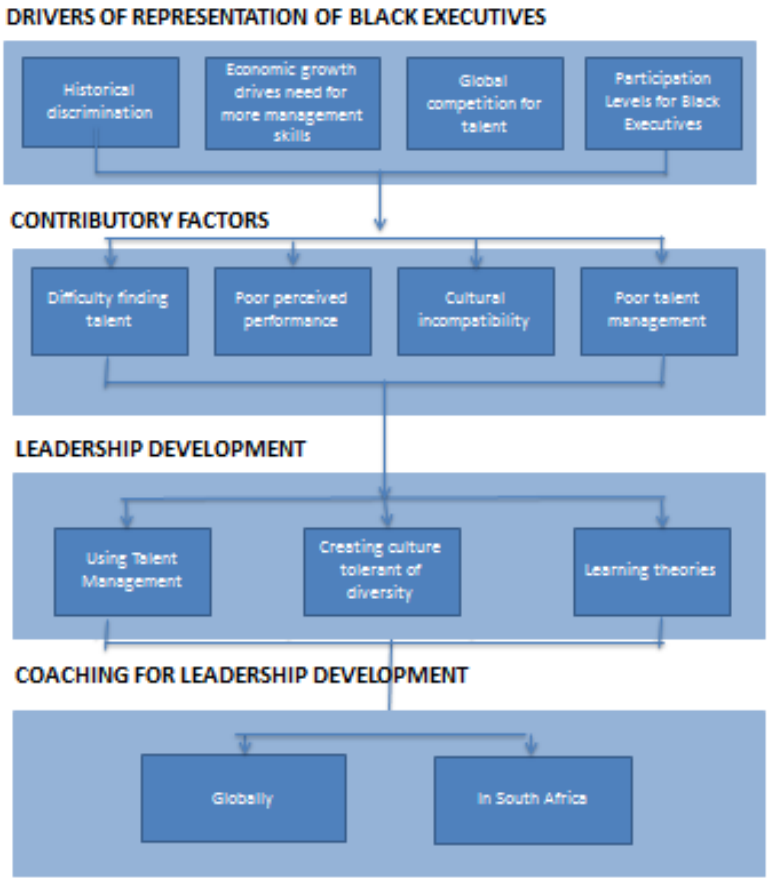

Figure 1: Conceptual framework

This conceptual framework follows a logic that firstly outlines the drivers of the black executive participation level; defines the current status of representivity for black senior management; goes on to suggest the main contributory factors potentially affecting the career progression of black executives in South Africa; and outlines how coaching could be a useful approach for addressing some of these factors.

The core framework underpinning the development of senior leaders relies on using the 'Leadership Pipeline' concept which refers to the six 'passages' in the lifeline of the leader as shown in Figure 2 below. Some other authors have termed these transitions as 'crossroads' (Kesler, 2002; Mahler, Drotter, & Associates, 1986)

Leadership level	**Description**	**Transition**
Enterprise manager	Operating as CEO	6
Group manager	Managing other business managers	5
Business manager	Responsible for profit	4
Functional manager	Looking after specialist function	3
Manage other managers	First time leading managers of others	2
Managing others	Promoted to managing other staff	1
Manage self	Professional operations, delivering results	

Figure 2: Passages in the Leadership Pipeline (Charan *et al*, 2008)

To address issues relating to filling up the pipeline at higher levels, this research focused on managers who have made transition three or higher, i.e. functional managers or higher.

2.3 Representation of black executives

2.3.1 South African history on discrimination against blacks

"Colonial and apartheid policies have had a devastating impact on the development of black human capital", according to the report from the Black Economic Empowerment Commission (Groenewald & Schurink, 2007, p. 94). Government legislation and policies had actively discriminated against blacks for nearly 100 years, before

democratic elections in 1994 brought the current government into power (Adam, 1997; Ajani, 2010; Andrews, 2008; Black & Geletkanycz, 2006; Booysen, 2007; Burger & Jafta, 2010; Ellis, 2008; Kim, 2010; Lee, 2010; Luhabe, 2002; Matandela, 2008; Motileng, 2005; Ulrich, 2005).

The exclusion of blacks from representative participation in the economy has largely been caused by the significant impact of deliberate strategies adopted by the government during apartheid years, relating not only to the level and capability of the education system for previously disadvantaged individuals (PDIs), but also a series of other deliberate exclusionary policies.

Many managers currently being groomed in corporate talent pipelines have suffered from poorer education, particularly maths and science (Ajani, 2010; Ulrich, 2005), and a markedly poorer environment generally (Castle, 1996; Williams et al., 2007). This would be particularly prevalent in individuals now old enough to have accumulated sufficient experience for a senior management role, unless they were educated overseas.

Strategies to redress the demographic profile

Since 1994, government has implemented a range of policies to redress this situation. These rely strongly on the principle of affirmative action, to tilt the playing field towards a preference for black executives (Adam, 1997; Burns, Godlonton, & Keswell, 2010; Kim, 2010; Lee, 2010), on the grounds that entrenched discriminatory practices would not otherwise be eliminated. The Employment Equity Act of 1998, and the Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment Act 2003, with the associated Codes of Good Practice, encapsulate this effort. This legislation is intended to create diversity, but is enforced and therefore has the potential to create a negative reaction (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010).

As a result, it has become a key competitive issue for South African corporates to strive continuously for an improved BBBEE rating by maximising points on the scorecard, which comprises seven key areas: ownership, management control, employment equity, preferential procurement, skills development, enterprise development and socio-economic development (Jack, 2007).

Not only are corporates required to achieve the specified goals, but their ratings on the scorecard influence their ability to succeed in procurement processes, particularly with government entities. Of the seven areas defined in the scorecard, this research will focus only on the top management dimension within the domain of management control, as defined in the BBBEE Act and associated codes (Republic of South Africa 2003, *Broad Based Economic Empowerment Act 53: Codes of Good Practice*, 2007; Jack, 2007).

2.3.2 Faster economic growth requires greater supply of management skills

The National Development Plan (NDP) states that one of the three strategic interventions in the economy is to improve skills and human capital formation, in the pursuit of creating another 11 million jobs in the South Africa economy by 2030 (*National Development Plan*, 2011). A key thrust of this is to accelerate economic growth to 7% and to sustain that for 20 years (Gordhan, 2011).

A growth rate of this magnitude will place severe pressure on the supply of management skills, as the management structures required to manage another eleven million people will be substantial. To make matters worse, the parts of the economy that have grown most, such as finance and business services, tend to be the most skill-intensive (Hausmann, 2008). Due to slow economic growth since the global recession in 2008, this effect has not yet been marked, but has the potential to become significant as economic growth accelerates again.

To support this, in their final recommendations to the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative for South Africa (ASGISA), the members of the international panel from Kennedy School at Harvard note that BBBEE policies “exacerbate skills constraints in managerial positions” and “are increasing the demand for high-skilled previously disadvantaged South Africans at a time when they are already facing very high and rising demand” (Hausmann, 2008, p.8).

The increasing demand for management skills should also be seen in the context of the shape of the population age distribution in South Africa, which indicates a greater need for experienced managers in relation to the relatively large numbers of younger

employees entering the workforce, which is further exacerbated by the imminent retirement of many of the experienced executives (

Appendix A: South African Age distribution, page 188).

Thus the recently adopted National Development Plan, BBBEE policies, and age distribution patterns in South Africa will increase demand for management skills generally.

2.3.3 There is global competition for talent

With globalisation effects increasingly more prevalent in South Africa, strategies have evolved for global talent management that consider the increasing mobility of the modern knowledge worker (Schuler, Jackson, & Tarique, 2010). As South African companies compete more globally, they need to manage their talent more effectively, particularly at senior management level (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2002; Cohn, *et al*., 2005; Strauss, 2010).

Aggravating this effect, some experienced white managers reportedly react to affirmative action policies by feeling they are being discriminated against, which makes them more vulnerable to the perceived attractions of emigration (Ellis, 2008).

The loss of skills from South Africa has been estimated as equivalent to dropping the national gross domestic product (GDP) by 3% over an eight-year period (Bohlman, 2010). Statistics SA data support this estimate, indicating that over the past ten years South Africa has lost over 50 000 professionals (Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009), a figure confirmed in a study by the Development Policy Research Unit at the University of Cape Town (Pauw, *et al*., 2008).

Thus, the history of black discrimination in South Africa and subsequent efforts to address this, combined with demands created by economic growth, population distribution and global competition for management talent, as well as a white management class dissatisfied with perceived discriminatory affirmative action policies in South Africa, have led to a sharp rise in the emigration of skilled workers, which in turn has added to the stress on the supply of management skills.

2.3.4 Black participation at top management level

Despite the pressure brought to bear by legislation, and significant strides made by some more progressive companies, black managers continue to be poorly represented

at senior management level. In the 2012 employment equity report, blacks in top management for the private sector represent 8% of positions for males versus the economically active population base of 40.5% (Republic of South Africa, 12th CEE Annual Report, 2012). In other words, black males are still significantly underrepresented at 20% of the target.

Examining the employment equity report for 2012 shows a dire picture, where black participation appears to be dropping and white increasing:

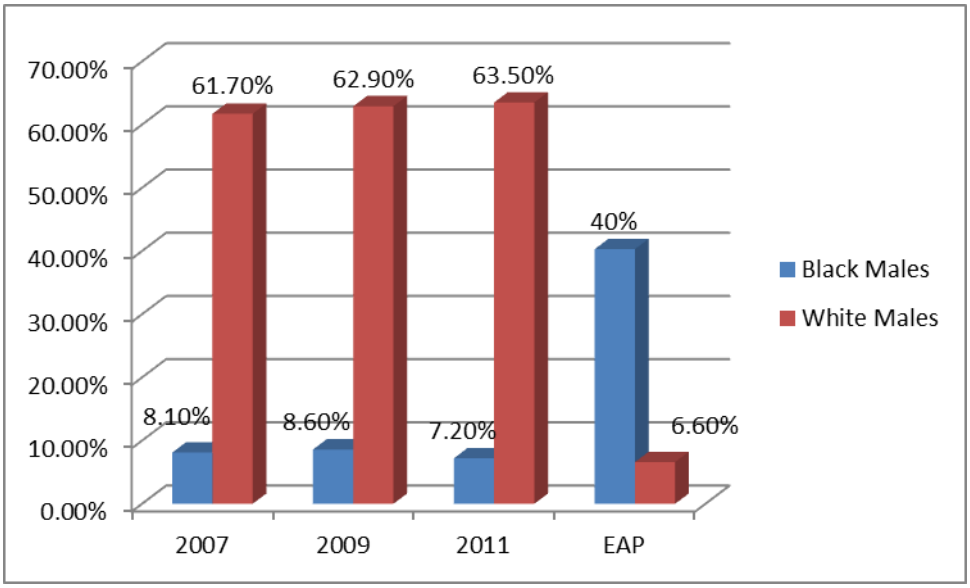

Figure 3: Trends for top management by race 2007-2011
(12th CEE Annual Report, 2012)

Another perspective on this issue is outlined in a report from the Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity at Oxford (CRISE), which notes that in 2006, only 16% of black African males were employed in highly skilled occupations, compared to 54% of white males. This proportion has only improved by 1% since 1997 (Burger & Jafta, 2010).

Commenting on the slow rate of progress of black participation, particularly at middle management level, Booysen laments that “This is disturbing in terms of EE progress, since the professional and middle management level is considered a ‘feeder’ to senior and top management positions” (Booysen, 2007, p. 50).

At the same time, many well-qualified blacks, for example chartered accountants, are in such short supply that they are perceived to 'job hop', remaining in one position for only a short period before moving on to more lucrative opportunities, making retention difficult. This phenomenon is evident in several research studies (Biyela, 2008; Daniels, 2007; Jack, 2007; Khanyile, 2007; Sadler, 2002).

Although some progress has been made on black participation in highly skilled and managerial occupations, the rate of change is a concern. This unrepresentative situation is economically and politically unsustainable, and South Africa needs to address it vigorously, to avoid further social unrest exemplified by the recent Marikana incident in which 45 striking mine workers were killed by members of the South Africa, Police Services.

Having reviewed the historical discriminatory policies and other factors affecting the supply of management skills in South Africa, including population distribution shape, emigration and global competition for skills, it is clear that South Africa needs proactive strategies to create a much greater supply of black executives for potential deployment in corporates.

The next section explores perceived factors that may affect the leadership development of black executives in South Africa.

2.4 Factors potentially affecting black executives in South Africa

This section reviews factors evident in the literature that may be inhibiting the career progression of black executives to the level representative of the economically active population at top management level. One of the most prominent authors in this field in South Africa is Professor Lize Booysen, who was resident at UNISA's School of Business Leadership (SBL), and did her doctorate on gender and racial discrimination. Her work will be referred to often in this research.

In a general review of issues faced by black executives in South Africa, one author listed factors influencing "upward mobility" for black executives (Matandela, 2008):

- Lack of training and development

- Racial discrimination
- Lack of mentorship and coaching
- Lack of trust from parties
- Marginalisation
- Tokenism
- Lack of recognition
- Fear of failure
- Culture clash
- Lack of black support
- Educational background
- Lack of proper career planning
- Lack of assertiveness.

Other barriers to upward mobility identified in other work (Kilian, Hukai, & McCarty, 2005) include:

- Lack of mentors and role models
- Exclusion from informal networks of communication
- Stereotyping and preconceptions of roles and abilities
- Lack of significant line experience
- Lack of visible and/or challenging assignments.

These factors were confirmed in another study (Booysen, 2007) relating to barriers to employment equity implementation and retention, which also included:

- Slow employment equity progress at management level
- Low commitment to employment equity from top management
- A lack of cultural sensitivity where new recruits are expected to assimilate into the current organisational culture
- A white male-dominant organisational culture that continues to exclude black recruits (formally or informally through exclusionary network practices)
- Black people are perceived as tokens and not fully integrated into companies, because of little delegation of real responsibility or decision-making authority, owing to persistent stereotypes
- Black staff are not systematically developed and trained – there is no effective talent management
- Lack of black mentors and role models or ineffective mentoring and coaching.

Professor Booysen points out that there are few formal coaching or mentoring programmes and, furthermore, by using current white incumbents as mentors, extensive resistance is sometimes encountered.

In the latest available publication, Professor Booysen added these factors to the already extensive list of inhibitors noted above (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010):

- Ineffectual consultation and lack of shared understanding and communication about employment equity progress and implementation
- A lack of cultural awareness programmes and of an organisational culture that values diversity
- Lack of meaningful engagement of white males in the employment equity process to gain their commitment
- Failure to deal with white fears and resistance to implementing employment equity legislation

- Insufficient focus, co-ordination and integration of existing implementation processes

- General lack of talent management, which includes training, development and growth opportunities, career pathing and succession planning.

To focus the literature review on potential factors for the poor progress achieved by South African corporates with black representation at senior management levels, the findings from these studies were consolidated by the author into four major themes, as illustrated in Table 1:

Table 1: Potential factors affecting black executives in SA corporates

Difficulty finding black talent	Black talent doesn't perform	Cultural incompatibility	Poor talent management
• Management skills in short supply • Not in network • Quality of education	• Issues in upbringing • Lack of appropriate experience	• Culture not diversity tolerant • Clash of cultural values	• No talent pipeline or potential matrix • Inadequate retention strategies • No growth opportunities • No succession planning or career pathing

Each column posits a high-level theme, under which associated factors are examined. These factors will be covered in greater detail in the following sections.

2.4.1 Factor: Difficulty in finding black talent

This section explores the literature for perceived issues affecting the employment of black executives in terms of overall supply levels, poor education, lack of appropriate experience, or lack of visibility in the market due to closed networks.

Management skills in short supply

In a general review of skills requirements for South Africa in 2006, the Department of Home Affairs identified management and commerce professionals in a category of scarce skills:

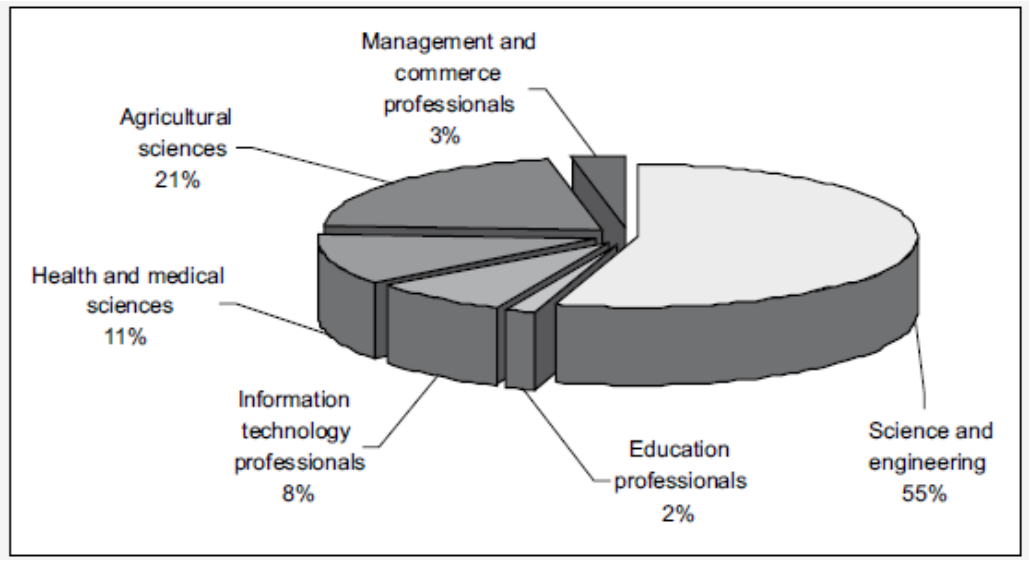

Figure 4: Composition of scarce skills quotas across broad occupation categories (Pauw, *et al.*, 2008, p. 15)

Not in network

The fact that blacks are excluded from traditional networks in corporate South Africa has been highlighted by Andrews (2008), who argues that the economic structure in South Africa affects access to personal networks, particularly in relation to board participation. He notes that often there is an inner circle which represents men from elite secondary schools and traditionally white top universities with a history of formal, big-business experience (Andrews, 2008). This aspect is reinforced by Fafchamps: “To succeed, one must be introduced in the right circles and become a member of the right clubs.” (Fafchamps, 2001, p.7).

This concept was first identified by Granovetter in 1983, who referred to upper-status individuals having “large numbers of weak ties”, which offer many job opportunities. He posited that this was why the upper class invested so heavily in institutions such as private clubs, special schools and social registers (Granovetter, 1983, p. 210).

One recent study in South Africa even claimed that social networks may enhance employment opportunities by an additional 3% to 12% (Burns, et al., 2010). Another author cites a growing body of literature on the importance of social networks for labour market outcomes, emphasising that this is often ethnic in nature (Hofmeyr, 2010). Other studies point out how social effects tend to cause occupational segregation too, due to peer effects (Buhai & van der Leij, 2006; Ferrant & Bourquin, 2011).

South Africa's ranking at 19 out of 139 in the world for reliance on professional management implies that this network effect is prominent (World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report, 2010).

Lack of appropriate education

While educational discrimination has historically been a major inhibiting factor, the situation is improving:

> *The decline after 2000 was mainly driven by a narrowing of the education differential between white and African male workers. This trend is likely to continue, as the younger, better-educated African cohorts increase their representation in the labour force* (Burger & Jafta, 2010, p. 21).

This is supported by a study highlighting that younger South Africans have become better educated over the last decade as enrolment rates at tertiary educational institutions have increased dramatically (Pauw, *et al*., 2008).

From anecdotal evidence for enrolment rates at business schools, and considering South Africa's ranking of 21 out of 139 countries for the quality of management schools in the Global Competitiveness report (World Economic Forum, 2010), the education levels of black executives is steadily becoming less of an issue. This is supported by the Council for Higher Education report (2009), which witnessed a steady increase in the proportion of black graduates between 2000 and 2005 for all three qualification types: honours graduates rising from 47% to 57%; masters' graduates from 39% to 47%; and doctoral graduates from 30% to 41% (Republic of South Africa, Postgraduate Studies in South Africa: A Statistical Profile, 2009).

Anecdotal evidence from coaching practitioners also suggests the mode of learning prevalent at previously black schools has encouraged a predominantly passive approach, which limited individuals' opportunity to demonstrate their leadership capability.

Summary

This section covering the difficulty of finding black talent concludes that various factors contribute to this perception, including an under-supply of appropriately qualified and experienced black executives, who may operate in different networks from those in place at big corporates in South Africa. In this context, coaching can play a role by helping corporates to appreciate the differences in networks and with skills to assist executives in addressing their relative lack of experience.

2.4.2 Factor: Poor perceived performance of black executives

A common perception is that blacks have traditionally had little confidence placed in them, as described by Vuyo Jack (2007, p. 436):

> *Having a model C school education is not a measure of one's intellectual capacity. It does mean that that the black person is probably more articulate, but it has nothing to do with intellectual capacity; the market does make a natural assumption that they must be 'clever', because they speak well. Such persons may then be hired in a role which they will never be capable of fulfilling; they just happened to speak well*.

The author also points out that emphasis needs to be placed on the individual's potential to fulfil a role rather than focusing on the length of service (Jack, 2007).

Anecdotal evidence from corporate clients indicates that sometimes blacks are perceived to be unwilling to discipline their staff, and appear to take the side of the employee. One possible explanation lies in a cultural upbringing that emphasises values associated with Ubuntu and that this, in turn, affects the effectiveness of performance management (Black & Geletkanycz, 2006). Certainly some studies strongly indicate that a perception from many quarters is that poor performance is perceived to be a common factor regarding black executives (Naidoo, 2008).

This factor can be largely explained by Booysen's extensive GLOBE (Global Leadership and Organizational Behaviour Effectiveness) studies; her section on Eurocentric versus Afrocentric leadership showed that dominant black traits compared with white managers include: a lack of future orientation and low assertiveness, combined with a high rating for humane orientation and collectivism (Booysen & van Wyk, 2008). This implies that black executives' leadership style may be different, and in a Eurocentric dominant corporate culture, may well be ineffective (Hofstede, 2006).

A common side-effect of fast-tracking can be derailment, due to promoting individuals too far out of their depth (Strauss, 2010). This is supported by Vuyo Jack, who cautions against someone being fast-tracked also being made to feel special, and counsels that it is important to establish whether the individual is genuinely interested in the positions being touted (Jack, 2007).

Issues in upbringing

Clearly apartheid has had a significant impact on the upbringing of black people living in South Africa who are now operating at or near executive levels, through policies such as forced removal, petty apartheid and families being fractured between urban and rural life (Castle, 1996; Mhlongo, 2010).

The levels of trauma experienced by blacks in particular have been studied very little, although one study found high levels of trauma experienced by South Africans generally (Williams, *et al*., 2007). It would seem that to succeed, despite the disadvantages of background, requires an unusually high level of resilience (Dass-Brailsford, 2005).

Other studies have highlighted that cultural factors, such as the African world-view of collectivism, family and socio-economic background, and particularly parental influence, have a marked impact on the choice of career and subsequent subject choice at university (Dass-Brailsford, 2005; Makoe, 2006; Mhlongo, 2010; Robbins, Wallis, & Dunston, 2003).

Emotional intelligence has sometimes been proposed as a key performance dependent, and indeed one study has demonstrated the link to profit performance

(Stein, Papadogiannis, Yip, & Sitarenios, 2009). Emotional intelligence has also been used to help identify leadership potential (Dulewicz & Higgs, 2000).

This section concludes that various factors contribute to the perception that black talent does not perform, including verbal acuity, a lack of superior qualifications and experience, family and socio-economic factors in upbringing, cultural background, particularly values associated with Ubuntu, and potentially emotional intelligence. In this context, it is proposed that coaching can play a role by helping executives appreciate their perceptions, effects and feelings about their background, how this may affect their leadership style, and to explore facets of emotional intelligence at work.

Lack of appropriate experience

In a paper prepared for the South African government as part of the international growth panel initiative, Andrews (2008, p. 16) argues that:

> *The biggest structural factor defining how business works centres on past experience in big, formal business. Very few managers and directors in South Africa's big businesses have traditionally reached their positions without years of work in the conglomerates, banks or other financial institutions*.

In a review of executive derailment, when a career is halted and even leads to dismissal, one study showed that performance is less likely to fall off at a more mature age, which correlates with the experience hypothesis (Strauss, 2010). Further, in a comparative study with the Malaysian experience, the author highlights the importance of experience for black management, claiming that the under-representation of blacks is due to combinations of discrimination and lack of experience and training (Lee, 2010).

2.4.3 Factor: Cultural incompatibility

Many studies on affirmative action mention negative experience amongst blacks discrimination regarding their perceived skills and experience (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2002; Black & Geletkanycz, 2006; Booysen, 2007; Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Boyatzis, et al., 2006; Conger, 2008; Groenewald & Schurink, 2007; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010;

Roman, 2011; Wöcke & Sutherland, 2008). Accordingly, it was predicted that this issue would surface strongly during the research.

Culture of the organisation

Organisational culture has been studied for many years and is regarded as an important factor affecting the behaviour of employees at work (Kahn, 2011; Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Schein, 2010).

The literature regarding progress on employment equity indicates that culture is likely to be a large inhibiting factor unless leadership has taken specific steps to create a diversity-tolerant one (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Booysen & van Wyk, 2008).

Sylvia Black warns that companies need to be careful with their approach, as if they lean towards towards a Eurocentric rather than an Afrocentric view, as this may cloud the evaluation of black managers' performance (Black & Geletkanycz, 2006). This duality of leadership style can have a significant effect on the culture of an organisation (Booysen, 2001).

A recent study highlighted marked differences in approach at work between ethnicities, with an apparent conflict between performance and cultural or social mores (Kim, 2010). Another study shows that black executives are likely to leave if they do not 'fit' the historically established organisation culture (Naidoo, 2008).

Personal cultural

At the personal rather than company level, several studies note that black leaders are likely to apply an African leadership style, often typified by the values espoused in Ubuntu (Khoza, 2006; McFarlin, Coster, & Mogale-Pretorius, 1999; van der Colff, 2003). Ulrich (2005) pointed out a significant difference in experience gained whether the person grew up in rural areas, under poor socio-economic conditions or in exile.

Booysen's follow-up to the worldwide GLOBE studies on national values highlights differences between white and black managers - whites are likely to be individually performance oriented, autocratic, aggressive and exhibit a very task-oriented and masculine approach. In contrast, black managers are likely to change plans more

easily, treat time commitments as desirable rather than absolute, and prefer interaction with others, being communal, democratic and inclusive (Booysen & van Wyk, 2008).

This section concludes that factors contributing to cultural incompatibility, whether at corporate or individual level, include a lack of sensitivity in the organisation to racial and cultural backgrounds, and highlights the differential between Afrocentric versus Eurocentric paradigms of leadership.

In this context it is expected that coaching can play a role by helping executives validate their personal values against those of the organisation, understand how these may affect their leadership style, and facilitate better communication between ethnic groups at the individual and corporate level.

2.4.4 Factor: Poor talent management

One possible cause of the current shortage of black management skills is that corporates in South Africa have failed to pay enough attention to talent management, with one study suggesting that management shortages may be a function of insufficient firm-level training and ineffective talent management strategies within firms (Pauw, *et al*., 2008).

Booysen's studies repeatedly note the general lack of talent management (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Booysen & van Wyk, 2008). This section combines the thinking behind talent management, leadership pipeline, succession planning, and retention strategies.

No succession planning

Several studies note the lack of succession planning as a factor explaining the lack of supply of suitable black executives. However, it is clear from the literature that succession planning is seen as a core component of talent management strategy (Groves, 2007; Munsamy, 2007). Booysen brings in the concept of "career pathing" in her latest work (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010, p. 230).

In one study, over 42% of corporates surveyed had no specific plans for facilitating upward mobility, nor were they perceived to be willing to actively attract or develop black managers (Matandela, 2008).

An alternative approach suggested by some is to apply the concept of space creation, where certain positions are deliberately reserved and created for blacks (Andrews, 2008; Jack, 2007; Selby & Sutherland, 2006).

Inadequate retention of skills

Clearly in a situation where there is an undersupply of good talent relative to demand, retention needs to play a major role. Horwitz and Jain (2011, p. 21) argue that "Scarce skills retention remains a critical problem, given the 'pull factors' pertaining to the current mobility of talent in global labour markets and 'push factors' including violent crime".

One obvious way of making sure the pipeline fills up is to ensure that it is not 'leaky', by retaining as many skills as possible. Accordingly, corporations need to pay special attention to ensuring the environment is receptive to black staff (Jack, 2007).

Regarding the retention of black professionals, mentorship and career aspirations are prominent requirements (Biyela, 2008; Janse van Rensburg & Roodt, 2007; Roman, 2011), and offering a leadership development process is often an effective retention strategy (Munsamy, 2007).

This section concludes that factors contributing to poor talent management include insufficient succession planning and poor retention strategies. In this context, coaching can play a role by helping executives to highlight their preferences with these issues, and to facilitate communication around these issues.

Summary of contributing factors

The section on the perceived difficulty of finding black talent concludes that various factors contribute, including an undersupply of appropriately qualified and experienced black executives, who often operate in different networks than are currently in place at big corporates in South Africa. In this context, coaching can play a role by helping corporates appreciate the differences in networks, and developing skills to assist executives to compensate for their relative lack of experience.

The section dealing with the perceived performance of black talent concludes that factors contributing to this perception include stereotyping, verbal acuity, a lack of

superior qualifications and experience, family and socio-economic factors in upbringing, cultural background, and potentially emotional intelligence. In this context, coaching can play a role by helping executives to appreciate their perceptions, effects and feelings about their background, how this may affect their leadership style, and to explore facets of emotional intelligence at work.

The section on cultural incompatibility as a factor concludes that cultural rejection, whether at corporate or individual level, includes a lack of sensitivity within the organisation to racial and cultural backgrounds and tolerance of diversity, and the difference between Afrocentric and Eurocentric paradigms of leadership. In this context, coaching can play a role by helping executives validate their values against those of the organisation, understand how these may affect their leadership style, and to facilitate communication between ethnic groups at individual and corporate level.

The section on inadequate talent management concludes that contributing factors include insufficient succession planning and poor retention strategies. In this context, coaching can play a role by helping executives highlight their preferences, and facilitating communication around these issues.

Coaching can play a useful role in resolving these contributing factors, thereby enhancing the talent management practices of South African corporates and ensuring they are better equipped to support the leadership development of black executives in senior management.

2.4.5 Research question 1:

As a result of the literature review, this enables the statement of the first research question:

> Establish what factors are perceived to be inhibiting the career progression of black executives

To increase the participation of black executives in top management fivefold to reach the EAP target will require dramatic growth in the number of effective black executives available in South Africa, and this calls for aggressive measures of leadership development.

Leadership development takes many forms, and is a complex field. Some authors have argued that an integrated approach to leadership development is required, using multiple methods (Bolt & Hageman, 2009; Collins, 2001; Lockwood, 2006). One such framework is suggested below:

Assessment	*Coaching*	*Learning*	*Experience*
Psychometric assessment Multi-rater feedback Competency assessment Assessment centers	Internal coaching External coaching Mentoring	Individualized development planning High profile learning events Technology-based learning options Leaders developing leaders Partnering with thought leaders Business school affiliations Development for intact teams	Stretch assignments Outside positions/projects Action learning

Figure 5: Four broad types of leadership development (Weiss & Molinaro, 2006)

This framework indicates that four aspects need to be covered to form a comprehensive approach, covering initial and on-going assessment, a variety of coaching options, skills learning and active learning on the job. While coaching is highlighted as a key tool within the framework, it is clear that a range of other interventions need to be considered if leadership development programmes are to succeed in creating a supply of leaders.

Another approach is to explore best practices in leadership development (e.g. Duke, 2008; Groves, 2007), with Duke adding the following elements to the Weiss and Molinaro framework (Duke, 2008):

- dedication to leadership development as part of the organisational culture
- responsibility of senior leaders in developing future leaders
- Use of leadership competencies and 360-degree feedback.

Thus assessment, coaching, learning and experience are key elements of a comprehensive and integrated leadership development programme. The next section explores how some of these developmental tools can be used to increase the supply of management skills.

2.4.6 Using talent management as a framework for development

Some human resource practice terms seem readily interchangeable, such as leadership development, talent management and succession planning. These terms have often not been defined or clarified sufficiently in the literature (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). This author will use the term talent management in the sense described by several authors as focusing on a set of processes to ensure that an adequate supply of employees are attracted to and retained in the talent pool, including succession management (Garman & Glawe, 2004; Kesler, 2002; Lewis & Heckman, 2006; Schweyer, 2004).

Another approach taken by some companies is to “develop deep and enduring bench strength” by combining succession planning and leadership development to create a “long-term process for managing the talent roster” (Conger & Fulmer, 2003, p. 2). Many companies globally have adopted practices to raise the profile of talent management, taking the argument as far as seeing human capital as a source of competitive advantage (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2002; Cappelli, 2008; Cohn, *et al*., 2005; Ready & Conger, 2007).

A good summary of an overall talent management approach is provided in Figure 6 overleaf: (Roman, 2011), derived from (Armstrong, 2003).

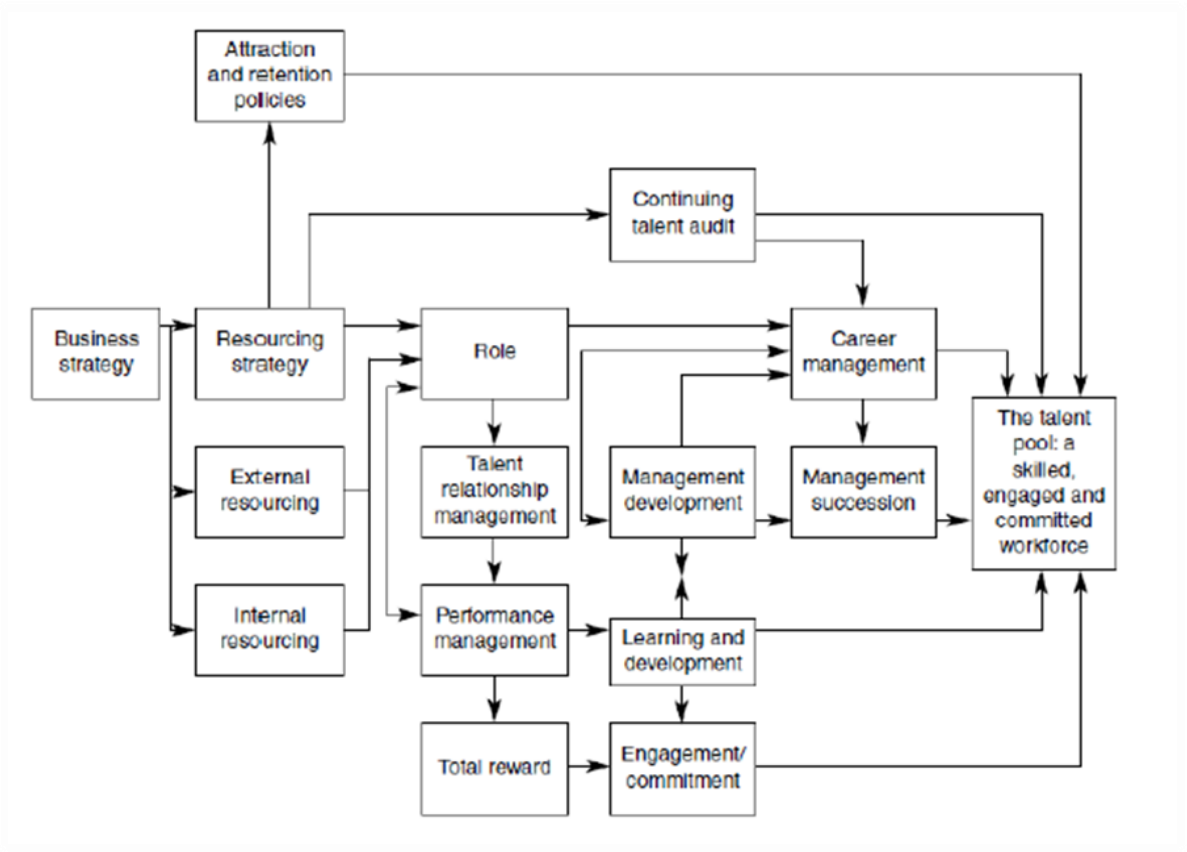

Figure 6:Aspects of talent management process (Roman, 2011)

The relevant aspects for this research from the diagram are to focus on retention strategy, management development and succession planning. Complementary to Roman's assessment, Schewyer (2004) presented the following comprehensive list:

- **Sourcing** (finding talent)
- Screening (sorting qualified and unqualified applicants)
- **Selection** (assessment/testing, interviewing, reference/background checking, etc. of applicants)
- Onboarding (offer generation/acceptance)
- **Retention** (measures to keep the talent that contributes to the success of the organisation)
- **Development** (training, growth, assignments, etc.)
- Deployment (optimal assignment of staff to projects, lateral opportunities, promotions etc.)

- Renewal of the workforce
- With analyses and planning as the adhesive, overarching ingredient.

These sourcing, selection, retention and development factors highlighted here by the author in bold will be used as primary criteria for analysing progress in the participation of black executives in South Africa.

Using the talent pipeline concept as a leadership development tool

Having established that talent management and the six passages of talent pipeline are useful frameworks for applying actions to increase the supply of management skills, this section develops the idea further, by considering the creation of a talent pool. Some companies use the concept of a talent pipeline to build up a pool of human capital (Charan, *et* al., 2008; Conger, 2008; Kesler, 2002; Kilian, *et al*., 2005).

A key tool for tracking potential and actual progress of a pool of executives is to map them onto a 3x3 matrix of their performance versus potential, as shown in Figure 7:

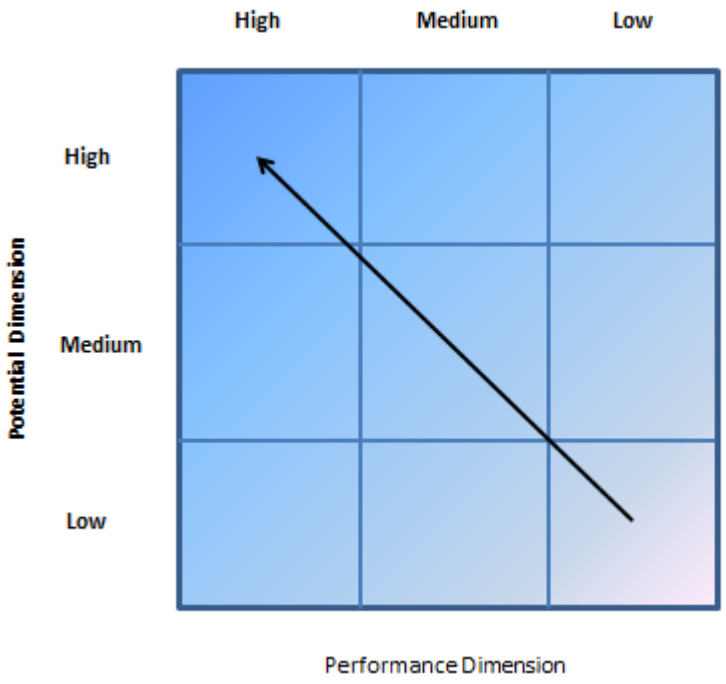

Figure 7: Potential-performance matrix (Charan, *et al.*, 2011)

This tool could be used as a leadership development device, after the executive has been in position for more than six months, to assess where the executive sits on the

matrix, enabling the creation of a personal development plan to move them to the upper left quadrant.

The concept of fast-tracking the development of executives already moving through the ranks was first suggested in the USA (Conger & Fulmer, 2003), and has been strongly supported by Vuyo Jack for BBBEE development purposes in South Africa in his provocative book on the subject (Jack, 2007). This concept deserves greater attention, and the field research emphasised this aspect.

Many of the relevant studies in South Africa indicate that talent management is, or should be, applied to developing executives (Booysen, 2007; Grobler & Warnich, 2002; Groenewald & Schurink, 2007; Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010; Strauss, 2010).

2.4.7 Developing culture tolerant of diversity

Cox (1991) initiated the concept of using diversity as a form of competitive advantage over 20 years ago, talking about the "the white male problem" and identifying six areas where diversity can bring advantage, as shown Table 2:

Table 2: Benefits from diversity management (Cox & Blake, 1991)

Argument	Support
Cost argument	As organisations become more diverse, the cost of a poor job in integrating workers will increase. Those who handle this well, will thus create cost advantages over those who don't
Resource acquisition	Companies develop favourable reputations as prospective employers for minorities. Those with the best reputations for managing diversity will win the competition for the best personnel.
Marketing	For multi-national organisations the insights and cultural sensitivity that members with roots in other countries bring to the marketing effort should improve those efforts in important ways. The same applies to operations in the domestic market
Creativity	Diversity of perspectives and less emphasis on conformity to norms of past should improve creativity
Problem solving	Heterogeneity in decision and problem solving groups potentially produces better decisions through a wider range of perspectives and more thorough critical analysis of issues
System Flexibility	The multicultural model for managing diversity becomes less determinant, less standardised and more fluid. Increased fluidity creates greater flexibility to react more quickly to react to environmental changes

Booysen and Nkomo (2010) highlight the differences between employment equity/affirmative action and diversity in Table 3:

Table 3: Major differences between employment equity/affirmative action and diversity (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010)

Employment equity/affirmative action	Diversity
Government initiated	Voluntary (company driven)
Legally driven	Productivity and business case driven
Quantitative – getting the numbers right	Qualitative – getting the organisational culture right
Problem focused	Opportunity focused
Assumes assimilation	Assumes integration
Internally focused	Internally and externally focused
Reactive – addressing historical discrimination	Proactive – addressing future inclusivity
Human resources focused	Human capital and social capital focused
Can lead to stigmatisation, tokenism and feelings of unfairness and polarisation	Enhanced appreciation of cultural difference and inclusivity
Tool: employment equity plan, quotas and preferential treatment	Diversity vision and plan, training, development culture and systems change

Accordingly, a diversity-based approach offers a solution to address many of the concerns that Booysen and Nkomo raised as inhibitors. This is supported by Ivancevich's (2000) call for a new approach, and links to the third leadership-based organisational paradigms that Ely and Thomas (2001) identified for managing diversity. These are the 'discrimination and fairness' paradigm, the 'access and legitimacy' paradigm and the 'integration and learning' paradigms. The first two increase diversity resistance while the last caters for working more constructively with diversity.

Nkomo, in her review of diversity management theory and practices in South Africa, identified 16 best-practice strategies to create an organisational culture that values diversity (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010):

- Create a superordinate social identity by establishing and evoking a compelling common organisation vision and set of values
- Adopt a human capital approach to human resources – where all employees are seen as valuable
- Link with and influence surround communities
- Use strategy of cross-cutting categories and roles in work structures
- Develop programmes that promote appreciation of cultural differences and multiple realities
- Promote positive attitudes towards differences among ethnic groups
- Encourage cooperative intergroup contact
- Invest in training, development and succession planning that builds multifunctional, globally oriented employees
- Hold all managers accountable for valuing diversity
- Identify and address concerns and needs of previously disadvantaged groups
- Involve representatives of all social identity groups in decision-making processes
- Challenge all stereotypes and assumptions about different groups
- Include everyone in after-work engagement and company-sponsored events
- Recognise that difference in time consciousness may be due to real obstacles and not a sign of laziness
- Recognise that family and community responsibility maybe a prime value of employees

- Be sensitive to holidays and use of religion in workplaces.

The GLOBE study claims whites are far more assertive, leading to comments such as “whites are autocratic and aggressive”. In contrast, blacks score highly on Humane Orientation and Collectivism, resulting in comments like “whites are more task focused than people oriented” (Booysen & van Wyk, 2008, p. 465).

Given national cultural traits, one would then expect a level of discomfort on the part of black executives when in the minority, given that a Eurocentric mode of operation would be strongly experienced as individualistic as opposed to a communalistic orientation.

2.4.8 Learning theories

When considering the effectiveness of leadership development, a consideration of which learning methods are most applicable also needs to be considered.

Learning theories suggest that four different abilities are required – concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (Kolb & Kolb, 2005), and thus these factors need to be considered for leadership development programmes. According to Honey and Mumford (1992), a key requirement for learning to take place is identifying the exact learning that is needed.

A coach therefore needs to investigate the styles of learning the client currently uses. A coach is also faced with the task of creating or highlighting potential learning opportunities for the client. Business coaching is uniquely positioned to assist individuals in developing this ability of ‘learning to learn’ (Gray, 2006; Stout Rostron, 2006) and, with some authors, consider learning to learn as at “the heart of learning” (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003).

Related to the ability of a coach to help clients learn, is the use of an integrated approach to learning. This takes into account knowledge about learning theories, learning cycles and learning styles. Awareness of learning styles can be useful for the both coach and client. Adult learning theories accentuate the importance of the learner’s self-actualisation, self-determination, and ability to develop and transform (Jarvis, Holford, & Griffin, 1998).

Since most learning style questionnaires rely on self-reporting and only indicate a preference, coaches should use the information gathered from the questionnaires as "starting point and not a finishing point" (Honey and Mumford, 1992, p. 4). The focus here should be on allowing the client to develop their abilities and not as an instrument to pigeon-hole people. In addition, the authors emphasise that the focus of their learning style assessment emphasises the observable behaviour of the individual and not the underlying psychological reasons for that behaviour. An additional consideration is that learning style assessments only indicate a general trend or preference and do not indicate an individual's ability.

Honey and Mumford (1992) identify areas where the knowledge of learning styles could be used to enhance learning:

- The ability to recognise which learning activities would be best suited to a learner based on the preferred style of learning
- The ability to implement activities best suited for the client's required learning
- The ability to recognise where and how learning processes could be improved.

Summary

Applying talent management frameworks that include performance-potential measures for succession planning, diversity management and learning theories should be key tools in South African companies to increase the supply of black executives. This involves attracting the right staff, developing and retaining them and, in so doing, compensating for pressure likely to be encountered by a less diversity tolerant culture than the ideal.

2.5 Coaching applied to leadership development

Although one can argue that coaching has existed in several forms over centuries, current practice in the business application is relatively new, only arising during the 1980s (Stout-Rostron, 2006).

The term coaching in this study means 'executive coaching' which, for the purpose of this study, is defined by the author, with credit to the Worldwide Association of

Business Coaches (WABC), as a “proven process that enhances high-potential executives and teams’ awareness and behaviour to achieve business objectives for both the client and its organisation” (WABC business coaching definition, 2011).

Other benefits of implementing coaching programmes include sustained behavioural change and transforming the quality of the executive’s life (Zeus & Skiffington, 2000). Most coaching is provided to high-performing middle managers and junior managers on the fast track, while executive coaching targets high-potential employees, problem employees and executives (Stout-Rostron, 2009).

Accordingly, coaching offers a promising means to accelerate fast-tracking a pipeline of executives to address the shortage of black executives in South Africa.

2.5.1 The role of coaching for executives in leadership development globally

Coaching appears often in leadership development articles as a key tool for effecting development (Bolt J.F. & Hageman, 2009; Boyatzis, et al., 2006; Burgoyne, Hirsh, Williams, & Britain, 2004; Cappelli, 2008; Dalakoura, 2010; Duke, 2008; K. Ely & Zaccaro, 2010; Groothof, 2007; Hernez-Broome & Hughes, 2004; Leskiw & Singh, 2007; Melum, 2002; Simpson, 2010; Zenger & Stinnett, 2006).

Ajani’s (2010) study shows various aspects where coaching has been effective in leadership, as illustrated in Figure 9:

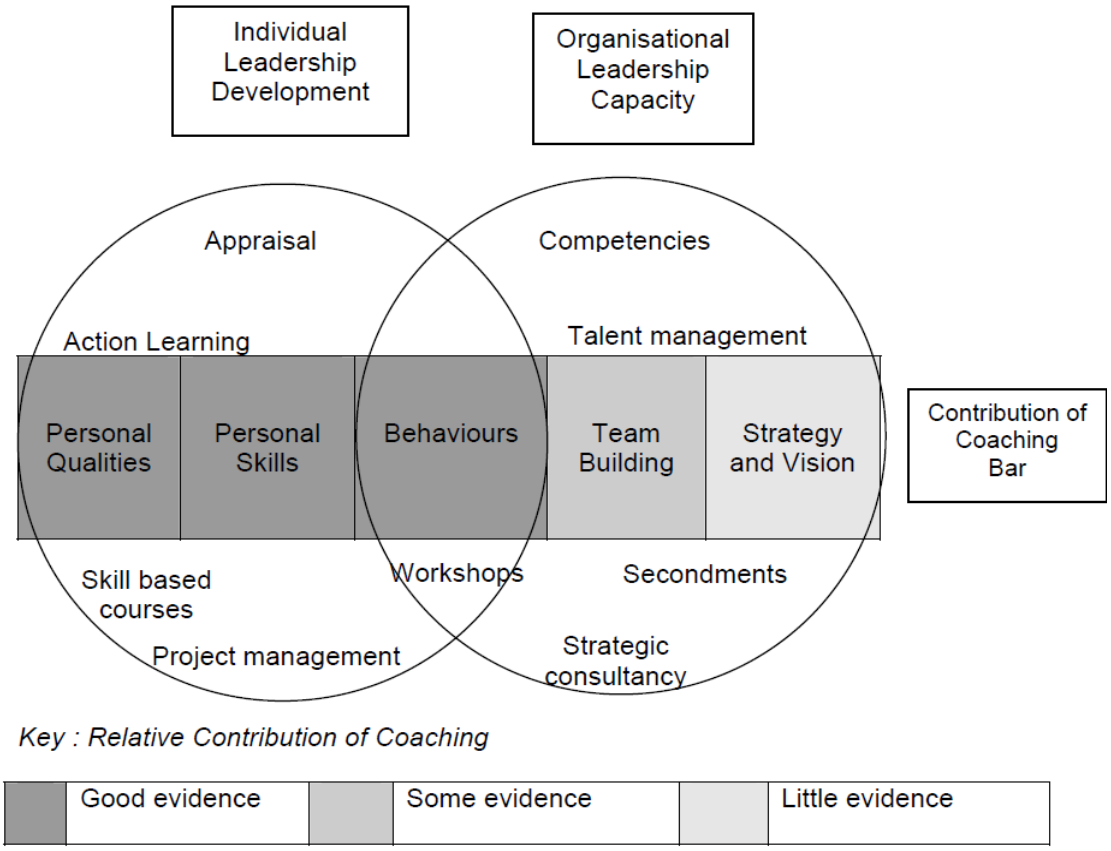

Figure 8: Contribution of coaching to individual leadership development (Ajani, 2010)

This research will focus primarily on the individual leadership aspects shown in Figure 8, that is on personal qualities, skills and behaviours, on the grounds that these aspects are the ones most accessible to coaches.

Tompson's (2008) global study of coaching practices with 1 000 participants indicates that leadership development is among the top reasons for using coaching:



Figure 9: Purpose chosen for selecting coaching (Tompson, 2008)

High-potential leaders and senior executives were the most common recipients of coaching programmes, as illustrated below from another study (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009).

To what extent does your organization use coaching for the following groups?

Responses	Percent Choosing a Lot or a Great Deal	Correlation with Coaching Success	Correlation with Market Performance
High Potentials	60%	.34**	.12
Executives	42%	.26**	.09
Expatriates	7%	.16%	.19**
Problem Employees	37%	.10	.01

** significant at p<.001

Figure 10: Recipients of coaching (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009)

Another study highlighted the benefits received by noting, “We found that coaching has much to offer executive directors in their professional and personal development. Coaching consistently led them to report significantly higher impact in specific

management areas, stronger leadership skills and more hopefulness and confidence" (McGovern *et al*., 2001:2).

One potential method for assessing the impact of coaching on performance at work is illustrated below:

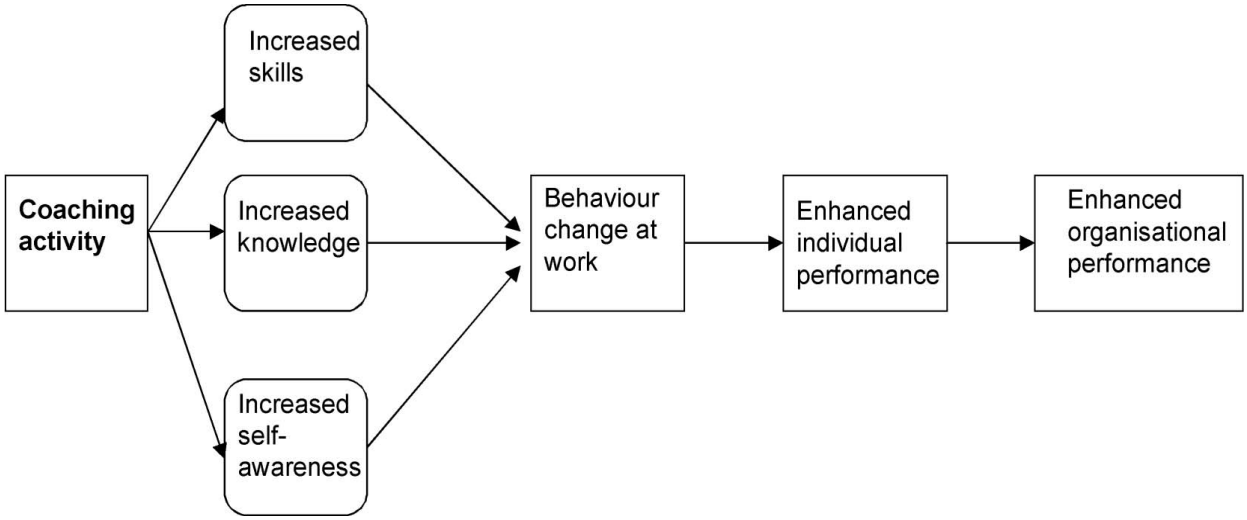

Figure 11: Kirkpatrick methodology for evaluating coaching (MacKie, 2007)

Thus coaching has already demonstrated its impact for high-potential executives and succession planning in leadership development.

2.5.2 Leadership style

Another aspect that can be assessed during a coaching programme is an individual's leadership style. This facilitates an understanding of the executive's own style and the mix of styles in the team, as well as to establish if there is a predominant style caused by culture.

A dominant model in this field is that of 'task-oriented styles' (pace setting and commanding) and 'people-oriented' (visionary, coaching, affiliative and democratic) (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002a). The writer prefers this approach rather than the style promoted by Bloch and Whiteley (2003), as the terminology in this version seems to resonate much better with South African clients, being more quickly understood.

2.5.3 Coaching versus mentoring

Some literature does not discriminate between coaching and mentoring. While coaching and mentoring are clearly understood academically as representing different approaches within the coaching industry, for this research it is assumed they represent the same support intervention, as respondents may not be able to make this distinction accurately.

Executive coaching has been proven as a successful leadership development tool in supporting minority talent pools, with Benavides' (2009) study noting that coaching is a better tool than mentoring for improving performance. The author also states, "Nearly one third of the respondents indicated that leadership skill improvement was the number one reason they participated in executive coaching" (Benavides, 2009, p. 81). One of the drawbacks to mentoring, however, is that often the programme is not structured effectively and then it fails due to meetings being cancelled, mismatching and mentor neglect (Clutterbuck, 2011; Eby & Lockwood, 2005; Y. Smith, 2006).

2.5.4 The role of coaching and mentoring in leadership development in South Africa

Coaching is seen by many studies in South Africa as a key leadership development tool (Abbott, Goosen, & Coetzee, 2010; Aricksamy, 2011; Biyela, 2008; Black & Geletkanycz, 2006; Booysen, 2007; Denton & Vloeberghs, 2003; Ghosh, 2001; Groenewald & Schurink, 2007; Horwitz & Jain, 2011; Jack, 2007; Kerr-Phillips & Thomas, 2009; Lee, 2010; Matandela, 2008; Motloung, 2008; Roman, 2011; Selby & Sutherland, 2006; Simpson, 2010; E. Wallis, 2011).

Some of the bigger listed companies such as Adcorp and Reunert match training with mentoring in holistic development programs (Andrews, 2008; Kilian, et al., 2005), and a study of talent pools found that mentoring was crucial (Groenewald & Schurink, 2007).

Although some people believe blacks are more likely to consider job-hopping, research shows that as they attain more senior levels, blacks become more committed to the company and feel they need a mentor (Khanyile, 2007). Interestingly, some studies have shown that it is not just money that prompts staff to migrate, but rather to find a

supportive culture, which includes the presence of coaching programmes (Booysen, 2007).

In a study of executive derailment in South Africa, Strauss (2010) states quite clearly that coaching should be seen as the primary development tool; in the coaching industry literature, this is seen as a common application for coaching (Shipper & Dillard Jr, 2000; Thach, 2002).

One study of Black Management Forum members indicated that blacks view coaching and mentoring as the most important factor contributing to their upward mobility (Matandela, 2008). In contrast, in a study of a South African manufacturing organisation, while coaching was seen as an effective tool the author also recommended that other support should be provided (Munsamy, 2007). A coaching support programme was supported in another study based on a face-to-face syndicated survey of 2 000 respondents (Khanyile, 2007), as well as studies at a parastatal (Boikhutso, 2005) and an investment bank (Motloung, 2008). Black managers at the SABC (South African Broadcasting Corporation) strongly support the use of coaching and mentoring (Motileng, 2005).

In a recent study that is most pertinent to this research, carried out on 226 executive clients of a South African coaching company, Wallis initially highlighted six main themes from the literature: motivation, goal setting, communication, conflict resolution, heightened self-awareness, and interpersonal relationships. Her subsequent thematic analysis of the field data resulted in a further six factors being identified as important in South Africa: improved work/life balance, improved strategic ability, heightened confidence, improved decision-making skills, acquisition of coaching skills and improved ability to manage company politics (Wallis, 2011). This study provides a platform for this research, and will be referred to often.

However, examining several similar studies overseas shows that common factors do not evolve in each study (McDermott, Levenson, & Newton, 2007; Natale & Diamante, 2005). For example, Bougae's (2005) study noted that participating executives described improvements in the following areas: interpersonal skills, self-awareness,

decision-making skills, team-building abilities, organisational skills, personal performance feedback, and positive personal impact.

Thus while coaching has already been applied in South Africa with executives, this research extends this knowledge to identify specifically which areas of leadership development coaching can address. This author does not believe there was sufficient evidence from previous research either globally or in South Africa that justified the application of predetermined themes to be researched. Accordingly, this research adopts an open-ended approach, which allowed black executives to express their own opinions and experience.

2.5.5 Research question 2:

This point in the literature review allows the definition of the second research question:

> Identify those perceived coaching needs of black executives that can accelerate their leadership development.

2.6 Conclusion of literature review

As a result of literature review, it is clear that South African blacks have suffered under previous discriminatory policies, and that due to economic growth, population age distribution, emigration and global competition for talent, concerted efforts need to be made to increase the supply of executives in senior management positions to compensate for the expected growth in management.

The level of participation of black male executives at top management levels is only at 20% of the distribution of black males in the economically active population. This is economically and politically unsustainable.

In examining how accelerating leadership development can be a means of increasing the supply of black executives, worldwide knowledge was evident in applying the talent management concept in developing a leadership pipeline to build a pool of executives.

A major portion of the literature review focused on exploring the factors that may be inhibiting black executives in their career progression, using the conceptual framework

of: difficulty finding black talent; black talent doesn't perform; cultural incompatibility; and poor talent management.

Although education has been an underlying cause of lack of supply, this factor appears to be diminishing. One factor that still inhibits fast-tracking is lack of appropriate executive experience.

Another factor affecting the success of black executives is a stereotype of poor perception of performance, but this is also related to both corporate and personal culture. In some cases, the corporate culture does not facilitate the attraction and retention of new black executives. In addition, there may be a clash between Afrocentric and Eurocentric cultural values, arising from an Ubuntu approach. Approaches to generating a culture that is more tolerant to diversity may be beneficial to the experience of black executives.

A major inhibiting factor is believed to be the lack of talent management, particularly succession planning, which in turn implies that there is no leadership pipeline. Inadequate retention strategies also cause attrition of the pipeline.

The global research shows that coaching has increasingly been deployed as a leadership development tool, particularly for high-potential executives and succession planning. The use of the Honey and Mumford (1992) learning styles may well be effective during this process.

In South Africa, several studies show that coaching has been applied with black executives, but there is little evidence on the specific factors affecting black male leadership development that coaching can address. Accordingly, this study closes the gap in knowledge over which factors coaching can most effectively be applied to in meeting the specific needs of black executives.

2.6.1 Research questions

Establish what perceived factors in South Africa are inhibiting the progression of black executives in their careers, and what perceived coaching needs they have for accelerating their leadership development.

2.6.2 Sub-problems

Establish what factors are perceived to be inhibiting the career progression of black executives

Identify those perceived coaching needs of black executives that can accelerate their leadership development

3 RESEARCH DESIGN METHODOLOGY

This section describes how the research questions were approached, and outlines the research design and methodology

3.1 Research paradigm

This empirical research was undertaken according to the “interpretivist” paradigm to capture the richness of content and perceived importance of factors, but in a relatively unstructured manner (Symes, 2010).

While interpretive, phenomenological and qualitative are seen as interchangeable by some authors (Hussey, 1997), this author used ‘interpretive’ to avoid confusion with the word phenomenology and the many interpretations associated with qualitative, as originally defined by Smith in his book (Smith & Osborn, 1998).

As commonly used in social science, an interpretivist methodology can surface practical meaning out of the work (Harding, 2009). A similar study on BBBEE barriers took a comparable approach in its methodology (Booysen, 2007), and several coaching studies have used the interpretivist approach (Groenewald & Schurink, 2007; Harding, 2009; Motileng, 2005; Symes, 2010).

3.2 Research design

The research highlighted the perceived limiting factors identified, and perceived coaching needs of, black male executives by conducting semi-structured interviews, some of whom had experienced coaching, while others had not.

Interviews were carried out in a “traveller” (Remenyi, 2011) or “Grand Tour” mode, (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002) that is, acting as a visitor to a broad variety of sites of interest, rather than “mining” a specific seam, to provide context across a wider range of issues.

Data triangulation was achieved by interviewing those with, and without, coaching experience. Further triangulation is difficult in this case, because of the confidential nature of issues to be discussed, but was achieved wherever possible by correlating

with other information provided by respondents, such as performance appraisals, 360-degree surveys, outcomes of coaching programmes or psychometric test results (Silverman, 2005).

3.2.1 Advantages

The advantage of this approach was that data saturation can be achieved within 12 interviews (Bowen, 2008; Fossey, et al., 2002; Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006; Sandelowski, 1995) and personal factors can be explored more deeply.

Due to the nature of the research questions, much of the data bears meaning and thus quantitative analysis could well miss much of the richness of information. Some limited analysis was done on pertinent demographic data supplied during the interview

3.2.2 Disadvantages

As the respondent had to recollect some of his experiences, the data collected may not have been totally accurate, thus suffering from a level of reconstruction bias (Mouton, 2001; Remenyi, 2011). In addition, the topic lends itself to interpretation through systems bias arising from the nature and history relating to the study. Accordingly, rigorous analysis was required, especially with data quality, validity, and reliability.

3.3 Population and sample

3.3.1 Population

The population for this research was black male senior executives employed in large private sector corporates in any industry headquartered in Gauteng, South Africa.

Black males were selected because this is the population sector suffering most from a lack of equity representation relative to Indian and coloured males (Burger & Jafta, 2010), and black females may have a more complex set of issues to deal with (Motileng, 2005).

In identifying respondents for the sample, this research was restricted to privately owned companies, as this is the area of the economy where the equity imbalance is most evident (Burger & Jafta, 2010).

In addition, the research required that the size of organisation lend itself to a significant number of senior managers, with an associated talent bench of leaders, and sufficient resources being applied to talent management and leadership development.

The industry type was not a major factor, although the author did achieve a reasonable spread across industries in the final sample.

3.3.2 Sample and sampling method

A purposeful sample was taken of senior black male executives who fit the criteria within the chosen population, including those who have and have not experienced coaching.

Table 4: Profile of respondents

Description of respondent type	**Number to be sampled**
Senior executives who have experienced coaching	7
Senior executives who have not experienced coaching	6

The topic was of sufficient relevance and importance to the private sector, coaching companies and HR practitioners, that there was ready access to this sample at the highest level and with companies where one would normally have expected some difficulty in access.

3.4 Demographic profile of respondents

This study was conducted in the Gauteng province of South Africa. The respondents were black male executives employed at senior management level in corporate organisations, and designated at least as functional managers as per the Drotter pipeline definition (Charan, *et al*., 2008). In total, 13 interviews were conducted.

As shown in Table 5, many respondents were very senior black executives at major South African corporations - what the employment equity commission might call 'top' managers, although this is dictated by the company's own classification:

Table 5: Summary of respondent profiles

Respondent pseudonym	Title	Industry	No employees	Coached	Access to mentor	Highest qualification	Nature of institution
Patrick	MD	Consulting	5 000	No	Unknown	MBA	HWI
Tshobe	MD	US software company	3 000	No	Yes	MBA	HWI
Jabalane	Ex MD of state-owned entity, now CEO	Telecoms, commodities	25 000	No	Yes, many	Masters	US
Lesedi	President	Industry lobby organisation	250	yes	Yes	MBA	US
Tebogo	HR manager	Hotel and gambling group	5 000	No	Unknown	BA	HBI
Themba	Executive	Auditing organisation	2 500	No	Unknown	MBA	HWI
Dingane	MD	Financial services	200	yes	Yes	BSc	HWI
Chris	MD	Executive search	10	No	Yes	MBA	HWI
Thabo	Executive director growth and strategy	Construction group	30 000	No	Unknown	MBA	Top
Jabu	MD - leadership development	Human resources	50	Yes	Yes	MSc	HWI
Phanuel	Finance executive – shared services	Construction group	30 000	Yes	Yes	BCom	HWI
Mpho	Head, business and mid corporates –big 4 bank	Financial services	12 000	Yes	Unknown	MBA	HWI
Zuko	Human resources director	Manufacturing	3 000	Yes	Yes	BA (hons)	Second tier

The majority of respondents had over twenty years' working experience and all but two had been managing other managers for at least ten years.

3.5 The research instrument

The primary research instrument consisted of an interview protocol that covered the outline of the respondent's information and the process to be followed; and a discussion guide to capture pertinent demographic information and provide a guide for open-ended questions (see Appendix B on page 180).

The research participant's information document and a letter of consent were provided at the interview. (see Appendix B on page 179). These records have been kept; and can be made available on request

3.6 Procedure for data collection

The discussion guide was pretested and then field tested on two potential respondents to ensure the wording was appropriate, did not cause offence in covering potentially sensitive topics and that pertinent information was captured.

All interviews were recorded, except for one very senior participant who refused permission, and one recording failure, where field notes were taken in those instances. If deemed appropriate during the interview, the researcher also asked for information from the respondent on their perceptions of their coaching experience.

To assist with validity and reliability, verbatim transcripts were made from the recordings, and recordings subsequently used to verify any field notes.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

The data was analysed and interpreted through qualitative content analysis, not to quantify the data, but to focus on thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a method for actively identifying, analysing and reporting repeated patterns or themes in data (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Mouton, 2001; Saldana, 2009).

A general analytic procedure was carried out on the content of the interviews to establish the salient factors (Hussey, 1997), using Atlas software (CAQDAS) to code topics, build them into categories and summarise those into themes. Saldana (2009), quoting several other authors, suggests that 80-100 codes, 15-20 categories and five to

seven themes are appropriate. This research resulted in 140 codes, 22 categories, and four themes.

A deductive approach to coding was adopted, using the discussion guide as a structure to develop a set of codes as shown in appendix C on page 188. These codes were then applied to the transcripts, so that patterns emanating out of the data could be identified. As the analysis proceeded, these codes were then sorted into families, then categories and finally themes. Although the findings are summarised by category in the findings by showing a table extract from Atlas, the importance or weighting of comments is based more on the number of respondents who mentioned it, rather than the absolute number of quotations. Some respondents would have several quotes on the same topic coded within their transcript.

A copy of the transcripts, all using pseudonyms to protect the identity of the respondent and their organisation, as per the Wits research code of ethics, has been provided on the CD attached to the back cover of this report. The CD also contains a soft copy of the report, and an extract of all 808 quotations coded during the analysis, sorted by code. For people who have access to the Atlas software, an extract of the whole analysis, called a 'bundle', has also been provided on the CD, for those who may wish to review the coding and analysis process in more detail. This report will only provide the summary findings and analysis.

As a general approach, qualitative analysis will emphasise the significance or importance of the statements, rather than implying importance from the number of occurrences (Saldana, 2009).

Summary analysis of respondents was carried out to better understand relevant aspects of their backgrounds, such as their experience and qualifications as shown in Table 4: Profile of respondents on page 47.

3.8 Limitations of the study

The study covers black male executives, and therefore results cannot be extrapolated across black female executives, who may encounter a different set of environmental factors, nor all categories of previously disadvantaged individuals.

Limitations are associated with the small size of sample, and being restricted to the Gauteng region.

The interviewer cannot be totally objective, as the subject of the research lends itself to bias.

Results from qualitative analysis cannot be fully generalised.

3.9 Validity and reliability

The human researcher is subject to sources of bias that can weaken the validity of data collection, analysis and interpretation (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

To seek the truth using qualitative methods, one needs to avoid anecdotalism. Triangulation between those with and without coaching experience will provide some validity, but this research cannot apply respondent validation, except through data saturation (Silverman, 2005).

Other techniques to assist with validity include using the constant comparative method between different interviews, and comprehensive data treatment to ensure sufficient cases have been collected (Myres, 2008; Silverman, 2005).

3.9.1 External validity

External validity comes about if the extent of a relationship observed in one context can be trusted to apply in different contexts (Carlile & Christensen, 2004).

The researcher needed to be mindful that any generalisation would not apply under different circumstances. Applying some aspect of triangulation improves the validity of the research (Golafshani, 2003).

3.9.2 Internal validity

Internal validity is the extent to which conclusions are unambiguous and all other plausible alternative explanations have been eliminated (Carlile & Christensen, 2004).

Verbatim interview transcripts using Atlas software were treated rigorously in their coding to reduce this possibility.

3.9.3 Reliability

Reliability is the extent to which another researcher could come to the same conclusion (Carlile & Christensen, 2004). Thus the researcher needs to counter being subjective as much as possible while doing the analysis.

From a qualitative standpoint, this has also been termed “dependability”, and this implies that ‘trustworthiness’ of the findings needs to be tested (Golafshani, 2003).

4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The findings from this study are presented within the context of the research problems, which have been synthesised into an analysis framework. The responses derived from the interview transcripts were analysed by applying 140 codes. These were initially generated from a set of codes that were derived from the research questions and interview discussion guide, and complemented by a few further codes generated in the analysis during the coding process. During the analysis, these were subsequently summarised into 22 categories that accumulated into four major themes represented by 15 sub-themes.

This section highlights the differences between executives who have been coached and those who have not, presents findings on the perceived progress on supply of black executives, outlines the inhibiting and contributory factors that emerged, and describes the perceived coaching needs related to addressing those needs.

4.1 Differences between coached and non-coached

The sample was separated into those executives who have received coaching and those who have not, for triangulation purposes. In general, there was little difference in opinion between the two groups, so results are not separately reported, unless there was a distinct difference evident.

As highlighted in the Atlas report shown in Table 6 overleaf, the only factors by summary category that vary significantly from the expected distribution between the two groups are: the attitude towards coaching for human and technical skills; gaining experience and visibility; job-hopping; perception of black executive performance; and succession planning.

Table 6: Summary of quotations by category

	7	6	13
	Coached	Not coached	TOTALS:
Black culture	21	27	48
Coaching approach/strategy	39	33	72
Coaching for conceptual skills	36	31	67
Coaching for Human Skills - Interpersonal skills	19	27	46
Coaching for Human skills - intrapersonal skills	31	33	64
Coaching for technical skills	11	14	25
Education	31	26	57
Equity employment issues	46	43	89
Equity employment strategy	32	27	59
Experience	39	22	61
Gaining visibility	24	32	56
Influence of upbringing	32	25	57
Job Hopping	32	22	54
Mentorship	10	10	20
Negative cultural effects	41	31	72
Perception of Black executive performance	42	28	70
Performance Management	25	21	46
Positive cultural effects	20	20	40
Retention	9	9	18
Succession planning	9	7	16
Supply of Executives	69	61	130
Talent Management	50	53	103
TOTALS:	668	602	1270

4.2 Progress on the supply of black executives

As a general open question at the start of the interview, the author asked the respondent his views on South Africa's progress in generating a supply of black executives for senior management.

The vast majority of respondents commented that the supply of black executives is still too low:

> *I'm still very worried about the numbers though, the good number of quality students that are emerging, the numbers are still too low for my liking, it could be better. Sometimes when I look at the young graduates today, I get a bit worried at their competency levels, it's still not there, we still have a long*

way to go. There are very few good quality youngsters. ***P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:21 [I'm still very worried about t..] (121:121)***

Most black executives take a long time to arrive, you don't just decide. You take time to think things over and look at the implications of the thing, and see how it will affect other people. You don't just act on the spur of the moment and say that's it. ***P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:66 [Most black executives take a l..] (201:201)***

What we do is we research the total target population against a specific brief or against very specific requirements. And then what we tend to do is highlight the names of people of colour against those very requirements, and you will find that the proportion is very, very small. We might come up with 500 names in that target population of which 15 or 20 of them will be black individuals ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:7 [we might come up with 500 name..] (99:99)***

Regarding specifically the progress on employment equity participation at senior management levels, comments from almost all executives were very negative:

Very badly, there has been a total focus on employment equity scores and no real development. ***P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:1 [Very badly, there has been a t..] (66:66)***

The level of supply is low; there is a pyramid, where the top echelon is predominantly white. So we need to make a very targeted effort to build the supply, not just "ticking the box", or making a "grudge" investment. ***P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:61 [The level of supply is low The..] (75:77)***

The performance of the country as a whole is probably pedestrian. I'd rather say pedestrian than poor or very good because we are making progress. **P4: Lesedi.docx - 4:85 [I think the performance of the..] (85:85)**

Some executives did note that there are now some cases where the quality of the executives coming through is good.

So we are doing well with producing quality. ***P4: Lesedi.docx - 4:9 [So we are doing well with prod..] (88:88)***

Several respondents linked the supply of executives back to the contribution to the growth of the country's economy and emphasised that, in their opinion, coaching is a worthwhile way of providing the quality and numbers of senior executives.

> *I think as companies, we need to understand that even if our white workforce were to help, we cannot help this country to grow, we don't have enough skilled people. Once we start to understand that, even the current black people that we have that are educated are not enough to grow the economy at the rate we need, if you can start to understand that, everything else will go away because the opportunities are so huge.* **P3: Chris.docx - 3:56 [I think as companies, we need ..] (154:154)**

The key point here is that companies and organisations need leaders to motivate all their staff to participate, both black and white, so that previously advantaged people can still contribute to growing the economy.

> *I think for us as a country, we just need to find a way of utilising those compatriots who have the time, who have the skill and I think we would grow by leaps and bounds.* **P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:74 [I think for us a country we ju..] (167:167)**

One respondent suggested using managers as coaches to create a multiplying effect, and the majority of respondents suggested using older experienced executives to help create a new generation of senior executives.

One or two comments were made on the benefit of gaining education or experience overseas. Four respondents were educated overseas; others had experienced trips overseas associated with courses studied in South Africa, and one had set up five positions for staff that allowed them to spend time with the parent company in the US.

From a global mobility perspective, no one highlighted the risk of losing talent overseas. One even mentioned that many white executives have been choosing to stay in South Africa rather than emigrate.

> *Rather than before when they said we have Australia to go to or Canada to go to, they are realising that the grass is not as green and they are saying*

let's water and irrigate our own grass here so that it is great. **P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:91 [Rather than before when they s..] (164:164) (164:164**

Six respondents pointed out that some of the best talent had chosen an entrepreneurial route rather than corporate life, possibly because of disillusionment or clash with the culture, or the perception that more wealth could be made that way.

The youth who are saying why do I go to school, rather than be active in the ANC and then show that I have a wonderful position, get tenders and I'm then going to live a good life, thank you very much. **P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:65 [The youth who are saying why d..] (162:162)**

A third of respondents mentioned exposure to senior management or at a state-owned entity as key to generating the experience needed to be an effective executive.

Another point raised by many respondents was that it depended on whether one was coming through the 'hard' or 'soft' skills route.

Still it's a very, very big problem. I have seen when I was in human resources, I had to recruit for executives into marketing and finance, your slots for operational, it's been a challenge, you don't have those people. The varsities and the colleges don't supply those individuals with the necessary skills and the necessary knowledge. **5: Tebogo.docx - 5:49 [Still it's a very, very big pr..] (110:110)**

In summary, although half of the respondents felt that South Africa is making some progress in developing black executives, the majority felt that progress was too slow, and four respondents condemned what they called malicious compliance or 'just ticking the boxes'.

So we need to make a very targeted effort to build the supply, not just ticking the box, or making a grudge investment. **P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:11 [So we need to make a very targ..] (77:77)**

4.3 Contributing factors

This section deals with factors that contribute to the poor supply and employment equity status arising from the theoretical framework and discussion guide. Although originally based on the literature review in the proposal, this section deals more comprehensively with all topics related to inhibiting or contributory factors that evolved from completing the analysis of codes and categories during the research.

In order of importance, the seven most salient factors emanating from the research were:

- Cultural effects
- Perceptions of black executive's performance
- Education
- Influence from upbringing
- Gaining visibility
- Lack of experience
- Access to mentorship.

As shown in Table 7 below, black culture, perceptions of black executive performance, gaining visibility, and experience are the only contributing factors that vary significantly from the expected distribution of coached versus non-coached respondents.

Table 7: Summary of contributing factors

Respondents	7	6	13
	Coached	Not coached	TOTALS:
Negative cultural effects	41	31	72
Black culture	18	22	40
Positive cultural effects	20	20	40
subtotal of cultural effects	79	73	152
Perception of Black executive performance	42	28	70
Education	31	26	57
Influence of upbringing	32	25	57
Gaining visibility	24	32	56
Experience	34	14	48
Mentorship	10	10	20
TOTALS:	252	208	460

The next section covers the seven contributing factors one by one.

4.3.1 Cultural effects

During the research, it became apparent that there are several different aspects of cultural factors at play. The corporate culture exhibited by companies features strongly, as do unique aspects of black culture, and some more generic effects. In general, there was no discernible effect in this area between coached and non-coached respondents, though clearly executives experience far more negative effects than positive.

Negative cultural effects

Clear evidence emerges from the research that the large majority of respondents have experienced or observed hugely negative aspects of corporate culture as a black executive in the organisation. Executives frequently used strong descriptors to express how they feel about this. In some cases, this has been a primary driver for executives to leave organisations.

> *He could have failed a few tests of resilience within the culture, which unfortunately is anti-black. So I'm suspecting that he got stabbed by the culture and he was not prepared to sustain himself and go through that pain.* **P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:14 [he could have failed a few tes..] (126:126)**

> *There are organisations that are not conducive for black people; the way they do things is not accommodative of other races.* **P 5: Tebogo.docx - 5:26 [Yet there are organisations th..] (173:173**

> *So let's talk about it in a corporate context, so now you come there…you've been working hard, doing well at school, etc. etc, and for someone to give you a sense that based on your skin colour, we expect less from you because you are inferior. So racism in the workplace is a big part as to why you can't have black executives strive in the corporate sector.* **P 8: Dingane.docx - 8:42 [So let's talk about it in a co..] (163:163)**

> *Yes, in fact people are being pushed out of the company because of the culture. People get into companies and they feel excluded largely because of the culture. However, something needs to be done to open up the culture. to embrace it because there is a lot of common ground, and if the emphasis can be not so much about the culture but about what the company stands for, its*

service is to its customers, I'm telling you things will change. ***P 3: Chris.docx - 3:54 [Yes, in fact people are being ..] (167:167)***

Clearly the effect of persistent racism that is still evident in many corporate cultures has an impact on the progression of black executives. The research continues by expanding on several related factors.

Role played by black culture

In exploring cultural factors, specific black cultural factors emerged. Sometimes the differences created a distinct clash with the corporate culture the executives experienced.

Half the respondents raised pressures they face from their cultural backgrounds, where granting respect to superiors and elders is expected. This contrasts with the common need in corporates, at least with those exhibiting Eurocentric cultures, to be robust in tackling issues, regardless of title or age.

> *So it takes time for you to acclimatise yourself to the culture. So that is why I'm saying are we sensitive enough to understand the cultures or are we so content with our cultures that we believe everybody must know that I am black and my culture is like this? I don't jump to issues, I respect elders and I just expect everybody to just take that as a positive. That's not true, to some people that is being submissive, that's being weak, that's being unsure, that's having no esteem, and you are out of the game. By the time your performance evaluation comes, you are dead.* ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:36 [So it takes more time for you ..] (189:189)***

> *Undoubtedly, in the black community sometimes, if you are my elder I am supposed to respect and listen to you and all those kinds of things. That's not how it works in the corporate culture or in the white community.* ***P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:47 [Undoubtedly, in the black comm..] (154:154)***

> *In the black community, you've got to be very diplomatic about it, you have to listen to an elder person even if you disagree with him and do it nicely. So there is that element of confrontation with issues as compared to an indirect*

confrontation That's a problem because we are taught to not be confrontational, to be diplomatic in our approach in the way we do things. But your corporate culture requires you to not waste time and address the issue. ***P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:48 [In the black community you've ..] (154:154)***

Some respondents apparently still struggle with this factor, particularly those who have not been coached. Some of the more successful executives have learnt to change this:

I had to break a lot of my stereotypes from my black culture of telling someone older and respectable and the boss. It took a lot of reflections and a lot of support. So the culture issue is huge. In boardrooms and meetings when you see how black executives make contributions, you raise your hand and you wait to be appointed to talk, you've lost the trick from the beginning because that is not how those cultures work. **P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:62 (187:187)**

In particular, it was apparent that those executives who had spent some time working overseas, especially in the US, had learnt to overcome this hurdle. This surfaces as a major issue needing attention for most black executives. One respondent labelled this inability to confront people a "politeness barrier", and pointed out that it happens particularly across the colour line; something South Africans need to learn to get past.

A third of executives brought up the cultural background of Ubuntu and associated values, and how this can affect black executives at work. This has an effect on leadership style, as it pushes people to adopt a more democratic or affiliative style:

I think our failure has little to do with the values of where our people are coming from, in fact if we could be embracing more of that Ubuntu and all of that and liberating that. Even with my own leadership style, people are finding life is different. Because everybody can come to my office, there is no hierarchy. That is actually a culture thing, but it is helping with the performance of the company because it opens communication, not coming from that British hierarchical manner. **P 3: Chris.docx - 3:2 [I think there are, I think som..] (165:165)**

Another example quoted often was the tradition of attending funerals, even if one didn't know the person. Several instances were cited of how surprised other employees were when senior black executives attended funerals without knowing the deceased.

Positive cultural effects

In cases where the corporate culture has been experienced as supportive, some organisations actively support the development and fast-tracking of black executives.

> *So the experience has been phenomenal, it's been good and bad. Good in the respect that you have that kind of nurturing environment where you are moulded to become a better person. There are good experiences and there are bad experiences. From my personal perspective, I have fallen into the guys who were exposed to good mentors and good organisations. But you do have to fight sometimes, it's not easy all the time.* **P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:91 (125:125)**

> *To be able to succeed I needed a very strong and supportive board. I don't think that my board was necessarily strong, but they were supportive, they gave me the opportunity.* **P 8: Dingane.docx - 8:45 [I was responsible for strategy..] (115:115)**

One respondent indicated that one can create a positive environment by highlighting the potential for growth within the organisation.

> *I think to retain black executives you've got to show them the possibilities if they work hard, and they can achieve the highest of corporate life, and corporate positions if they work very hard. And show them that there are opportunities in the organisation.* **P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:86 (178:178)**

Another suggestion is to support executives actively with programmes such as formal coaches or mentors.

> *Also you might want to have support programmes, have them meet some of their weaknesses; there are some areas where black executives needed to be nurtured, needed to be helped, and if that is the case then they will do*

that. They will be mentored or paired with somebody to work with, and they will be developed. **P 9: Jabalane.docx 9:29 [Yes, they are happy with that ..] (132:132)**

The contribution of personal values that people bring into the organisation, or are expected by the culture to adopt, do play a major role:

I need people who transcribe to the values because transformation for me is not a black or a white thing. A white person can transform this company, a black person can stop this company from transforming, it has happened many times. People want to be the only black in the environment, so it's not about that, it's about the belief system and how these people are open to helping others and those are the things I look for. **P 3: Chris.docx - 3:43 [I need people who transcribe t..] (168:168)**

And you get taught a whole lot of things, like lessons in conflict management, you get taught leadership, you get taught continuous input. It's nice, what I like about that is it also sort of aligns people with the values of the company as a whole. Because the whole company can go there. **P 6: Phanuel.doc - 6:70 (473:473)**

Some respondents pointed out that the culture in South Africa is uniquely tolerant compared with other countries, and this represents an opportunity for the private sector to excel at global operations.

One thing about growing up in South Africa is that we are very adaptable and tolerant, especially black people. **P11: Field Notes Patrick.docx –(99:99**

There is no country anywhere else in the world where you are likely to find such challenges and issues in and around corporate culture than in this one. That is across racial, gender, creed, from that particular aspect, religious. I think it's a matter of getting to the position of understanding and of appreciation, but not necessarily accepting, just having an appreciation of where the other parties are coming from, in order to view that much more depth and flexible in developing leadership. **P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:37 [I think in the South African c..] (190:190)**

Family support, either regarding education or values, is another aspect that has contributed strongly to the success some of the executives in the sample.

> *And then the importance of education is so clear, came from my mother.* ***P 3: Chris.docx - 3:36 [And then the importance of edu..] (159:159)***

> *At school, during the holidays I was working 100 or 110%, and at the end of the school holiday my father would pay me and my other brothers for the time we spent, so we had money because he was paying us. He was working us so hard that it was clear that we would not want to do manual labour for our sustenance. We had negative motivation towards education, he'd say if you are uneducated this is the kind of life you will live. You choose the alternative and we went to school!* ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:84 [I would say probably 3. One, I..] (134:134)***

> *I was lucky enough to grow up in a family of so-called academics if I have to call that, that went to school and they understand the value of going to school.* ***P 5: Tebogo.docx - 5:20 [I was lucky enough to grow up ..] (157:157)***

> *My grandfather used to buy the Rand Daily Mail everyday and he would say to me Papi, here is the newspaper, read the Rand Daily Mail. So I would read it in English and then he would say to me, so what did you think? So it was a way of teaching me how to understand the English language, and he wasn't very literate himself. He just felt that he should impart something on his kids, and it might have been a small thing, but for me it was a huge thing. He also had encyclopaedias that he bought for us at home, and at the age of 7 or 8 we would go through encyclopaedias.* ***P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:44 [I was about 12, 13 somewhere a..] (150:150)***

> *I got a lot pressure from my family to succeed, but also lots of support. They said that the next generation must do much better than their parents.* ***P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:29 [I got a lot pressure from my f..] (109:110)***

4.3.2 Perceptions of black executive performance

One of the most striking factors surfacing from the research is the perception espoused by the majority of respondents on an enduringly negative view of black executives'

performance. More than half the respondents stated categorically that the perception often at the outset is that black executives cannot or will not perform, and therefore they are not given opportunities to prove themselves.

> *There is another aspect where some companies and some white executives see black people as lazy buggers. They see them as people who were done a favour to get to where they are without working hard to get there. They see them as beneficiaries of affirmative action and with that as a result look at them with contempt, so there is that problem. Unfortunately, some black executives play into it, because they behave the way they are expected to behave.* **P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:30 [There is another aspect where ..] (133:133)**

> *There is a national assumption that whites will do better in a job unless you can prove otherwise to them. Thus you have to go out of your way to do more than your white colleagues in order to earn a reputation.* **P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:24 [There is a national assumption..] (98:98)**

Some admitted that a contributing factor to this was that some previous black executives had failed, perhaps because they had been placed in a position beyond their competence, and this has exacerbated the situation, as people then often talk about the failure.

> *Unfortunately some execs have made a hash of their opportunities, and now that is perceived as the standard. People will always talk about the cases which failed, not the successes*. **P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:25 [Unfortunately some execs have ..] (101:101)**

Some negative views on this included that sometimes it amounts to 'talent fronting'.

> *But I have noticed that some of the senior black people that are employed are weak people. So the sense I'm getting is it's easier for them to manage those people. Because somebody they can pay way more than they would get in a highly competitive market, then the person is beholden to you. Then you can manage them and drive them*. **P 8: Dingane.docx - 8:20 [But I have noticed that some o..] (132:132)**

Five respondents highlighted that the perception was changing, however, and that there are now some high-profile examples of successful black executives at major corporations.

> *In the past this was a major problem, but now it has really changed, with the calibre of leaders at MTN, FirstRand, IDC, etc.* **P11: Field Notes Patrick.docx - 11:9 [In the past this was a major p..] (87:87)**

> *I think with the kinds of compensation packages and the expectation of C-level executive people, there is an expression, the air is very thin up there. They are expected to meet with those requirements irrespective of whatever racial or gender requirements.* **P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:28 [I think with the kinds of comp..] (172:172)**

A related aspect was that nearly half the respondents mentioned that black executives need to work extra hard to earn their stripes to generate respect. This is linked to another perception that blacks have to prove they can execute, before being given opportunities.

An associated concept is that there is a perception that, certainly historically, black executives were placed in 'softer' roles like human resources or marketing, and it is only recently that black executives have been taking up technical roles in operations and finance. In these positions, it has been harder to prove performance.

A respondent from the executive search business stated that one of the reasons for high mobility was:

> *Because some organisations try to get away with bringing black executives without portfolio and then saying I will try to find something for you to do once you are in.* **P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:41 [And that's mainly driven becau..] (202:202)**

A few respondents claimed that, with some executives, there is a sense of entitlement in obtaining a senior rank.

4.3.3 Education

In general, half the respondents believed the quality of education obtained by black executives coming through the ranks now is no longer such an issue. This seems to be attributed to relatively recent attendance at a historically white university or even overseas.

> *What I find more often than not is that black executives are much more qualified than their white counterparts, almost always. That to me is a surprise, but there they are. They are more qualified, they got MBAs, MAP, so many things, but they lack, most of the time, experience.* **P 3: Chris.docx - 3:17 [What I find more often than no..] (132:132)**

Several respondents pointed out how hard it was to "get your CV to the top the pile" if you came from one of the 'homeland' universities or historically black institutions (HBIs).

One of the more surprising comments was that black executives quite often are now perceived to be over-qualified, or at least more highly qualified than their white counterparts.

However, there is still a major concern that the continuing poor quality offered by the historical "Bantu" education will severely hamper the supply of new executives into the pipeline.

> *The current leadership which we are having at top level are black people who are the products of Bantu education. It's a historical fact that Bantu education was inferior and therefore those people in a sense are succeeding against the odds. They have built on fairly shaky foundations within the superstructure and [it] is something to behold*. **P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:80 [Firstly is the quality of educ..] (92:92)**

> *My view is that we really need to work on the education system in this country. If you don't get that right, you will not improve the good quality numbers that you want to get that can be injected into the economy of our country. So as you can see the malaise of our country is our education.* **P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:10 [My view is that we really need..] (104:104)**

Another factor brought up by several respondents is that the government needs to play a key role in continuously driving up the quality of education.

> *I think, in terms of talent management, we do need to accept that the concept of the war on talent, it continues to rage. The struggle though I think we have is that in military strategies they say there is a war but the war is constituted by a series of battles. I don't think we have defined our battles well enough. We look at the war and sometimes we raise our hands and say it is insurmountable. Whereas if we had to say government, your role is to produce a literate student, whether it's Grade 12 or tertiary education, specialise in that and do the best you can. At some stage we kind of blame the education system and we say garbage in, garbage out. Whereas that concept in IT makes sense, garbage in, garbage out, however people should not be dealt with as garbage. They may have not been trained well, however, one may do even mid-stream training. And I think we need to do that better in terms of in-service training as the industry across the board*. **P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:86 [I think in terms of talent man..] (144:144)**

A major concern of several respondents is the misalignment between tertiary institutions and what industry requires. In light of the failure of the FETs (further education and training institutions), significant effort will be needed to understand industry's requirements, and produce skills appropriate for the private sector's needs.

> *Our universities, our technikons and our schooling system in my view has very little relevance to the needs of the economy, even up to now. We are struggling to find the alignment between what happens in the classroom and what is required in industry.* **P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:8 (101:101)**

It is perhaps no coincidence that two thirds of the respondents grew up with family values that strongly encouraged schooling and further education.

All respondents had bachelor's degrees and only three did not have a master's degree. So from the sample, one can deduce that university education is an important factor for success as a black executive at senior management level.

4.3.4 Influence of upbringing

One of the most salient aspects the researcher noticed during his interviews was the extent to which significant events and people in the executive's upbringing had played a role in their development and success. Many mentioned a role model as a major factor:

> *I had a father in the classic sense, he was a Calvinist. His view was if it's not painful for you it's not good for you, and consequently [he's] a successful rural businessman in his own right.* **P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:40 [I had a father in the classic ..] (134:134)**

> *I think it's a very important part of me, I grew up with a father in Robben Island, I grew up with a mother in exile. So I had to fend for myself. My father in particular is a hero to me, he could have chosen the easy route, he has suffered tremendously.* ***P 8: Dingane*.docx - 8:28 [I think it's a very important ..] (151:155)**

> *I was a student in university, and I said to my grandfather, I'm about to graduate in the US and I think it's time for me to come home to South Africa, and he said no, no, no young man, to do what? I said I will come and work and look after you and he said no I've lived my life, it's time for you to prepare for yourself, to prepare yourself for your own life. So you go out there and get the best preparation that you can get so that you can be a better person.* **P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:46 [I was a student in university,..] (151:151)**

The other factor that surfaced was the importance of having a business or executive in the family, which creates an environment at the dinner table where the young manager learns about business terms and pressures.

> *Look at myself, my mother was an entrepreneur, both my mother and my father were teachers and growing up in an environment like that.* ***P 3: Chris.docx - 3:35 [Look at myself, my mother was ..] (159:159)***

> *We are first-generation managers, and therefore they have not shared or even benefited at a dinner table or father who is worried about the budget or*

worried about the business performance or the strategic plan. ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:11 [first generation managers, and..] (93:93)***

It is a territory they haven't been exposed to, nor their parents were exposed to. So in a way the new western culture is something we are getting into and we don't have a lot of people who came before you who you could talk to, so I think the experience we are getting is phenomenal. ***P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:23 [it is a territory they haven't..] (124:124)***

Half the respondents grew up in a rural area, but it is not clear whether this has any influence on their subsequent performance, though it may relate to attitudinal aspects raised later in the discussion.

4.3.5 Gaining visibility

One of the most surprising results of the research is that networks for the recruitment and attraction of black executives are weak, if not completely non-existent.

There is a void, we have dismantled all of those networks. ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:15 [There is a void] (140:140)***

I think within the black executives I don't see that network. ***P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:27 [I think within the black execu..] (110:110)***

Some organisations use radio to reach potential executives and several use social media, such as Linked In. Other methods mentioned by respondents include golf clubs and sometimes school networks.

The two primary sources frequently quoted by the vast majority are the top universities and especially their business schools. The Black Management Forum (BMF) was identified by most respondents as a theoretical source.

Some companies consciously say we are going to fund or sponsor BMF because we want to attend those functions. Not because of the debates that are going to take place, as informative and useful as they may be. You can pick the talent by attending the functions and understanding how those people argue their points. **P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:23 [Some companies say consciously..] (108:108)**

Other organisations mentioned include the ANC Youth League, ABASA (Association of Black Accountants of SA), BUSA (Business Unity South Africa), Women in IT, Black, Black IT Forum, ABSIP (Association of Black Securities and Investment Professionals), and CAFÉ (Communications and Advertising Forum for Empowerment). One respondent even suggested that attending Shaya Nyama events on Sunday mornings in the townships was a method for networking.

Unfortunately, the respondents all felt the BMF has lost its way and is no longer effective in this respect.

> *BMF have a completely different agenda, sad thing, their agenda is about other things completely, it's about advancement. There is not necessarily competencies linked to that.* **P 3: Chris.docx - 3:1 [BMF have a completely differen..] (116:116)**

> *I must say I have been in association with the BMF in the past for 19 years or so. The shift in terms of BMF as a platform on which its founding principles were based, has shifted, which has left a kind of a void.* **P 7: Zuko.docx - 7:9 [I must say I have been in asso..] (104:104)**

4.3.6 Lack of experience

All respondents highlighted a major problem with black executives in gaining relevant and extensive experience to become an effective senior manager.

> *I think it's true because people often underestimate the importance of experience. I must go into an organisation, I must pick up a lot of experience in various roles at various levels before I can get to the level of executives.*
> **P12: Phanuel.docx - 12:16 [I think it's true because peop..] (101:101)**

Several respondents pointed out that working at state-owned enterprises can form a good experience base, as long as one then moved across to the private sector. Four respondents had experience of working overseas, and highlighted how good this period was for their development.

One of the factors contributing to an inadequate level of experience is the high level of job-hopping, which respondents were unanimous in saying was destructive to an executive's career:

> *The problem is that we have high mobility, black execs don't stick around long enough to get the right experience – a rolling stone gathers no moss*. **P11: Field Notes Patrick.docx - 11:27 [The problem is that we have hi..] (108:108)**

This aspect will be dealt with in more detail in the next section on implications for human resource strategy.

4.3.7 Access to mentorship

Over half the respondents, unprompted, raised the fact that a major contributor to their growth was creating access to a mentor. In the way they talked about it, this was almost always informal and initiated by the executive themselves:

> *I saw a bunch of black systems engineers who had been there for a long time and these guys were good systems engineers but they aren't going anywhere. And I said I'm not going to be like these guys, but these guys are very experienced and I need to learn from them, so I went to them and said can you help me become a better person? I am very educated but I am not very experienced as you are, I need your help and your guidance. These guys opened their arms and nurtured me, and made me a better person.* **P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:57 [I saw a bunch of black systems..] (186:186)**

An aspect that surfaced with nearly half the respondents was that, relatively often, older more experienced white executives felt pleased to have been approached as a mentor.

In contrast, two respondents pointed out that sometimes it is the white incumbents of senior positions who feel most threatened by affirmative action and fast-tracking of black executives.

> *The funny thing is, the people who can give the most in terms of giving coaching, they are the people who stand to lose the most, and that's typically your white male.* **P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:25 [the funny thing is there are p..] (157:157)**

This section has dealt with issues arising from the theoretical framework and findings that represent categories of factors inhibiting or contributing to the poor state of employment equity figures at senior management level.

In summary they comprise:

- Access to mentorship.

4.4 Implications for human resource strategy

Having covered factors that may have inhibited progress on employment equity statistics, this section deals specifically with the prominent categories that were related directly to HR strategy, such as talent management, employment equity issues and the implications for employment equity strategy. Although some of these factors were identified in the theoretical framework developed in the literature review, this findings section expands and elaborates on the factors previously identified.

In terms of significance of mentions as shown in Table 8 overleaf, there is no apparent difference between coached and non-coached respondents.

Table 8: Summary of human resource strategy

	Coached	Not coached	TOTALS:
Talent Management	50	53	103
Equity employment issues	46	43	89
Equity employment strategy	32	27	59
Performance Management	25	21	46
Mentorship	10	10	20
Retention	9	9	18
Succession planning	9	7	16
TOTALS:	**181**	**170**	**351**

These seven issues are dealt with in order of significance shown in the table.

4.4.1 Talent management

Within the category of talent management, the following prominent topics were raised:

- Leadership development
- Mentorship
- Clear career map
- Providing stretch
- Succession planning.

These aspects of talent management were the most-quoted topics by the vast majority. Surprisingly, in some cases, respondents were very positive about their more-recent experiences.

> *I think in terms of what we do we are more and more coming across organisations which have expert talent management resources internally, people focusing specifically on talent management. I think that ties in closely with the organisation to becoming more forward thinking in and around attracting and retaining talent that comes in.* ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:38 [I think in terms of what we do..] (196:196)***

> *We do have a talent management process; at very early stage identifying the graduates that we bring into the organisation and for them to be able to be supported, in terms of their growth, in terms of their development and to understand the business. It's two-pronged: where possible bringing in fresh new talent in what we call a person in the classical way – grow to become a GM. And therefore one of the options would be to look outside and say are there people who have the talent, are met in terms of the values and can we do that. We have also successfully used those people as GM-designate and they ended up in a senior role in the business.* ***P 7: Zuko.docx - 7:53 [We do have a talent management..] (132:132)***

Although the discussion guide does have a question on the leadership pipeline as part of the talent management section, it was surprising how many executives used this terminology unprompted; it has clearly become a common term. Several organisations are using the performance-potential matrix for mapping their pipeline.

> *Yes, and even in the succession plans, there is representation. You find that the Africans are not ready now, either 1-3 or 3-5 years. We have to make sure that people understand succession that is living, and appointed by people from these lanes. So I had to share with them and say look we are building pipelines, it's going to come through, but this is where the pipeline is right now..* ***P 3: Chris.docx - 3:57 [Yes and even in the succession..] (171:171)***

> *Basically it's the project called Khuluma that talks to a realignment of HR executives' job profiles and all those things together in succession planning, competency assessments. We have aligned to the Drotter leadership pipeline –where we look at standards in all management levels and we look at the objectives in all the levels to say if you manage others, in supervisory positions, you get the work done through your team.* ***P 5: Tebogo.docx - 5:43 [Basically it's the called proj..] (178:178)***

> *We have a pipeline development method where we create a pool at each level. We use a 3-by-3 matrix to plot everyone.* ***P12: Phanuel.docx - 12:22 [We have a pipeline development..] (116:117)***

Surprisingly, with one or two exceptions, executives did not complain about the lack of talent management.

Leadership development

Also surprisingly, given that the last interview question asked about their formal leadership development programmes, only half the respondents indicated that their organisation offered some form of leadership development programme, All had little to say on the subject, and none ever expanded at length on this subject. In most cases, external service providers were used, such as business schools, or specialised companies.

This lack of interest in the subject is very surprising; perhaps it relates to being the last question in the discussion guide.

Mentorship important

The majority of executives spontaneously brought up the significant role that a formal, or mostly, informal mentor had played in their successful careers. They had almost all found people who were prepared to nurture their careers, and the respondents had obviously blossomed from the experience.

> *When I came back and finding people who cared enough about me, who volunteered to mentor and coach me. In one form or another, I have gone through coaching and mentorship probably for the past 24 years of my career.* ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:42 [when I came back and finding p..] (136:136)***

> *I find mentoring implies a protégé relationship, and it's about the work that you are actually doing, the environment that you are in. Where you say Chris this is the way to go about doing the work that you do. It's about action and consequence, if you do things like this, this is what it will result in, and that's because your mentor has more than likely been there and done that. He's talking with the wisdom that comes with good old work experience.* ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:45 [I find mentoring implies a pro..] (216:216)***

Clear career map crucial

A particularly important point raised by many executives is that a potentially powerful retention tool is to ensure the executive's career path is mapped out and clearly communicated to him. This does not have to take the form of a specific commitment to a position by a set date, but a clear indication will often prevent executives from leaving the organisation.

> *There needs to be a defined career development path for Chris, where Chris's expectations are managed. I think that is a very key and crucial perspective particularly around how you attain articulate black executives for the organisation. It's not only on the basis of financial or non-financial perspectives. It also has to be in and around the learning curve that they*

actually go through, the learning and exposure curve that they go through. ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:39 [There is a defined career deve..]***

Only when they want to leave, then they say why didn't you tell me all along, is it because I'm leaving? ***P 6: Phanuel.doc - 6:45 [Only when they want to leave t..] (347:347)***

Providing stretch is important

Some executives pointed out how important it is to be given the opportunity to stretch themselves in new roles, and to receive support for that, both from senior management and HR support functions, like coaching through a transition.

One of the issues is the preparedness of the organisation to take the risk. The extent to which black people at senior level need to be given opportunities, and to function as executives, their risk appetite. ***P 7: Zuko.docx - 7:5 [One of them is the preparednes..] (97:97)***

Succession planning

Over half the respondents mentioned that their organisations or others successfully use succession planning, using the 3-by-3 matrix to determine readiness for a move.

We have succession plans that are robust and monitored, in which identifies an indication around in terms of readiness. ***P 7: Zuko.docx - 7:24 [We have succession plans that ..]***

We have a nine-box matrix in that system. So first a person needs to show potential and the difference between whether you can promote a good performer and [one who] has potential because you've got people who are performing very well. ***P 5: Tebogo.docx - 5:28 [We have a Nine box matrix in t..]***

In all the companies now in terms of BBBEE targets, we work on our succession planning and that talks to how do we accelerate those BBBEE black employees and putting that in place. ***P 5: Tebogo.docx - 5:50 [In all the companies now in te..] (151:151***

4.4.2 Employment equity issues

The research surfaced nine categories of problems experienced or observed by respondents, summarised below:

- Impact of fast-tracking
- Critical mass of executives needed
- Propensity to job-hop
- Supportive culture helps career development
- Black executive performance is watched closely
- Prefer to become an entrepreneur
- More black executives found in ‘soft’ roles
- Resentment over fast-tracking
- Lack of commitment by corporates to BBBEE.

These issues are dealt with in order of relative importance, judged by the number of respondents offering quotes or significance of comment. A shown in table 9 overleaf, fast tracking was talked about more by those not coached, whereas propensity to job-hop and prefer to become an entrepreneur were mentioned mostly by those who had been coached, presumably because they were more aware of their options through increased self-awareness.

Table 9: Important employment equity issues

	Coached	Not coached	TOTALS:
impact of fast-tracking	10	13	23
critical mass of Black executives	6	6	12
propensity to job hop	8	4	12
Black executives' performance is watched closely	4	3	7
entrepreneurs rather than executives	6	0	6
Black executives put into softer roles or without portfolio	2	3	5
Fast tracking creates resentment	1	3	4
Lack of commitment to BEE	2	2	4
TOTALS:	39	34	73

These issues are dealt with in the following sections.

Impact of fast-tracking

When asked about poorer perceptions of black executives' performance, and whether fast-tracking people may have been a contributing factor, the respondents almost unanimously quoted instances where fast-tracking had caused problems. Unfortunately, these are the memorable ones, and so these stories tend to stick.

> *Where we have parachuted people, we have failed, we end up with only glorified top executives who have no contribution to the core business.* ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:6 [where we have parachuted peopl..] (96:96)***

> *Because of the smaller pool that we talked about, those who are available do get fast-tracked. Then as they get fast-tracked they are then unfortunately and unintentionally put up for failure in the future.* ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:38 [because of the lower pool that..] (199:199)***

> *And that's where I think a lot of companies seem to get it wrong when it comes to black executives. They will bring in Chris because he seems to be well spoken, he's gone to the right schools, he's not carrying any baggage, and somebody who we believe will fit within this culture.* ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:42 [And that's where I think a lot..] (204:204)***

However, it was encouraging to see that many executives now also claimed that fast-tracking increasingly has a positive impact, if done correctly. This suggests a requirement for assessment of emotional intelligence and active support when placed in the new role.

Because you are fast-tracking for the acquisition of knowledge and experience, you are closing gaps and a lot of blind spots quicker before they get ambushed. ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:48 [Because you are fast tracking?..] (221:221)***

Fast-tracking doesn't happen now without support; it's also happening across the colour line. ***P11: Field Notes Patrick.docx - 11:10 [Fast tracking doesn't happen n..] (91:91)***

When you fast-track a person, for me, an interpretation of fast-tracking for me….when you see a person has an emotional intelligence, that's one, it's not really about performance. You say that person has matured enough to operate at a certain level. ***P14: Interview - Thabo.docx - 14:19 [when you fast track a person, ..] (156:156)***

A critical mass of executives is needed

Half the respondents, at differing points in the interview, but often at the point of being asked "how well is South Africa doing?", highlighted the need for South Africa to achieve critical mass in terms of the number of black executives at senior level. This is directly related to the negative cultural effects noted earlier that are experienced by most of the executives, where they are, or feel, in the minority and that the corporate culture was not welcoming to them.

You've got largely white corporations who are supposed to be driving the transformation, so that on its own is a challenge, because you are actually asking people to act unnaturally, because I assume that people tend to want to connect with people who are similar to themselves. ***P 3: Chris.docx - 3:25 [You've got largely white corpo..] (145:145)***

You're actually outnumbered. You are outnumbered in all sorts of things – social preferences. Like you'll find that people will say that they're going to have a teambuilding and then they say 'rugby'. ***P 6: Phanuel.doc - 6:5 [you're actually outnumbered. Y..] (142:142)***

So until you have a lot more black executives coming from my background, with the same ethic in the top structures, that will not change. It's about getting momentum – it's a critical mass. ***P 8: Dingane.docx - 8:31 [So until you have a lot more b..] (165:165)***

In one case, the executive was quite optimistic that South Africa was close to reaching a tipping point, where rapid momentum would be gained in placing significant numbers of black executives at senior level:

> *In my view as a perennial optimist, I think we are close to where we are going to have a critical mass of black executives, and therefore the development of other black executives, it's going to move far quicker*. **P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:66 [In my view as a perennial opti..] (163:163)**

Propensity to job-hop

Because the pool of appropriately qualified and experienced black executives is small relative to demand, this creates a situation where excessive competition for talent creates a high level of mobility. Many executives are tempted to move between organisations, for higher and higher packages, only staying for two or three years in any one position. The negative impact of this is rapid recirculation and potentially a level of laziness, as the executives feel they can land another job easily.

> *Some of them recycle themselves, which is another problem about BBBEE and about employment equity. Those who can master the tricks end up circulating themselves, increasing their salaries and not staying long.* **P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:12 [some of them recycle themselve..] (118:118)**

> *There are others potentially, most who are lazy because they know they can move from one company to another. The world is their oyster as it were and therefore they can pick and choose. And not only that, some of them job hop as they move from one company to another.* **P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:31 [there are others potentially m..] (124:124)**

Interestingly, all respondents were not only unanimous, but vociferous, over objections that job-hopping is destructive to a black executive's career, as they do not gain sufficient experience in executing a role as well as strategising or planning.

> *And wow you've moved so many times, but gain very little experience, because you are not staying long enough in any one role. So very quickly that advantage of being black is the only source of advantage you have; it's*

your colour, it's not competence or experience. **P 3: Chris.docx - 3:22 [and wow you've moved so many t..] (141:141)**

Which creates more and more mobility for people, recycling themselves in different places which then negatively impacts on the experience – it weakens your groundedness, because job hopping you end up knowing a bit of this and a bit of that and you don't engrain yourself within a culture of a particular sector, and then you become less competitive. You may be taken and employed purely for that number basis but not because you have been targeted for future leadership. People end up being recycled, and they lose the experience. **P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:19 [the pool which creates more an..] (158:160)**

Sometimes this ability to shop around manifests in the expectation of a black executive becoming that the organisation needs to adjust to him, rather than the other way round.

So for a black executive who knows he is always sought after in the marketplace and although I know that I might be highly regarded because of my background skills etc etc, desirable, the point is that I must fit in with that organisation rather than organisation restructuring around me. **P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:43 [So for a black executive who k..] (210:210)**

Black executive performance is watched closely

Many executives have seen their work and behaviour being watched very closely, even almost suspiciously, and that puts tremendous pressure on them, as they do not want to feel they have "let the side down". Many executives feel they need to overcompensate for this though over-performance.

And you know there is this perception that you're always on the radar and, as such, you are under pressure to be impressing a lot and you even think that you're actually sometimes doing some double effort as opposed to your other race counterparts. **P 6: Phanuel.doc - 6:6 [And you know there is this per..] (144:144)**

Also any mistakes are jumped on, so you feel like you are always under test.
P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:26 [Also any mistakes are jumped o..] (102:102)

Prefer to become an entrepreneur

Given the current shortage in supply of Black executives, it is concerning that the research indicated that in some cases, if an executive gets disillusioned, then they opt to run their own businesses, rather than fight to make a success of corporate life. This could also form an escape route, where the executive is fed up with being watched and scrutinised. The lure of potential wealth may also be a factor.

> *You are black and you are in an organisation and getting frustrated. In the public sector it's better than the private sector, they care less about politics there that keep you. So then people decide they are going to go out and try it on my own. I have learnt the skills, I know the opportunities. So what draws black talent away a lot of the time is that a lot of people go out and want to do it on their own, and start a business, earn a living and have the freedom. I can't give you numbers, but a lot of those guys were disillusioned people who left.* **P 8: Dingane.docx - 8:13 [You are black and you are in a..] (120:120)**

> *The entrepreneurial route gives them the freedom not only to pool themselves but also the freedom of movement and they are not accounted for to the shareholders or to the board of directors who may be very strict with a number of things*. **P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:15 [The entrepreneurial route give..] (95:95)**

More black executives found in 'softer' roles

Several respondents pointed out that, historically, black executives were placed in softer roles such as HR, and so there is a particular talent shortage in the 'hard' roles of technical and accounting function.

> *The more difficult areas I suppose….. when I say more difficult, areas in which there is a [lower] proportion of qualified black professionals, would probably be finance and technical.* **P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:9 [The more difficult areas I sup..] (103:103)**

> *When we are talking about affirmative action, that's when people started to appoint people in HR who are black. So in those days, many, many years ago, if you found someone who was black in the organisation it had to be in*

an HR role, and again because of that you are still defining the pool. **P 3: Chris.docx - 3:13 [When we are talking about affi..] (110:110)**

Resentment over fast tracking

One of the factors mentioned was the level of resentment from other executives when they see a black executive being fast-tracked, particularly when they have to report to someone they do not believe can do the job, but is getting all the rewards.

I think to an extent there is also this level of envy or resentment where your white counterparts will say gee these guys are coming in, they are getting top jobs, they haven't earned their keep and now all of a sudden they are up there and they are my managers and they are getting top jobs because of their blackness and because of affirmative action, so there is a level of resentment. **P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:34 [I think to an extent there is ..] (136:136)**

But there is that level of resentment, these guys don't deserve to be where they are, they are just being fast-tracked. So the perception sometimes in organisations is, gee listen to this guy, he is up there and they don't even know how to articulate the company's position, they don't know what they are talking about and they are enjoying all these big monies and top jobs, so there is that level of resentment. ***P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:36 [.but there is that level of re..] (140:140)***

Lack of commitment by corporates to BBBEE

When respondents were asked about how well South Africa was doing in making progress to achieving employment equity for black males at senior management level, two stated unequivocally that progress was poor. This was primarily seen as being caused by a lack of commitment by leadership to BBBEE or transformation by corporates:

But I think the leadership has never come out very clearly to show commitment to the organisation, to say yes, this is a way of life where are we ultimately going to see ourselves in the future. **P14: Interview - Thabo.docx - 14:6 [But I think the leadership has..] (105:105)**

Corporates just don't think hard about the need for transformation, and thus it doesn't get done. **P11: Field Notes Patrick.docx - 11:25 [Corporates just don't think ha..] (102:102)**

4.4.3 Employment equity strategy factors

This section deals with the six most important factors highlighted by the research that can affect the design and implementation of an organisation's employment equity strategy. The six factors identified in order of importance are:

- Performance management
- Retention strategy
- Communicate clearly on the BBBEE strategy
- Coaching is good for growing the pipeline
- Coaching improves the quality of executives
- Government and shareholder pressure is having some effect.

As can be seen from Table 10 below, communication around BBBEE was espoused more strongly by those who have not been coached, whereas those who have been coached believe coaching will definitely help the talent pipeline and that government and shareholder pressure is having an effect was espoused by those who had been coached.

Table 10: Employment equity strategy

	Coached	Not coached	TOTALS:
Performance Management	25	21	46
Retention strategy	6	7	13
Communicate to explain why BBBEE	3	6	9
Coaching for the talent pipeline	5	2	7
Coaching improves the quality of executives	3	4	7
Pressure from Government and shareholders	5	2	4
TOTALS:	16	14	27

The topics are dealt with in sequence overleaf.

Performance management

It is clear from the number of mentions that performance management is very pertinent to this research, both in terms of its impact, and in how coaching can be used in this area, particularly with black executives. The majority of respondents brought this up as a critical factor for the mere survival of black executives, let alone their success.

> *It's about performance, wanting to bring a culture of performance in organisations and even in government; if I am going to have people reporting to me what do they need to do, how will I get them to achieve, that is where coaching will help.* ***P 5: Tebogo.docx - 5:34 [Secondly it's about performanc..] (195:195)***

> *There is still a lot that has to be covered before a person is put into that position; there are certain criteria that are important, but for me the key issue is performance, irrespective if that person is black or white. If they can be held accountable and in terms of results and to perform and actually see that those people perform. Like everyone else, people need to feel accountable.* ***P 7: Zuko.docx - 7:40 [I will talk from my experience..] (120:120)***

Retention strategy

When asked about retention strategies, half the executives mentioned share or bonus incentives as a mechanism. More significantly, the majority of respondents highlighted that career mapping and on-going development and support were crucial:

> *I think through the process of leadership development, identification of talented people to put structure and processes in place, to expose their roles of what they should be doing going forward and have a kind of support and development.* ***P 7: Zuko.docx - 7:7 [I think through the process of..] (100:100)***

> *We need to show people that they have careers, so that they can take charge, pace themselves, create a platform for growth. They will know what to do.* ***P11: Field Notes Patrick.docx - 11:18 [We need to show people that th..] (112:112)***

> *If there is clarity on what is it that what could I be doing in the next 10 years and how am I being supported to get there, my sense is that people are likely to stay.* ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:45 [if there is a clarity of what ..] (216:217)***

Communicate clearly on the BBBEE strategy

Executives expressed strongly the need to communicate the need for, and implications of, a company's BBBEE strategy. This involves actively promoting success stories, and addressing whites' concerns over the implications for them of BBBEE:

> *I think it's more about reasons, more communication, why are we doing this? And how does it talk to the business, I would say it's more about that. Talk to the employees and let them understand why you are doing what you are doing and also make sure they are being developed.* **P 5: Tebogo.docx - 5:19 [I think it's more about reason..] (155:155)**

Nearly half the respondents have a strong feeling that the country as a whole would benefit if it adopted a more progressive development approach for black executives.

> *If we could create that environment then the whole country will develop and everyone would benefit, transformation will become natural, and whites would support it.* ***P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:12 [If we could create that enviro..] (79:79)***

> *I think for us [as] a country we just need to find a way of utilising those compatriots who have the time, who have the skill and I think we would grow by leaps and bounds.* ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:74 [I think for us a country we ju..] (167:167)***

> *That will transform the country; we need a multiplying effect, we have lots of professional coaches, but to solve this big problem we need to appoint managers as coaches.* ***P 3: Chris.docx - 3:52 [That will transform the countr..] (178:178)***

Coaching good for growing the pipeline

A third of respondents believe that coaching is an ideal mechanism for growing the pool of executives and the talent pipeline.

> *Black executives particularly need the coaching, but develop whoever needs it to create the pipeline. By doing so, you will create redress for the future.* ***P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:53 [Black executives particularly,..] (155:155)***

If we spoke about mentorship and coaching, people would say "what?" Now there is better appreciation of that and it is making its own contribution to the improvement of the pool, but also the quality of that pool of business executives. ***P4: Lesedi.docx - 4:21 [if we spoke about mentorship a..] (102:102)***

Coaching improves the quality of executives

Over half the executives claimed that coaching was not only very positive in improving the quality of executives, but that it should be mandatory for all executives.

I can say without a shadow of a doubt that I was transformed as a leader following my executive coaching exercise. ***P 8: Dingane.docx - 8:34 [I can say without a shadow of ..] (179:179)***

So they said OK they would need to give you some general management coaching and strategic view, which I'm enjoying. So it depends on what you need. ***P 6: Phanuel.doc - 6:50 [So they said OK they would nee..] (372:372)***

Government and shareholder pressure has had some effect

Some executives acknowledge that government policies and pressure have had some effect in driving BBBEE, and that in some quarters there is a level of impatience.

I think it's been pushed mainly from government, because time is running out. I think they see that the sunset here in terms of, the government I think is getting impatient right now. They might just come up with some serious, radical punitive measures. ***P 6: Phanuel.doc - 6:56 [I think it's been pushed mainl..]***

And just because of legislation, I think that in itself coerces businesses to think down that road and to do things down that road. ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:3 [And just because of legislatio..] (87:87)***

Several made the point that shareholder pressure was now also starting to bring results in BBBEE transformation, particularly if the company was listed, due to the new Companies Act requirement for social and ethics committees.

> *And then you see the shareholder point because now, with this integrated reporting, you need to police things,* ***P 6: Phanuel.doc - 6:58 [and then you see the sharehold..] (420:420)***

> *I think the organisation is trying hard with a push from the shareholders. And obviously, we're listed and if there had to be any naming and shaming….* ***P 6: Phanuel.doc - 6:55 [I think the organisation is tr..] (416:416)***

One executive pointed out that, through growth, one can address the imbalance in ratios, without causing too much damage to the incumbents.

> *We can always grow ourselves out [of] this problem – what do you mean by that? What I mean by that is that there is not just one person who will lose a job because of his colour. We will grow out of this problem, we will grow our business and we will recruit these people who [have what] we want, but over time you we will have the right kind of composition of people.* **P 3: Chris.docx - 3:34 [we can always grow ourselves o..] (155:155)**

This respondent also went on to say that he had managed, with multinational parent support, to create five new positions outside his budget, which he used to groom new potential executives, sending them overseas for training.

> *I went to the company and asked for five positions, five open positions fully funded. If I find talent somewhere out in the market, somebody I can find a great person who should join. I may not have a job for that person and opening, I put him in one of those five positions. So the person can start to understand our company, I can send him overseas, have training, understand our products, the culture, and then after 6 to 12 months an opening comes and then we put the person in. I've been able to bring so many people into the company through this programme.* ***P 3: Chris.docx - 3:45 [I went to the company and aske..] (173:173)***

This last section dealt with issues that executives raised regarding human resource strategy, and went on to describe important issues affecting an organisation's employment equity strategy.

4.5 Coaching as a solution

The final section on findings covers all the areas where coaching was mentioned as a possible solution to addressing the particular leadership development needs of black executives. In all, nearly 50 areas were identified in the research. To streamline this, findings have been separated into areas that firstly suggest strategies for coaching, and then categorised by the specific skills listed in the Katz managerial skill model (Katz, 1974), namely:

- Conceptual skills
- Human skills
- Technical skills.

The breakdown of number of mentions by type for coaching is shown in Table 11 below. Those highlighted in yellow represent subjects that are significantly different from the expected distribution, being coaching approach and conceptual skills for those who have been coached, and interpersonal skills for those that haven't.

Table 11: Summary of coaching

	Coached	Not coached	TOTALS:
Coaching approach/strategy	39	33	72
Coaching for conceptual skills	36	31	67
Coaching for Human Skills - Interpersonal skills	19	27	46
Coaching for Human skills - intrapersonal skills	31	33	64
	50	60	110
Coaching for technical skills	11	14	25
TOTALS:	136	138	274
Total Skills	97	105	202

4.5.1 Coaching strategy

Three respondents pointed out how important it is to match the coach to the executive's need. One executive was even allocated two coaches to cover different areas.

> *Therefore we focus on two things, one is the personalised executive coach for executives and senior managers who are identified, and not only black, anyone. So they were paired on a one-on-one basis and we said in yourself*

this is your strengths, your limitations, your blind spots, and that's why you need a coach who is going to help you through your journey of development. ***P 7: Zuko.docx - 7:31 [Therefore we focus on two thin..] (151:151)***

That is a whole panel and what they do is they match the coaching depending on the profile and the need. ***P 6: Phanuel.doc - 6:2 [That is a whole panel and what..] (118:118)***

A consistent message from respondents who had been coached was that coaching is not really suitable for technical skills like financial; a training course would be better for that. For non-coachees, the distinction was not as clear. The executive search respondent stressed that coaching was most suitable for what he called 'functional' skills; another pointed out that a good coaching programme would help an aspiring executive identify further training needs.

If the coaching is done as well as it should be, my understanding is it needs to identify the needs of the executive who is being mentored and coached. Therefore let there be no panacea as it were, or one size fits all, and say there are some issues which may be behavioural and they need to be dealt with, but there are some core competency issues which need to be dealt with. Therefore you need to register with the Wits Business School, GIBs or UJ and acquire the necessary training; coaching and mentoring is not going to give you this, go back to class and get that. **P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:62 [If the coaching is done as wel..] (157:157)**

A third of respondents suggested that older white executives should be used as coaches, not only as a way of making a contribution, but also because black executives often prefer that.

Because of apartheid, people will tend to gravitate towards having a white mentor, and maybe they are right because of their experience. ***P 3: Chris.docx - 3:46 [because of apartheid people wi..] (175:175)***

This is where the thing about the white male comes in, so much knowledge and wisdom is invested in the minds of typically white pale males. By virtue of which you have historical significance. There is one thing I think white

males could do to give back to South Africa, particularly corporate South Africa, is to give of their knowledge and wisdom and their exposure. ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:57 [This is where the thing about ..] (226:226)***

Where we struggle around coaching is using a lot of retired white executives. Use them not in a negative sense, use them to say they have the talent, they have the skill, they have the time, may we put that time to greater use. ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:68 [where we struggle around coach..] (166:166)***

One executive advised giving black executives a white coach to offer a perspective from a very different viewpoint.

Black guys as well I think make the mistake of wanting to be coached by people who look like them and think like them. When that happens, it becomes group-think whereas being coached by somebody whose world-view is fundamentally different to yours, they challenge assumptions which you may accept as true, and as they challenge the assumption they cause people to think at a higher level. ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:69 [Black guys as well I think mak..] (166:166)***

An associated concept to this was that nearly half the respondents said that when more senior white executives were approached, mostly they appreciated being included in this process, especially if they felt secure.

I found my managers were quite willing to help. My view on this thing is that people who are willing to help out are very secure, and those who are not willing to help out are very insecure. ***P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:25 [I found my managers were quite..] (124:124)***

There are a lot of white compatriots who are so committed to this country, they say we are going nowhere and therefore they are contributing more and more to the talent development. ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:73 [There are a lot of white compa..] (164:164)***

Yes I did, there are one or two that actually did take notice of an individual or myself and said we are taking you with us. This is what the things are that we need to focus on. There are those that identified these are the people. …

One thing I learnt, when you approach those people they feel good. ***P 5: Tebogo.docx - 5:23 [Yes I did, there are 1 or 2 th..] (163:165)***

Only those who felt somewhat insecure were resistant to providing help.

The funny thing is there are people who can give the most in terms of coaching and they are the people who stand to lose the most, and that's typically your white male. ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:25 [the funny thing is there are p..] (157:157)***

For me it had more to do with the resistance from people that are currently in positions. ***P 6: Phanuel.doc - 6:40 [And for me it had more to do w..] (335:335)***

Nearly half the respondents stressed that coaching can be used for many applications and at different levels.

There is NO aspect which is NOT suited to coaching! Not even the technical skills. ***P11: Field Notes Patrick.docx - 11:19 [There is NO aspect which is NO..] (115:115)***

I think for me it will always be a critical and key enabler of development, irrespective of your level of experience, irrespective of your level of leadership within the organisation. ***P 7: Zuko.docx - 7:28 [I think for me it will always ..] (149:149)***

I think everyone deserves a level of coaching, I work as CEO in a sizeable organisation right now and I actually insist that the young executives that I identify as potential, or young managers should go through a level of coaching. ***P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:71 [I think everyone deserves a le..] (211:211)***

A couple of respondents pointed out that coaching should not be used to fix underperforming executives.

A useful point some executives made is that coaching should be applied to promising young black executives quite early in their career, before it is too late to make an impact.

I say coaching should be at earlier stages, at least start at early stages for black professionals. Because it's almost like giving them directions to where

their purpose is. On their little corner of being able to make a difference, but I suppose at that stage it might not be at their level of thinking until a much later stage of life, you know and just asking very simple questions, who am I, what am I, what am I all about? How can I make a difference? ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:54 [why I say coaching should be a..] (224:224)***

And why I say that once you start providing coaching for the first time when somebody is an executive, it's going to be very difficult. You've got a full set of teeth.- ***(laughter)*** *What is it that he wants to teach me, I have arrived here. It will be a broad-minded person who can say listen, coach me!* ***P14: Interview - Thabo.docx - 14:42 [And why I say that once you st..] (218:220)***

Finally, a couple of executives pointed out that it is important for the coach to understand the culture of the organisation in which they are coaching.

You have to first of all be experienced in the ways of the corporate world. I think you really have to understand cultures and behaviours of people, where they come from, their backgrounds, to be able to understand how they behave and help them to survive in the corporate wide world. **P 9: Jabalane.*docx* *- 9:60 [you have to first of all be ex..] (193:193)***

4.5.2 Managerial skills

In this section, perceived coaching needs will be split into the three primary domains identified by Katz (Katz, 1974): managerial skills in:

- Conceptual thinking
- Human skills (interpersonal and intrapersonal skills)
- Technical skills.

The human skills section breaks the skills down even further into interpersonal and intrapersonal skills

Conceptual thinking skills

Conceptual skills have been referred to as systemic or systems thinking. This section covers three areas at a strategic level:

- Understanding corporate culture
- Being sensitive to context
- Business acumen

Coaching to understand the corporate culture

This aspect was the most prominently mentioned of all coaching aspects, gaining 25 mentions by two thirds of respondents. Most comments related to how executives need to learn how to align themselves with the organisation's explicit or implicit expectations.

> *The biggest question I always have in a corporate setting is how individuals understand the complexity and conflicts between their personal convictions and their organisational imperatives.* ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:41 [The biggest question I always ..] (210:210)***

> *I think not only must you understand people you are coaching, you must understand the culture of what the organisation is. Understand where the impediments of the organisations are going, the guys that you want to coach. So you have to understand both, the candidate and the culture that he or she operates under.* ***P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:61 [I think as a coach you have to..] (193:194)***

> *Within a corporate environment, sometimes at an executive level, it's not a question of how good you are in the job. There are a number of things that come into it. Because to arrive at that level you can perform, you can deliver, but it's a question of how do you navigate yourself through the system? How do you capture the culture of the organisation? How do you live with the peer groups? How do you conduct yourself within the Exco meetings?* ***P14: Interview - Thabo.docx - 14:18 [within a corporate environment..] (150:150)***

Being sensitive to context

One aspect mentioned by a quarter of respondents is that often black executives are not sensitive enough to the context in which they are operating. A coach can help them be more aware of these factors and help them become more effective.

> *I think that's exactly now where coaching comes in and how you navigate yourself through the mire of contextual background and environment that*

you're in. How do you do that successfully? ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:51 [I think that's exactly now whe..] (221:221)***

Coaching links up because as we coach people we realise that many of the people who fail, fail because of lack of being sensitive, of understanding the context. ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:30 [coaching links up because as w..] (177:177)***

Business acumen

Half the respondents mentioned business acumen as a major learning point that coaches could focus on. This presumably means not so much the ability in business skills, but rather making practical commercial judgements.

So the continuous learning and the broader understanding of business. I mean people don't read papers, for example, they don't read the Harvard Business Reviews. It is more [on] the business that people need to be coached and the people management, the leadership theory. ***P 6: Phanuel.doc - 6:60 [So the continuous learning and..] (434:434)***

It's just a holistic understanding of free enterprise and the role each executive plays. ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:54 [it's just a holistic understan..] (151:151)***

Also mentioned was complex high-level thinking skills, like tolerating ambiguity.

How to handle systemic, interrelated, different perspectives, ambiguity. ***P12: Phanuel.docx - 12:29 [How to handle systemic, interr..] (130:131)***

How to handle dichotomies in life, and the inherent contradictions. ***P11: Field Notes Patrick.docx - 11:23 [how to handle dichotomies in l..] (120:120)***

Although mostly one-to-one coaching was mentioned as the primary approach, a couple of respondents also mentioned that, in certain settings, group coaching can be effective.

Even when we do coach people one on one, if we don't influence executives to accept that they need group coaching. In other words they need open forums where an external coach or an external expert with a coaching understanding provides a platform for them to be in a group context, and

learn to knock each other and learn to debate issues without labelling, without judging, without having fear. We seem to be becoming very closed and fearful. ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:51 [even when we do coach people o..] (227:227)***

So from a leadership side we need more dialogue, but from a coaching side we've got work to do, we provide platforms for team coaching or group coaching more, so it fits with each other. ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:52 [So from a leadership side we n..] (228:228)***

Human skills I – interpersonal

The author has chosen to break the human skills section into two further subdivisions, one regarding 'interpersonal' skills and the other 'intrapersonal'. This section deals with those skills which are involved in dealing with other people.

Gaining leadership skills

Nearly half the respondents brought up leadership as a key area for which coaching would be used. Although they did not define clearly what was meant by leadership, many had had programmes run for them by external companies.

Leadership skills – listening, communications, socialising. ***P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:48 [Leadership skills – listening,..] (148:148)***

We currently use coaching as an integral part of developing leaders in our business. ***P 7: Zuko.docx - 7:1 [We currently use coaching as a..] (86:86)***

How to manage for performance

As noted in the employment equity strategy section, performance management is very important for executive effectiveness. The majority of respondents brought this up as a critical success factor for black executives and, in this section, the personal, as opposed to the organisational, perspective is evident in creating an environment in which the executive can demonstrate his performance.

And then he needs to learn how he will be measured in executing that, and then figure out what resources do you require? ***P 8: Dingane.docx - 8:37 [And then he needs to learn how..] (187:187)***

You must teach a drive to compete, highlight their responsibilities. So what outcome must I get, how do I become recognised as a good performer? ***P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:42 [Teach a drive to compete: high..] (137:139)***

How to drive performance by being more direct

Associated with this performance management theme, over half the executives mentioned that applying a management style associated with an Ubuntu approach or black culture may not be the most effective in getting results in many corporate cultures. Thus black executives need to learn to confront or be more direct with their staff or in meetings.

Are black executives prepared to be challenged about their performance even if they think they are doing well? In other words, are they prepared to receive feedback, even if feedback may not be believable, it may be perceptional. And how do you work through those perceptions, those perceptions unfortunately are sometimes the ruler of the time, of the culture, of the decisions. Whether you accept it or not, you need to find how do you work yourself out of those perceptions. ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:54 [Three, are black executives pr..] (178:178)***

Looking back I should have actually been coached on being direct. ***P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:58 [looking back I should have act..] (189:189)***

But you have got to stand out there and when people look at you, they see a human being who would be direct and to talk to me and say I'm uncomfortable with your performance and these are the issues. ***P14: Interview - Thabo.docx - 14:22 [But you have got to stand out ..] (164:164)***

Managing corporate politics

Two thirds of respondents emphasised how important it is to coach executives about the politics within a corporate culture and how they need to fit in or accommodate their style and values.

Typically the culture clash is very high. Guys are not prepared for the corporate culture; when they find out about the level of politics, they don't

want to participate. ***P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:54 [Typically the culture clash is..] (112:112)***

So the culture issue is huge. In boardrooms and meetings when you see how black executives make contributions, you raise your hand and you wait to be appointed to talk, you've lost the trick from the beginning because that is not how those cultures work. ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:62 [I had to break a lot of my ste..] (187:187)***

You know, how to play corporate politics, not only how to play but how to read corporate politics, and how to manage yourself through that. Corporate politics is not a bad phrase in itself, it's always going to exist as long as people of diversity with a range of backgrounds come together. ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:50 [You know, how to play corporat..] (221:221)***

They have to realise that either you play, or you get played. ***P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:31 [They have to realise that eith..] (113:113)***

Developing effective networks

A quarter of respondents brought up networking skills as something that coaching can help with, implying that blacks traditionally are not good at doing this.

They must be sensitive to other people's perception of transformation, or have they got a one-way ticket of doing things because I'm black. And there is no sensitivity saying I'm black and there are other people with different backgrounds and different cultures, and how do they work together. So depending on their approach, black executives are likely to stab themselves from the beginning and run for failure for lack of connecting with other people who are critical in their own success. ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:61 [Two, is where the black execut..] (176:176)***

And as a result I think networking is maybe a bit of a difficult initiative for black execs, it's something that they really have to learn. ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:61 [And as a result I think networ..] (228:228)***

What networks, what leverage points do you need to be able to do that executing? ***P 8: Dingane.docx - 8:38 [What networks, what leverage p..] (187:187)***

That is a kind of a subtle hidden network within the organisation that makes and breaks you. And if you don't get that right, whatever that right means, what's perceived right you find yourself being quietly ostracised and then get lonely that can also be a non performing area ***P14: Interview - Thabo.docx - 14:18 [within a corporate environment..] (150:150)***

Coaching leadership style

Almost half the respondents suggested that coachees should pay attention to a coaching leadership style.

Mentoring and coaching as my style of management, that tends to be difficult. We tend to manage as we've been managed, rather than saying how can I move my management style in such a manner that it is largely a coaching, mentoring, management, leadership style. ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:56 [Mentoring and coaching as my s..] (151:151)***

It is more the business that people need to be coached on and the people management, the leadership theory. ***P 6: Phanuel.doc - 6:61 [It is more the business that p..] (452:452)***

Team leadership

A similar concept mentioned by a third of respondents is how to develop a vision for and to understand what is needed to manage a team.

And then build a team that you can share and drive the vision with, to be able to execute. ***P 8: Dingane.docx - 8:39 [And then build a team that you..] (187:187)***

How to get the best out of people – team leadership. ***P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:46 [How to get the best out of peo..] (146:146)***

Human skills II – intrapersonal

This second aspect of Katz's human kills are ones most useful for improving aspects more to do with factors *internal* to the executive, how they feel about themselves.

Raising self-awareness

Two thirds of respondents mentioned the aspect of raising self-awareness during coaching, whether that be around values, strengths, effects of background, limitations and managing oneself through reflection.

> *Mentoring and coaching has got to be an inside-out process.* ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:55 [Mentoring and coaching has got..] (151:151)***

> *Building self-awareness – around me and in my mind.* ***P12: Phanuel.docx - 12:25 [Building self-awareness – arou..] (124:124)***

Coaching for improved performance

Half of respondents were very supportive of using coaching to improve performance; interestingly enough this was balanced between coached and not coached.

> *They have coaches not because they are poor performers, but because with the coaches they can get that competitive advantage which will cause them to win.* ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:37 [They have coaches not because ..] (131:131)***

> *Dealing with the performance of those who are being managed in such a manner that they are allowed to move to the next round.* ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:57 [dealing with the performance o..] (151:151)***

> *Secondly it's about performance, want to bring a culture of performance in organisations and even in government; if I am going to have people reporting to me what do they need to do, how will I get them to achieve, that's where coaching will help.* ***P 5: Tebogo.docx - 5:34 [Secondly it's about performanc..] (195:195)***

Raising self-esteem

A third of respondents brought up the issue of a lack of self- esteem in executives, and how this might affect their performance. There is an expectation that coaching can help in this area.

> *Are we sensitive enough to understand the cultures or are we so content with our cultures that we believe everybody must know that I am black and my culture is like this? I don't jump to issues, I respect elders and I just expect everybody to take that as a positive. That's not true, to some people that is being submissive, that's being weak, that's being unsure, that's having no esteem, and you are out of the game, by the time your performance evaluation comes you are dead.* ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:57 [So that is why I'm saying are ..] (189:189)***

> *But those people well might find their confidence level improves and therefore their productivity improves.* ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:50 [But those people as well might..] (146:146)***

> *There are people who just don't know how to get there and coaching needs to give them the desire to get there, whether it's lack of motivation, lack of desire or are they just fearful to get to these levels. These guys have got potential but they are fearful of expressing themselves, of taking charge.* ***P 9: Jabalane.docx - 9:70 [There are people who just don'..] (210:210)***

Emotional intelligence

A third of respondents, unprompted, raised the need to develop emotional intelligence. This was mentioned as a skill to be more effective in the business context at work.

> *When they have been with the organisation for 12 months, we begin adding other aspects. First and foremost would be to learn the intricacies of the organisation and to master engineering aspects and then master further aspects, leadership, emotional intelligence and such like.* ***P 7: Zuko.docx - 7:41 [Not necessarily, but I would s..] (136:136)***

> *Need to develop EQ, in order to be more effective at senior level.* ***P11: Field Notes Patrick.docx - 11:22 [Need to develop EQ,] (120:120)***

So these are all aspects I would term functional competencies, perspectives, emotional maturity which I think might come down to the EQ perspective issues. And as a leader one of the traits that a leader is expected to have, given the context and the framework within which you work and what you do. ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:49 [So these are all aspects I wou..] (221:221)***

Coaching for transitions

A quarter of executives, particularly those who had been involved in leadership development, pointed out that coaching can be particularly useful when either making a transition, or identifying gaps to be closed to be prepared to make a transition, typically a promotion within.

It's better to catch them as they get into those jobs and you can make it as part of the deal when they get employed. My sense is that you are likely to have a higher level of success if you can do that, so that transitional coaching for me is critical. ***P 2: Jabu.docx - 2:47 [its better to catch them as th..] (219:219)***

We have a nine-box matrix in that system. So first a person needs to show potential and the difference between whether you can promote a good performer and [someone who] has potential because you've got people who are performing very well. So we need to be able to identify people who've got potential and then these people if in Casino International, we can move from a smaller unit to a bigger unit. So you can say ok the person is here, let's move him to this level. ***P 5: Tebogo.docx - 5:38 [We have a Nine box matrix in t..] (180:180)***

This is related to the one mention made of coaching for executives joining company boards.

Coaching through strengths

Two executives mentioned that coaching should emphasise an executive's strengths

We said in yourself this is your strengths, your limitations, your blind spots, and that's why you need a coach who is going to help you through your journey of development. ***P 7: Zuko.docx - 7:42 [Yes, internal coaching we have..] (151:151)***

Why are they are here on earth, what value can they add, their purpose? But before purpose comes a magical word called passion. What is it that you are passionate about? What is it that you believe you are good at and what is it that you really enjoy doing? ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:53 [why are they are here on earth..] (223:223)***

Coaching for listening skills

Two executives mentioned the need for the coach to work with listening skills, as well as more general socialising skills.

Leadership skills – listening, communications, socialising. ***P10: Field Notes Mpho.docx - 10:48 [Leadership skills – listening,..] (148:148)***

Listening skills, how to receive feedback and manage conflict. ***P12: Phanuel.docx - 12:27 [Listening skills] (128:128)***

Coaching for work-life balance

Significantly, only one executive mentioned the need for the coach to help the executive achieve a better work-life balance.

All these pressure points that I'm talking about, where I come from, the context, where I come from, cultural things, maybe an ineffectual board, lack of talent in my executives. Political pressure in my role as CEO, balance between work and home? ***P 8: Dingane.docx - 8:35 [All these pressure points that..] (180:180)***

Technical skills

This last section on Katz skills deals with aspects mentioned by respondents where they suggest coaching is sometimes even used to address what are commonly termed technical skills, or functional skills, as opposed to human or soft skills. Despite the general consensus among executives that coaching should be used mostly for softer skills, there are apparently some technical skills that coaches can tackle.

One of the areas that I can maybe draw your attention to is the technical, which is the job requirement, functional in that Chris is the right person.

Doing the right thing and managing yourself in the context and situation you find yourself. ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:66 [One of the areas that I can ma..] (244:244)***

Financial management

Perhaps surprisingly, one executive pointed out that some people would benefit from being coached on financial skills. Apparently, even though one might expect this skill would be better derived from attending an appropriate course, there are aspects at executive committee meetings where, for example, one needs to know to approach topics when challenging the CFO.

Around financial management I think, one, as an executive, the income statement, the balance sheet, the sources and uses of funds and the cash flows, it has got to talk to every executive. If it doesn't talk to that executive it becomes a problem and there are some skills which are cross cutting and universal. Like financial issues where people sometimes look at it and say, that is for the financial manager or the CFO. However, one needs to be certain that I can debate with the CFO or I can ask difficult question to the CFO to say this and this does not add up, help me make it add up. ***P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:58 [Around financial management I ..] (154:154)***

Time management

One executive mentioned that a lack of time management might not hinder an individual's performance. Interestingly, this factor was only mentioned once, and another respondent lashed out at the common perception of 'African time'.

But something like time management might be serious limitation of miss X. He or she might not learn how to manage themselves better in that context; there may be other factors around that cause that to happen. ***P13: Chris v2.docx - 13:65 [Yes, on the job stuff. But som..] (242:242)***

You can be bright or whatever but if you come to meetings 10, 30 or 40 minutes late, you are not going to go anywhere in this company. Other people might say, maybe it's an African culture – bullshit, there is no African culture which says you must be late. This a business. It also helps to connect, they must connect with people they report to. ***P 3: Chris.docx - 3:67 [You can be bright or whatever ..]*** **(176:176)**

5 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

This section synthesises the findings in chapter 4 into higher-level implications and discusses the potential meaning attached to the findings. Although the research was originally structured around the research questions resulting from the theoretical framework developed from the literature review, the findings brought out some more general topics worth covering in greater detail. The broad categories of analysis are:

- Drivers on progress on the supply of executives
- Inhibiting and contributory factors for poor participation by black executives at senior management levels
- Implications for human resource strategy
- Coaching as a solution.

As a result of the greater coverage, the author revised the research framework into the diagram shown in Figure 12 overleaf:

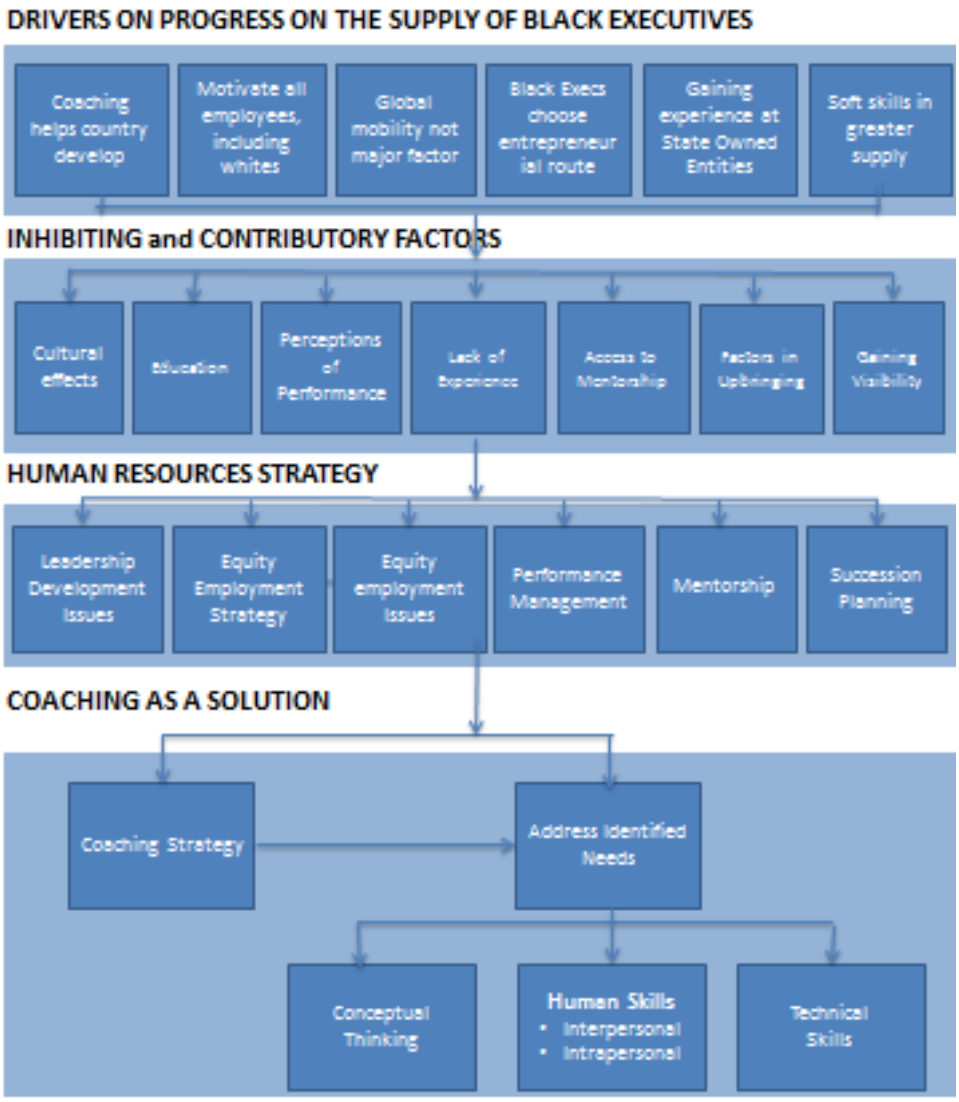

Figure 12: Revised theoretical framework

5.1 Demographic profile of respondents

Analysis of the profile of respondents shows that these respondents have all been notably successful in their careers, all being at least at a senior management level if not MD or president, which is what the commission for employment equity would call top management. Half the sample operates at the enterprise level (level 7 on Drotter), i.e. CEO, three at group manager (level 6), classified as 'managing other business managers', and four run a specialist function (level 4). Five roles were involved in the human resources field in some way.

They also exhibit a high level of qualifications, with ten of 13 respondents holding MBA or CA qualifications. Only three held bachelor's degrees, and those were mostly honours. Apart from the four overseas qualifications, Wits was their undergraduate institution or postgraduate in four cases, and in four cases they attended HWI institutions such as University of KwaZulu-Natal and University of Johannesburg.

Four of the sample spent significant time in the US or UK, either living or studying, and two of the MBAs were from global institutions.

Clearly, lack of appropriate qualifications has not been a barrier to these executives. In fact, one respondent pointed out that sometimes black executives are becoming over-qualified, as a way of compensating for the expected discrimination.

5.2 Progress in representation for black executives at senior management level

The graph showed in the literature review on page 13 dramatically highlights how, in the five years since 2007, there has been no significant movement in the ratio of black executives, and that South Africa is still only at 20% of the required baseline for the economically active population (EAP). The proportion of white executives is still entrenched at 65%, five times greater than the associated EAP would suggest.

Given this view, some of the five positive comments from black executives are surprising; the most appropriate description the author found during the interviews was to describe the situation as "pedestrian". The state of employment equity statistics explains clearly why there are 25 negative comments in the transcripts when asked, "how is South Africa doing?"

A few executives mentioned that there are now a few high quality and successful black executives in the corporate sphere, so these few success stories need to be promoted.

Although the literature and proposal framework suggested there would be evidence of global competition for talent draining South Africa's management supply, there was almost no evidence for this or any mention of this factor.

On the contrary, the black executives who had studied or worked overseas had returned to South Africa some time ago. One executive went so far as to say that many white executives had chosen not to leave for Canada or Australia as

> *"they are realising that the grass is not as green and they are saying let's water and irrigate our own grass here so that it is great."* ***P4: Lesedi.docx - 4:9 [So we are doing well with prod..] (88:88)***

Accordingly, the predicted shortage of executives due to global competition was not evident at all, and the reasons for this are outlined below.

5.3 Results pertaining to progress in the supply of black executives

The most salient issues arising from the earlier phase of the interviews introduce perceptions raised by executives at a more general level on how South Africa can address the shortfall in the supply and participation of black executives at senior level. The most important factors emanating from the findings are:

- Gaining overseas experience, especially in the US, helps black executives learn how to be more direct and drive performance in a Eurocentric company, offsetting any Ubuntu or black cultural influence. Two of the organisations in the sample deliberately send their staff overseas to gain experience

- Some black executives become disillusioned by the way they are treated at corporates, feel like outsiders, and some then leave to take an entrepreneurial route. One person thought this was potentially to avoid scrutiny of performance by a board or shareholders

- Some very senior executives were very positive about leadership development benefiting South Africa's development as a whole

- It is evident that one of the roles state-owned entities (SOEs) play in the economy is as a breeding ground for senior executives, as long as they do not remain there too long, but revert to the private sector

- It is clear that, historically, black executives were put into softer roles such as HR, and so there is still a severe shortage of skills in finance and operations.

None of the relevant literature covered in South Africa appears to mention any of these factors. Accordingly, these are considered new findings, with implications for human resource practitioners.

One factor that has appeared in the literature, that was also supported by several of the executives, is the emphasis on how important it is for the successful implementation of transformation for leadership to motivate all employees and get the more experienced white executives on board with the programme. Booysen (2010:230) described this barrier as a “lack of meaningful engagement of white males in the EE process” and “failure to deal with white male fears and resistance to implementing EE”.

5.4 Results pertaining to contributing factors

During the research, seven major categories emerged for those factors that have or are inhibiting progress in employment equity participation levels in senior management in South Africa. These were ranked in order of prominence as indicated by the number of quotations for each code as shown in Table 7 on page 58. These were:

- Cultural effects
- Perceptions of black executive’s performance
- Education
- Influence from upbringing
- Gaining visibility
- Lack of experience
- Access to mentorship.

5.4.1 Cultural effects

This section deals with three apparent effects attributed to cultural factors, those relating to negative, positive and black cultural effects, with the negative ones being the most prominent in the transcripts.

Negative cultural effects

The extraordinary level of racism experienced by most of the executives, whether conscious or not, evidently plays a major role in the lack of progress with transformation. This confirms what many of the studies in the literature highlight, in that racial discrimination is a barrier to mobility towards higher management levels in South Africa (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Matandela, 2008; Nkomo & Kriek, 2011; Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010; Van Rensburg & Roodt, 2005). This stereotyping effect has also been noted overseas (Kilian, et al., 2005).

From the moment the black executive is even considered for a senior role, he has to counter a whole range of hurdles, not least of which being the assumption that he will not succeed. Half the respondents confirmed that huge and on-going effort is required for executives to get past these barriers and earn their stripes. One factor that does help to ameliorate this bias is whether the executives studied at an institution classified as a historically white institution (HWI). Clearly, quite a few of the executives feel that until a critical mass of black executives is achieved in an organisation at senior management level, the situation is likely to persist.

As a result of her work on diversity management across 12 cases in South Africa, Melissa Steyn points out that BBBEE and employment equity policies in themselves are not sufficient drivers that will affect change in the society; social justice too is required to effect deep structural changes. She has described this as, “Deep social divisions and inequalities persist, perpetuated along the fault lines created by the past colonial and apartheid ideological commitments” (Steyn, 2010, p. 17). In an interview with another author she uses the term “Afro-pessimism” to describe this effect (Grant, 2007).

One approach evident in studies that goes some way to explain this tendency is the difference between the Eurocentric (sometimes called Anglo American) culture still evident in many corporates as opposed to the Afrocentric approach espoused by Booysen (2001). She describes Afrocentric management as one “which emphasises collective solidarity, inclusivity, collaboration, consensus and group significance, concern for people as well as working for the common good, structure through rituals and ceremonies, patriarchy, respect and dignity” (Booysen, 2001, p. 54).

The “four worlds” cultural approaches suggested by Lessem (2001) cater for a more Ubuntu-like style (apparent in the southern, socialisation world) in contrast to historical Eurocentric values (western, pragmatic, action-oriented world). Should a corporate deliberately set out to create a culture that accommodates more diversity of participants, this could allow for a blend of management practices, which in turn could create competitive advantage for South African companies to operate in a global world, where diversity is becoming increasingly important as covered extensively in studies that compared South African managers with global evidence (Black & Geletkanycz, 2006; Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Booysen & van Wyk, 2008; Littrell & Nkomo, 2005; Thomas & Bendixen, 2000).

Black culture effects

Half the respondents pointed out that aspects of culture emanating from their black background might be detrimental to executive performance in some organisations. In such cases, the executive needs to learn how to confront their superiors, even if they are elders, and to be more direct when addressing issues in a meeting or managing an employee. Interestingly, this issue was raised three times more often by those people who had not been coached.

Significantly also, executives who had spent some time outside South Africa seem to be more aware of this issue and therefore had already tackled it within their style. No literature seems to explicitly deal with the potential impact of African leadership style on executive performance and this may therefore represent an unspoken or hidden truth.

Thus Afrocentric management styles may have an impact on executives. Specifically the behaviours likely to be related to an Ubuntu style approach include a focus on the collective, rather than the individual’s success (Khoza, 2006; Mangaliso, 2001; Poovan, 2006).

Khoza (2006) says that the African leader serves the followers rather than seeks to dominate them as a master or commander. Ubuntu values show immense respect for human dignity and cohabitation within diversity, and an awareness of mutual dependence. As black executives may subscribe to this school, their experience of

being a leader at some South African corporates may come as a shock, particularly those from a driven, US perspective.

Another related factor is the one posited by several authors by the term “homophily”, whereby racial groups prefer to cluster among themselves (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, & Cook, 2001; Mollica, Gray, & Treviño, 2003). Although the executives in this study never admitted or proposed this, Bartol (2007) has pointed out that this practice often leads to inferior networking performance, due to a lack of diversity and minority pack behaviour which is different from the dominant minority.

Positive cultural effects

Half the executives commented that it is still possible to create a positive environment in which black executives feel supported. Specific measures mentioned include:

- Mapping out a career path for the executive
- Giving support for further education, coaching and mentoring
- Coming from a supportive family structure.

In combination with this, some executives pointed out that South Africans can be very tolerant, particularly blacks. This links back to the more humanitarian and collective approach in the southern style of management and augurs well for the potential for South Africa to create a positive blended environment between Eurocentric and Afrocentric approaches.

Future sections on human resources implications and employment equity strategy deal with this issue in more detail.

5.4.2 Perceived performance of black executives

There appears to be an enduring and pervasive perception that black executives are assumed not to be capable, unless and until proven otherwise. This is consistent with literature such as McKaiser (2011, 2012), Oosthuizen (Oosthuizen & Naidoo, 2010), Motileng (2005) and Booysen (Booysen, 2001; 2010).

This means that black executives have to go out of their way to prove their worth, especially as they are in the spotlight all the time, and the smallest error will be noticed

immdiately and broadcast on the company grapevine. The situation has been exacerbated by those executives who may not have performed adequately, perhaps because they have been placed inappropriately, and those who move on when times get tough.

One respondent even went so far to say,

> *You can't rely as strongly on the black executives as you would with the white executives. Probably the white executives feel their job security is not as good therefore they are performing much more in order to secure their jobs".* **P 4: Lesedi.docx - 4:33 [You can't rely as strongly on ..] (126:126).**

This issue also highlights why effective performance management is so important, to ensure that black executive clearly understand their accountability and genuinely know where they stand.

An issue that may be affecting this perception of performance is the dissimilarity in management style between blacks and whites, where whites tend to be more individualistic and assertive (Ashkanasy, Trevor-Roberts, & Earnshaw, 2002), where blacks may emphasise the team more above the individual and tend to have a more humane orientation (Booysen, 2001; Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Booysen & van Wyk, 2008).

Another factor potentially affecting this perception is that for some years now, black executives have often been put into 'softer' roles, to get them into more senior positions to comply with employment equity statistics. One respondent called this 'talent fronting'. Gaining a reputation for performance in these roles may be harder, as the results are not as obvious and measurable.

More recently, however, there are a few very successful executives at the highest level, and this is helping turn the tide on the perception. As one of the respondents pointed out, black management needs to promote these successes actively within the corporate community, although it was not clear exactly who and which organisations should take on this responsibility, perhaps he had the BMF in mind.

5.4.3 Education

While the majority of respondents acknowledge that the Bantu education system has been historically inferior and has undoubtedly contributed to the paucity of good executives, the majority agree that education is no longer a limiting factor in the supply of black executives, as blacks can readily access historically white universities (HWIs). Homeland universities (or historically black institutions, HBIs) are still perceived as a problem though.

Most respondents also quoted the current top five rated business schools in South Africa as a good source of potential material.

This is consistent with the more recent studies which show that university enrolment levels have grown steadily since 1995 (Daniels, 2007; Lee, 2010; Pauw, *et al*., 2008), making up for the disastrous years prior to 1994 where 61% of whites passed matric and had five times as many degrees as blacks (Castle, 1996).

Somewhat of a concern in this area, though, is that some respondents mentioned that some black are becoming over qualified for their roles, as a means to compensate for the inherent discrimination. This may also lead to a perception that black executives are using further education to compensate for a lack of experience in senior roles. This factor does not appear to feature in the South African leadership development literature.

5.4.4 Upbringing

A clear outcome of the research is that most respondents had significant factors in their upbringing which seem to have contributed to their successful careers, whether these were positive or negative. Half of the respondents grew up in a rural area, but it is not clear what impact this has made, if any. Some went to boarding schools as a result, and perhaps this has had some influence.

Certainly many of them had important role models, whether this was their father, or other family members, or even people who somehow had a major influence in their childhood. This seems to correlate with a strong adherence to values, mentioned by half of the respondents, particularly regarding the importance of education, where over

half the respondents stated that their family was extremely supportive of their education.

Only two respondents grew up with parents who were business people; the research brought out the issue that only now are children growing up with business environments at the dinner table. This seems to be a major inhibiting factor and thus points to a major role that could be played by a coach or mentor.

It would be inappropriate to speculate from the research whether stress or trauma in an executive's upbringing has played any role in his success, and this aspect deserves further research. Certainly, if this proves to be the case, the unfortunately high levels of trauma experienced by South Africans would grant the country an unusually resilient management force (Williams, *et al.*, 2007).

Castle (1996, p. 397) describes this battle to succeed as a "process which involved parental and personal ambition, as well as a strong drive for upward mobility, self-preservation and self-improvement".

This varied experience of the respondents supports Bill George's (2007, p. 130) notion that "you do not have to be born with specific characteristics or traits of a leader. Leadership emerges from your life story". His (2007) study of 125 leaders concluded that

> "they frame their life stories in ways that allow them to see themselves not as passive observers of their lives but rather as individuals who can develop self-awareness from their experiences. Authentic leaders act on that awareness by practicing their values and principles, sometimes at substantial risk to themselves". (p. 131)

It would appear that respondents in the study have been able to turn adversity into advantage through their own positive attitude and life story.

A final factor in this section is that respondents are all graduates, 70% at master's level. Eight (60%, if you include US) went to top-tier universities, which some claim gives them more credibility relating to the initial perception of likely performance.

5.4.5 Gaining visibility

The aspect first highlighted by Andrews (2008) in his seminal paper turned out to be a very significant issue for black executives in this study. The executives confirmed that networks do not appear to exist in South Africa for sourcing potential black executives, in contrast to the traditional, private school-Oxbridge route into Anglo American.

Although many did mention the BMF as a potential source, they also now think the organisation has lost its way and is not functional in this respect. The only sources available now, mentioned by the great majority of respondents, are to recruit through top universities and business schools.

This issue then becomes a major factor in developing the sources of black executives. HR practitioners will have to consciously build out networks, using opportunities such as golf days, social media and black business organisations. The government also needs to play a role with government institutions like the SETAs or sectoral education and training authorities.

No apparent literature mentions the use of networks for recruitment in South Africa.

5.4.6 Lack of experience

Two thirds of respondents highlighted that lack of experience at management levels is patently a problem for creating quality Black executives at senior levels. This is partly attributed to the quality of experience gained by frequent job-hoppers, but is also due to the limited time that quality executives, with the appropriate qualifications, have been coming through the system. This confirms what much of the literature has said (Lee, 2010), though the impact of job-hopping is a new finding.

The suggestion that a stint spent gaining experience at a state-owned entity is an interesting one, as long as the migration to the private sector does occur.

Another aspect here is the option of adopting a deliberate strategy to stretch the executive in roles; one of the executives found their experience in the office of the CEO, attending executive committee meetings (EXCO), to be hugely beneficial in his growth path.

Of course, the ideal scenario is to spend substantial time operating overseas, to learn some of the habits practised there, especially performance management in the US.

This aspect has certainly been found to hold true in the accountancy profession, where lack of experience is seen as the most serious career barrier (Sadler, 2002).

5.4.7 Access to mentors

Clearly, many of the successful executives had created access to informal mentors by themselves, and this seems to have contributed to their success. There appears to be little evidence of formal mentoring processes inside many corporates, except Eskom. This implies that a more structured formal coaching programme could have more impact over a shorter period.

Watson (2009) found in his study for mentoring support that business skills were most in demand, followed by entrepreneurial skills and then motivation.

5.5 Results on implications for human resource strategy

This section covers the six categories that relate to implications for human resource strategy, including employment equity issues, and the associated strategies.

5.5.1 Talent management

Given the comments made, talent management in the respondent organisations seems to be gaining positive traction; it would appear that BBBEE pressures and the global war for talent have had a high impact.

As Cohn *et al* (2005, p. 62) describe in their Harvard Business Review article, “In companies where leadership development really works, it is not a stand-alone activity. It is a core process of the business dyed into its very fabric.”

It is encouraging that so many executives are using the words ‘leadership pipeline’ as this indicates it is apparently becoming a lingua franca at those levels. However, in the literature, Booysen’s (2010) work identifies a continuing lack of talent management as a barrier to executives. She goes on to prescribe training, development and growth opportunities, career pathing and succession planning as key components.

The literature links the terminology of talent management to strategic human resource management (Lewis & Heckman, 2006).

To effect many of the changes referred to here, HR practitioners and leadership will need to be proactive, using organisational development tools and interventions to create an environment and culture that supports diversity, attracts top talent, and allows black executives to flourish. This in turn compels the organisation to be reconceptualised from a different perspective than the current dominant culture.

In many cases, this requires a conscious decision by top leadership to change the culture of the organisation to become more sensitive to diversity and more adaptable.

Many organisations will not be capable of doing this alone and will require external help, as getting to grips with the basic assumptions, beliefs and values requires a sophisticated approach to change management (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Schein, 2010).

Leadership development

The prominent finding on talent management shows that this topic is important to the executives; some were passionate about the subject. When contrasting this with the relatively suppressed talk about leadership development, one impression is that talent management is seen more as getting potential executives on board and into the pipeline, rather than emphasising leadership development once the executive has reached a higher level in the pipeline.

Certainly this author can only surmise from the relative prominence that coaching and mentoring are seen as much more desirable and effective in leadership development than traditional learning at institutes (Weiss & Molinaro, 2006). This is supported by Duke (2008), who says leadership development should be more internalised, becoming part of the culture, supported by senior leaders and using tools such as 360-degree surveys. One report did show that coaching and mentoring are preferred mechanisms for leadership development in the UK (Burgoyne, *et al.*, 2004).

The findings support the assertion that ‘talent management’ has not been tightly defined, and appears seldom in the literature (Lewis & Heckman, 2006). Conger and

Fulman (2003) suggest that a combination of leadership pipeline and succession planning is the most effective way to establish long-term development of talent.

Thus human resources departments need to have a clear vision of how they want to attract and retain high potential staff, and then decide what language they wish to use to label their initiative.

Mentorship

With six executives emphasising how they created informal access to mentors, this aspect seems to have contributed significantly to their success, which supports some of the research (Hayes, 2009; Khanyile, 2007).

However, given the lack of evidence for formal mentorship programmes, this author posits that a formal coaching programme would be more effective than mentoring, as often mentorship programmes fail, mostly because they have been poorly structured and implemented (Clutterbuck, 2011; Y. Smith, 2006). In particular, the obligations on the participants mean that meetings are often cancelled, not just rescheduled, and if mentees feels unable to make inputs, even imminent termination. In formal mentoring programmes, protégés also complain about mismatched mentors, scheduling difficulties and even mentor neglect (Eby & Lockwood, 2005).

Providing stretch is important

An important factor in growing the pipeline is to put executives into challenging positions. One has to be careful to avoid tokenism, but to apply real accountability. One way of doing this is create specific positions in the budget, so that the organisation has the luxury of letting the executive gain experience (Kilian, *et al*., 2005; Selby & Sutherland, 2006).

Succession planning

Key to winning the war on talent is to adopt a comprehensive succession planning process. Charan *et al* (2011) recommend that the CEO is involved and that the review, using the nine box matrix, is carried out annually, with quarterly reviews and monthly reporting. One needs to have tough discussions too, to move people off the matrix so they do not clog the pipeline.

5.5.2 Employment equity issues

This section addresses those findings that highlight issues raised on employment equity.

Impact of fast-tracking

There seem to be two sides to the fast-tracking debate. Certainly there have been instances where fast-tracking has been detrimental, both to the black executive and to other affected managers, particularly causing resentment and resistance from white managers. However, fast-tracking can also be a way of preparing executives for higher office, especially if the experience is stretching, but with adequate support.

Some of the literature refers to fast-tracking as a means of leadership development, but this is only mentioned in one or two papers (Conger & Fulmer, 2003). This concept has also been termed 'high-flyers' in some literature and coaching is seen as a key support tool (Dries & Pepermans, 2007), but that may be an inappropriate term in the South African context. Certainly, managing participants' expectations features as a key success factor in the literature (Feild & Harris, 1991).

The key here is for leadership to create an environment where everyone involved understands the strategic and social need for the development initiative, and then to ensure executives are both protected and supported in their new roles, e.g. with a coach.

Critical mass of black executives

It is clear from the findings that if one could achieve a critical mass of black executives at senior management level, then the culture of the organisation would start to gain momentum towards one that is more tolerant of diversity. There is no doubt that many of the executives feel isolated or even rejected by the corporate culture.

Related to this is the concept of creating an Afrocentric management style or culture – as one increases the relative proportion of Black executives, presumably this is more likely?

Gladwell (2000) in his book, *The Tipping Point*, popularised this term originating from concepts in physics. He suggests that three types of people are needed to start an epidemic:

- Connectors, who have ties in many different realms
- Mavens, who have a strong compulsion to help others and
- Salesmen, who have unusually strong charisma and ability to influence others.

So for South African companies to reach a 'tipping point', multiple influencers and influences would have to come to bear, and a certain amount of 'stickiness' is needed for the concept to take root. Applying Granovotter's (1978) concept of disturbing the equilibrium in population distributions, one must deliberately identify the threshold and push beyond it to form a 'domino' effect that may have a striking qualitative effect.

This links back to the quality of leadership, both within the country and its organisations, which presently does not augur well, unless the proposed National Development Plan were to be executed effectively, and then this may well come to pass.

Propensity to job-hop

Clearly, the imbalance between supply and demand for experienced and qualified senior black executives creates a situation where high mobility becomes attractive. Thomas (2002, p. 240) pointed out that a contributing factor to this was "not fitting into historically established corporate cultures", i.e. feeling rejected and deciding to move on.

This finding confirms some of the findings in the literature; one empirical research study indicates that although whites are just as likely to move on, 17% of the sample were looking for another job and 39% were uncommitted (Khanyile, 2007). Wocke (2008), in his study on the impact on a psychological contract with their employer, found that black executives definitely exhibited a greater propensity to look elsewhere.

Cruz (2006) claims that research by the Unilever Institute at the University of Cape Town found that a significant 65% of black employees had changed their jobs at least

once within the last three years. Selome (2008) found that intention to leave was often mediated by the extent to which an organisation is able to create a “pro-diversity climate”.

Thus creating a supportive environment and providing retention mechanisms become crucial. Although this situation is accepted by some as partly inevitable, this practice needs to be tackled head on, as it is so destructive to the quality of the experience gained by the executive, and presumably is expensive too for the corporates, in terms of recruitment fees and starting afresh down the learning curve.

Supportive culture

The key point in the findings – that executives who experience a supportive culture were more likely to stay – has significant implications for human resource strategy. This is encouraging for HR practitioners, as it indicates that the potential reward for significant effort in this regard will extend the length of stay for black executives.

Research shows that black executives involved in the job-hopping study were looking for “an environment with support and guidance that embraces their individuality and promotes diversity – they don’t want to have to change their character or compromise their values in order to fit into the environment” (Khanyile, 2007, p. 22).

This research thus confirms findings from previous studies (Booysen, 2007; Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Zulu & Parumasur, 2009). In particular it would be wise to review the organisation’s performance, perhaps with a climate study, and to address the 16 factors listed on page 33 recommended by Nkomo as best practice (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010).

Black executive performance is watched closely

An associated issue regarding the supportive culture is that black executives often feel under the microscope regarding their perceived performance and behaviour. Just as superior’s behaviours are often observed closely, this must put additional stress on the executive. During coaching, it would be worth highlighting this fact if the executive did not seem particularly sensitised to it.

There is no apparent mention of this factor in any literature, even in those papers that cover affirmative action and employment equity in South Africa.

Prefer to become entrepreneur

This statement is somewhat controversial, as it implies that when black executives feel rejected by the culture or under too much scrutiny, they start to yearn for greener pastures. This aspect is not evident in any of the entrepreneurial research yet, but may be a trend worth monitoring.

Global entrepreneurship monitor GEM studies indicate that the proportion of black African males in entrepreneurship activity is slightly higher than the EAP, so this is perhaps not altogether surprising (Herrington, Kew, Kew, & Monitor, 2010).

More executives put into softer roles

Many respondents admitted that this was a failure of talent management in the past, but does not seem to happen much anymore. This research highlighted the historical tendency and this finding has been confirmed in the literature (Op't Hoog, Siebers, & Linde, 2010), even being described by some authors as tokenism (Booysen, 2007; Thomas, 2002).

This practice needs to be avoided in future, as it has apparently had detrimental effects, not only on the reputation of black executives, but also on the individual's self-esteem, but mostly on the quality of the experience obtained.

Resentment over fast-tracking

This issue seems to be a very real inhibitor to transformation and appears in some of the literature (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010). As part of the plan to effect transformation, it is critical to address any incumbent fears through clear communication over the societal and organisational needs for BBBEE.

Lack of commitment to BBBEE

Although some executives highlighted a supposed lack of commitment to BBBEE in their organisation, this was only occasionally mentioned. This finding contradicts much of the literature, which consistently found that this factor continues to contribute to a lack of progress, particularly if the company in question is not concerned about achieving a BBBEE profile to secure business (Booysen, 2007; Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Selome, 2008; Thomas & Jain, 2004). One author even noted that "top

management merely play lip service about the need for BBBEE" (Booysen & Nkomo, 2010, p. 230).

5.5.3 Implications for employment equity strategy

Building on issues raised in the previous section, this section begins to address some of the issues by developing the points raised by respondents.

Retention

Although financial incentives clearly play a role in keeping executives at the company, what is patently more important is to ensure the career path or map for the executive is mapped out, without necessarily making specific commitments or timeframes.

This is closely linked to the practice of succession planning, where it seems that corporate South Africa is now making considerable efforts.

One study went so far as to say that having a mentor provided actually *reduced* the commitment the organisation (Van Rensburg & Roodt, 2005).

Performance management

The prominence of mentions on performance management shows how important it is to the success of black executives. Following a process, which can be either the company's or a self-driven one, will provide clarity over expectations of delivery, thus providing a level of objectivity that could largely eliminate discrimination, and will also instil self-discipline.

Weekly reviews on key performance indicators or KPIs, linked with the vision and mission of departments, carried out as per Stephen Covey's 7 habits of highly successful people would undoubtedly bring results and enhance the reputation of the executive (Covey, 1989). Armstrong (1998) describes how coaching was used with performance management to effect change at Glaxo Wellcome.

Coaching improves the quality of executives

Clearly those executives who have been coached have found the experience extremely rewarding, as the majority mentioned this with some fervour.

Although there is a limited number of published empirical studies on the impact of coaching, several studies have now demonstrated significant effects (Dagley, 2006; Feldman & Lankau, 2005). Although some rely on self-reporting, apparently the growth in self-efficacy is most prominent (Finn, Mason, & Bradley, 2007; Kombarakaran, Yang, Baker, & Fernandes, 2008; MacKie, 2007; Passmore & Gibbes, 2007).

Recent studies in South Africa confirmed that coaching programmes are viewed as effective, particularly regarding heightened self-awareness, confidence and managing politics (Geber, 2010; Simpson, 2010; E. Wallis, 2011).

Communicate clearly on the BBBEE strategy

Clearly, the previous findings put much pressure on the HR division and senior leadership to take the issue of communicating the imperative and rationale for the organisation's BBBEE strategy. The challenge here is to maintain a balance of pressure for change with respect to black executive progress, while addressing natural concerns from their white colleagues. Leadership needs to play a key role here, as it would in the most successful companies (McCauley & Wakefield, 2006).

As Wocke (2008, p. 28) puts it, "This necessitates the development of HR strategies to differentiate between the groupings while attempting to build a united organisational culture, a nigh-impossible task when the differential pull-factors created by the labour market are so strong."

This author suggests a strategy to avoid what Ely and Thomas describe as "access-and-legitimacy perspective, and the discrimination-and-fairness perspective", i.e. applying legislative or policy pressure while worrying about fair application, instead of emphasising "integration and learning" for the benefit of the business (2001, p. 234). This approach is supported by Jain (2003, p. 2), who points out, "affirmative action and employment equity are legislatively driven, whereas diversity management is strictly voluntary". This therefore creates an opportunity for leadership and HR to take not an enforcing stance, but an opportunistic one by being able to claim that diversity will enhance performance. This suggests a much stronger emphasis on development of staff than merely "hitting the numbers" (Human, 1996).

Organisations need to have a clear vision on why and how they will pursue an employment equity strategy. They also need to consider to what extent diversity management will play a role before they begin communicating with staff (Leonard & Grobler, 2006).

Coaching good for growing the pipeline

Clearly executives believe strongly that coaching is beneficial for leadership development, regardless of whether they have been coached or not. Some of the more recent coaching literature refers to mentoring and coaching as a key support process (Bolt J.F. & Hageman, 2009; Booysen, 2007; Hayes, 2009).

Government and shareholder pressure has had some effect

Some respondents seem to think that government pressure has been justified, but warn that the government may be growing impatient. The recent proposed revision of the DTI BBBEE guidelines may be a case in point. In some cases, shareholders themselves are starting to apply pressure too; recent changes to the Companies Act obliges larger organisations to establish a social and ethics committee of the board, which is now legally responsible for BBBEE compliance.

Some of the literature indicates that political pressure has had some effect on affirmative action policies for top industrial companies listed on the JSE (Jinabhai, 2004).

5.6 Results on coaching as a solution

Having considered the salient factors affecting black executives in their roles as leaders, and highlighted the important issues affected by employment equity, the research now focuses on the second research question: what are the perceived coaching needs of black executives for developing into more effective leaders? This section analyses the 50 areas identified in the research, breaking them into two sections – strategy and identified needs.

5.6.1 Coaching strategy

Some of the findings in the research were more applicable to strategies relevant for coaching, and these are outlined here.

A common opinion from those coached was that coaching should not be used for technical skills, such as financial acumen. This is confirmed the general absence of technical skills in the limited studies available, with only softer skills prominent (Bougae, 2005; McDermott, et al., 2007; Natale & Diamante, 2005; E. Wallis, 2011).

There are one or two studies that mention business acumen and technical skills mastery, but as a minority relative to soft skills (Judge & Cowell, 1997; Schlosser, Steinbrenner, Kumata, & Hunt, 2006). This apparent contradiction is supported by the opinion of some respondent executives, whether they had been coached or not, who believe that coaching is suitable for all applications.

A few executives believe that coaching should be used at all levels of the organisation; this was not affected by whether they had been coached or not, is partially supported by the literature and is really only limited by cost factors. One way to limit the cost factor is to employ group coaching techniques at lower levels. Two respondents mentioned this, and it is also supported by some of the literature (Kets de Vries, 2005; Reid, 2011).

Matching coaches to executives' needs is seen by the executives as important, but only by those who have been coached. In Hill's (2010) master's thorough review of the effectiveness of coaching, only nine of 19 coaching studies highlighted this aspect as important, although other studies point out that the coach's skills in establishing rapport and a trusting relationship are key (Boyce, Jackson, & Neal, 2010). A study conducted by the American Management Association showed a mismatch was the main reason that the coaching programme was terminated (Anon, 2008).

Respondents consistently mentioned that older white executives are preferred as coaches, both because of their executive experience, and because their world-view is probably substantially different from black executives, thus providing an opportunity to challenge a coachee's assumptions more deeply. This issue was only raised by executives who have been coached, which implies that executives undergoing coaching for the first time might be more resistant to the idea. Interestingly, it appears that as long as white executives do not feel threatened, they most often are very willing to assist, and like being approached. This aspect could form a core principle in the

coaching and mentoring strategy. These aspects of white coaches do not appear to be covered in the literature.

Executives who have been coached made it clear that coaching is not for fixing poor performers. This is sometimes referred to in the coaching literature as “derailment”, and used to be a common use of coaching (Shipper & Dillard Jr, 2000; Thach, 2002).

5.6.2 Addressing perceived coaching needs

Over 50 areas were identified during the research where respondents thought coaching could be applied. To structure these effectively, the Katz model of skills needed for managerial practice was used.

The data on the number of mentions for coaching categories in Table 11 on page 90 shows that respondents who haven’t been coached are particularly positive about how coaching can help with interpersonal skills.

Grouping of skills for coaching using the Katz model appears not to have featured in the literature before, although Leedham (2005) did use the categories of inner and outer personal benefits leading to business benefits. In her recent study, although Wallis (2011) initially identified six categories in the literature, she went on to uncover these further six categories that seem important in South Africa.

- Improved work/life balance
- **Improved strategic ability**
- **Heightened confidence**
- Improved decision-making skills
- acquisition of coaching skills
- **Improved ability to manage company politics**

Only the ones in bold are ones that subsequently appeared important to black executives in this study.

Thus one conclusion is that the coaching profession needs a more coherent model for analysis, as all the studies use their own structure, apparently not based on any theoretical framework (Anon, 2008; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Joo, 2005; Kampa-

Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; MacKie, 2007; Schlosser, et al., 2006; Wasylyshyn, 2003; Zeus & Skiffington, 2000), though one study used principal factor analysis to identify:

- Effective people management
- Better relationships with managers
- Improved goal-setting and prioritisation
- Increased engagement and productivity
- More effective dialogue and communication (Kombarakaran, et al., 2008).

At this point, it is worth highlighting that the work by Luthans (1988) showed that the emphasis on behaviour between effective, i.e. those who delivered, and successful, i.e. those who were promoted rapidly, was distinguished by the amount of time they spent networking and communicating within their team.

For successful managers, 48% of their time was spent networking, whereas effective managers spent 44% of their time on communication. In other words, to succeed in fast-tracking their careers, executives need to focus more on socialising and politicking, than necessarily performing. This has implications for the focus for coaching, as seen below.

Conceptual thinking skills

This first category is limited to three aspects – understanding corporate culture, sensitivity to context and business acumen.

Coaching to understand the corporate culture

This aspect is, by far, the most prominent comment in the whole of the research findings. With so many of the executives mentioning this, it is obviously a major issue experienced by black executives. Interestingly, two thirds of the mentions are from people who have been coached, so presumably they have been made more conscious of the potential for coaching to help through this experience.

Many of the executive coaching articles mention this aspect but, in South Africa, it probably has particular significance, given the earlier comments about racism and black

culture. This factor did not appear in Wallis' (2011) work, although Kahn (2011) puts great emphasis on it, presumably as a result of his extensive experience in South Africa. One study points out that only if the corporate culture is supportive will coaching be effective (Redshaw, 2000).

While this aspect can be brought into a coaching programme easily, it will put a large onus on coaches, as they need to ensure they understand the corporate culture well enough not to cause the executive unnecessary problems. This also raises a dilemma – if the culture is not diversity tolerant nor supportive, should the coach attempt to work with the executive, or would it be more productive to change the culture first? The latter requires a major organisational development intervention and significant time from senior management. Thus the leadership, or perhaps even the social and ethics committee, need to decide on how important the culture is. As a coaching programme can run for a year, perhaps the answer is to do both in parallel.

Being more sensitive to context

In a related but different emphasis, a few of the black executives raised the issue of needing to be more aware of the context in which they operate; this was not sensitive to having been coached or not.

This could even result in an attitude that comes across as expecting the corporate to adapt to the individual or appearing to be often or always right. It also relates being largely outnumbered and therefore having to be very sensitive to the nuances of the corporate culture, of adapting or "fitting in". Coaching can certainly help executives here, by making them more aware of these issues, and how they may be coming across.

This could also refer to the culture clash terminology noted in much of the literature (Booysen, 2001, 2007; Booysen & Nkomo, 2010; Matandela, 2008).

Business acumen

Business acumen is often mentioned, and is defined in some literature as a combination of business literacy – being the knowledge and understanding of the

financial, human resources, marketing and operational functions of an organisation – combined with the ability to make good judgements and quick decisions.

Some of the literature does mention this as a coaching application, so this finding is not new (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Kombarakaran, et al., 2008; Wasylyshyn, 2003).

Human skills

This section is broken down further into interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. Bartol and Zang (2007) suggest another category – that of relationship management, as opposed to dyadic in relation to interpersonal interactions between two people.

Interpersonal skills

The respondents offered seven key areas to which coaching should be applied, as shown in Figure 13 below.

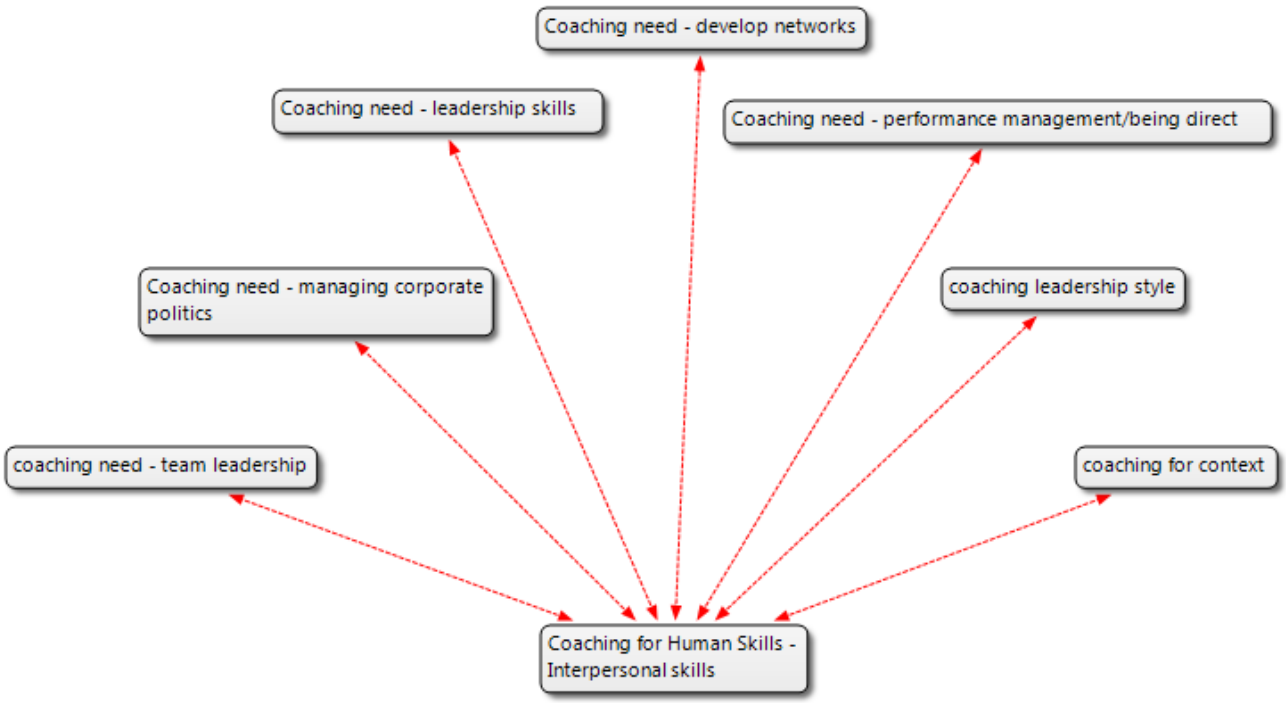

Figure 13: Coaching needs - interpersonal skills

The topics will be dealt with in order of significance, by number of mentions or importance.

Enhancing leadership skills

Clearly, the executives believed that a critical way of enhancing both the supply and quality level of black executives is to offer coaching support to leadership development. A key question arises here: is this best done via a training session, supported by both team and one-on-one coaching?

Boyce's (2010) study suggests that coaching is by far the most effective tool to enhance leadership, although more traditional training methods could provide the content, and coaching the practice. Leadership training will be a large market, and many companies and business schools are involved in the area.

Certainly a great deal of the coaching literature revolves around using coaching to enhance leadership skills. A reason for this is posited by Weller (2004, p. 21) who points out that Goleman stated "that skills such as self-awareness, self-discipline, and empathy play a far greater role in leadership performance than do conventional IQ and technical abilities".

Performance management – being more direct

A key finding in this research is the aspect of performance management, particularly in relation to black culture, where there may be a tendency to defer to seniors, who might be seen as superiors, rather than by age. Those executives who have not spent time overseas most probably need to include the ability to confront seniors and their employees more directly. This could be incorporated into an EQ assessment, and role play could play a role, as well as conducting observation of the executive at meetings. Interestingly, this is brought up much more often by executives who have not been coached.

This aspect does not appear to surface in research, although it may well an unspoken aspect of the term "culture clash" or aspects related to Ubuntu (Matandela, 2008).

Managing corporate politics

This aspect again was mentioned almost exclusively by executives who have not been coached, particularly by two who have had the opportunity to observe closely how not 'playing the game' can affect the executive negatively. They expressed a concern too

that if the executive becomes aware of the extent of the game, they do not want to play, or if not aware, this could seriously undermine their position, for example by being reticent during meetings. Coaching can help the client be more aware; in this case it is critical that the coach fully appreciates the corporate culture (Kahn, 2011).

Wallis (2011) found that this aspect was the least mentioned among the 12 factors she found useful for coaching.

Building effective networks

Some of the executives pointed out that blacks need to make special efforts to establish and build networks. Informal networks may explicitly or subconsciously exclude blacks, which can restrict their access to information; these could help with organisational knowledge, task mastery and role clarity (Mollica, *et al.*, 2003). Again, it is the non-coached executives who mostly mention this.

By identifying the social skills and kinds of networks needed, coaches can consciously guide executives, even with specific goals for each kind of network: task, career and social (Bartol & Zhang, 2007). Their work points out that the “homophily” effect is even stronger with race than gender, but the decreased network diversity greatly restricts racial minorities’ access to information networks and related sources. Even worse, minority members tend to have contacts with lower status links because the majority members occupy the dominant coalition (Bartol & Zhang, 2007).

Leadership style

Five of the respondents mentioned how they had changed their leadership style. In particular, many of them promoted use of the coaching style as being more effective with their staff.

Bloch and Whiteley (2003a) posit that the commanding and coaching styles are most effective. Accordingly, a leadership style assessment can be carried out by the coach, and the prominent leadership style(s) brought into the coaching agenda.

Team leadership

Four executives mentioned the need to learn how to build and lead teams as a good coaching application, this time evenly balanced between coached and non coached.

The literature mentions team leadership only occasionally, although group coaching is often done in teams (Zaccaro, Rittman, & Marks, 2002).

Intrapersonal skills

The seven important areas identified under intrapersonal skills are shown in descending order of importance in Figure 14

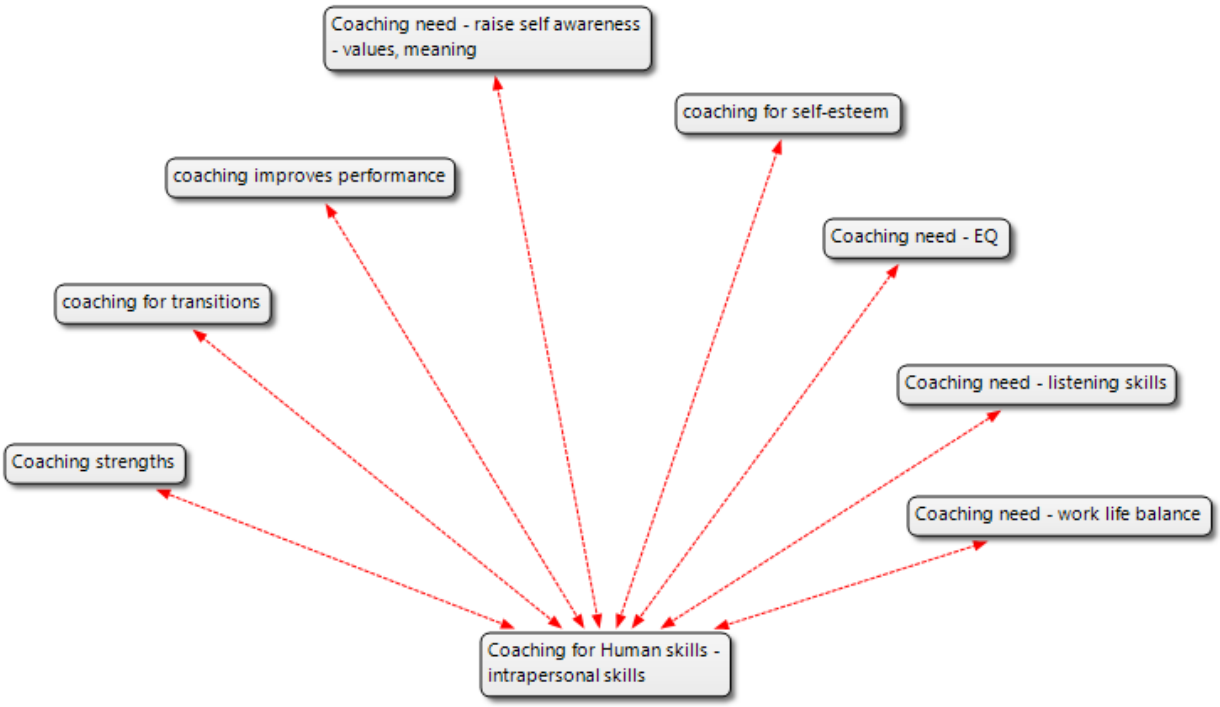

Figure 14: Coaching needs – intrapersonal skills

Raising self-awareness

Several factors surfaced under this category – personal values, strengths, impact of upbringing. Strangely, more mentions were made of this by non-coached respondents, which is surprising.

Certainly a key role for any coach is to raise further the self-awareness of executives (who usually must have a relatively high level already to have succeeded in their role). Some coaches prefer using tools for this; others like having conversations. Introducing a reflective process to executives is likely to have beneficial results, by encouraging deeper introspection.

Bill George's influential study highlights how important it is to grow self-awareness to be a leader, by exploring one's life story and ensuring one stays grounded by "spending time with their families and close friends, authentic leaders get physical exercise, engage in spiritual practices, do community service, and return to the places where they grew up (George, 2007:137). This aspect is further supported in Wallis' study, which found that this was the most important factor in her research (2011).

Thus coaching can support the aspiring leader by helping them explore facets of their life and tendencies.

Coaching for performance

This is the classic application for coaching. Clearly, the executives perceived that this area could have a significant impact.

Although the research is limited in its extent, empirical studies have shown a clear pre- and post-counselling link with better performance (Thach, 2002). Whether this shows up in soft behaviours or hard business results is moot.

Raising self-esteem

The stories told by the executives indicate clear damage to their self-esteem, whether through racism, upbringing or just a lack of support. Given its track record of increasing people's confidence, this can be a key application for coaching. Baron's (2010) study showed that coaching can be very effective in raising self-efficacy and this is related to the number of coaching sessions. If this was identified as a key factor during the coach engagement process, it may also point to providing a coach with a psychological background to conduct some assessments, e.g. Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), and carry out counselling to maximise the effect.

This is supported by Wallis' (2011) study, which found that this was the fourth most important factor in her research and is often cited in the coaching literature (Govindji & Linley, 2007; Linley & Harrington, 2006; Linley, Nielsen, Gillett, & Biswas-Diener, 2010).

Emotional intelligence

Emotional intelligence is slowly gaining prominence in the executive space, and even in some of the academic literature. There is a clear recognition that being effective with

one's emotion is important for a leader. The coach could use an emotional intelligence assessment to trigger this conversation.

Goleman and Boyatzis' extensive work in the field indicates that building emotional intelligence can be key to becoming an effective leader (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002b). Other studies have shown that emotional intelligence can be enhanced by coaching (Grant, 2007).

Coaching for transitions

Executives with greater experience in leadership development strongly promote the use of coaching when transiting to a new position or even on-boarding when joining a company. This is a classic application for coaching support, for example from one level of the pipeline to another, so it is a little surprising that more mention was not made of this aspect.

The literature suggests this is a common coaching application (O'Neill, 2000; Stout-Rostron, 2009; Zeus & Skiffington, 2000), although Wallis (2011) did not identify this aspect at all.

Coaching through strengths

Somewhat surprisingly, only two executives mentioned strengths, and neither of them had been coached, although one did work in an organisation that is increasingly using coaches, which is possibly why he mentioned this.

In the author's coaching experience, using strengths as a platform from which to build can be significantly empowering. The positive psychology movement, started by Martin Seligman, strenuously supports this approach. Research in this field has grown significantly in the past ten years and shows a variety of applications (Govindji & Linley, 2007; Linley & Harrington, 2006; Linley, et al., 2010).

Listening skills

It may seem somewhat of a waste to use a coach to teach someone listening skills, although it is ranked at the bottom of coaching applications. Perhaps it relates more to improved social skills, communications and what Wallis called improved interpersonal relationships (Wallis, 2011). A coach can certainly establish if a client prefers visual

auditory or kinaesthetic modes of communication through a simple neurolinguistic programming (NLP) analysis. Sometimes this can bring a greater awareness of presentation styles within a group setting.

Work-life balance

With only one executive mentioning this topic, and that person being coached, perhaps this features low on the priority list for black executives? Certainly it contrasts with many coaching studies on executives, where for example, Wallis ranks it third in South Africa (Wallis, 2011).

In this study it has certainly ranked virtually at the bottom of all the identified coaching requirements.

Technical skills

This final section in discussion deals with a few technical skills that were mentioned:

- Business thinking
- Financial management
- Time management

Coaching for business thinking

It is somewhat surprising finding that half the respondents suggested coaching could help with commercial thinking. One would imagine that a more traditional business school education, studying cases and general management issues would provide this. Like several of the issues in this section, perhaps part of a coaching programme could address these topics as part of the programme, largely by setting research tasks and then having a discussion at coaching. It does imply that the coach in these cases needs to have a solid business background rather than a psychological one (McDermott, *et al*., 2007).

The literature does not often mention this as a coaching application, so perhaps it is unique to the South African situation?

Financial management

Another surprising mention was that of using coaching to address financial skills. Again, one would suppose that attending financial skills course would be a better application of resources. However, the author has heard of a case where a senior executive wanted her coach to assist her understand financial statements better, so she could feel more confident in challenging the CFO at board meetings.

The research does not seem to mention this aspect, so this it may be a unique feature of the South African landscape, where due to a lack of education and/or experience, executives find themselves at a senior level, but without adequate background.

Time management

Although only two executives mentioned time management, this could be a significant finding for some executives. A coach could introduce some classic concepts such as the urgency and importance matrix, to help executives identify their priorities better.

It is a skill not traditionally tackled on classic leadership courses, although it is a key feature of the Covey Institute programmes, with the chapter three of his best selling book, called “first things first” highlighting the impact versus urgency dilemma (Covey, 1989). His recommended approach is to plan weekly, putting the important tasks for the weeks in as ‘rocks’ of time, in order to ensure that they do not become engulfed by the day-to-day urgent matters that typically arise within corporates.

The book *Getting Things Done,* reputedly authored by the main consultant to Microsoft on their new version of Outlook software, also has tips on managing deadlines (Allen, 2001) and workflow.

This aspect was not mentioned by Wallis at all (Wallis, 2011), although it does appear in some literature.

5.7 Conclusion

This discussion section has highlighted the findings and related them to the existing body of knowledge, or pointed out where there may be new findings.

In conclusion, the answers to the two research questions have been addressed as follows:

First research question:

Regarding "what factors are perceived to be inhibiting the career progression of black executives", the study identified factors contributing to the slow rate of black executive representation at senior level, grouped into the areas of positive and negative cultural effects as well as black culture.

It then examined some further factors of importance:

- Perceptions of black executive performance
- Education levels
- Impact of upbringing
- Visibility
- Lack of experience
- Access to mentors

Next, under the same question, the section tackled issues arising for organisations' employment equity:

- Impact of fast-tracking
- Achieving a critical mass of black executives
- Propensity to job-hop
- Effect of supportive culture
- Black executive performance is closely observed
- Preference to become an entrepreneur
- Black executives put into softer roles
- Lack of commitment to BBBEE

It also examined implications for employment equity strategy:

- Importance of performance management
- Communicate clearly over the BBBEE strategy
- Retention strategy
- Coaching is good for growing the pipeline
- Coaching improves the quality of executives
- Government and shareholder pressure is having some effect

Second research question:

In answer to the second question “Identify those perceived coaching needs of black executives that can accelerate their leadership development”, this section discussed the use of coaching as a solution in these areas:

- Coaching strategy
- Addressing perceived coaching needs, using the Katz (1974) managerial skills framework
    - Conceptual skills
    - Human skills – interpersonal
    - Human skills – intrapersonal
    - Technical skills

Clearly, the use of coaching as means to tackle these particular factors is likely to be more effective than training. The fact that, to be effective, training needs to create mediated experience and demands debriefing afterwards, lends itself perfectly to a coaching programme, where executives can identify an aspect they wish to develop, and then reflect back to the coach at their meeting.

6 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarises key findings from the research regarding what factors have contributed to the parlous situation of black male representation at senior management levels after 19 years of democracy, highlighting the main factors in the research which are associated with a company's employment equity strategy, and describing the most salient aspects of an executive's accelerated leadership development which could best be addressed by coaching.

6.1 Conclusions of the study

Many societal and historical factors have inhibited black males from participating at senior levels of the private sector of the economy to the extent indicated by population ratios.

6.1.1 Factors contributing to the low level of participation of black males at senior levels

Black executives evidently experience high levels of racism, whether this is conscious or not. This is typified by a widely held stereotypical attitude that the black executive is assumed ineffective until proven otherwise. Having attended a historically white institution (HWI) ameliorates this effect somewhat, but it has been exacerbated by the historical practice of putting black executives into 'softer' roles. Some recent high-profile successful black executives are helping to change this perception.

This creates a situation where achieving a critical mass of black executives within an organisation should have a significant effect on the company and the country. What it could enable is the adoption of a blend between the historical Eurocentric management style and an Afrocentric one, which would bring in aspects of Ubuntu, and may afford a competitive advantage. Aspects related to this are a tendency for white executives to emphasise tasks and individual effort, and blacks more relationships and the team.

Aspects emanating from black culture could be detrimental to black executives' effectiveness in many organisations, particularly the ability to confront other executives even when they may be perceived as superiors. Experience gained overseas seems to limit this effect.

Creating a positive support environment for black executives is important for the future creation of a pipeline of executives. Factors such as mapping out a clear career path, support for further education, coaching and mentoring, and coming from a supportive family background all appear to make a significant difference.

A positive finding in the research is that education does not seem to be an inhibiting factor anymore, as executives have for some time now been more readily able to access degrees at HWIs and their associated business schools. Some 70% of respondents had master's degrees, and 60% went to top-tier universities, either in South Africa or the USA.

A most interesting aspect of the research is the apparent extent to which factors in the executive's upbringing have contributed to their successful careers. In some cases, this manifested in support from the family, particularly in gaining access to education but, in others, it entailed overcoming hardship and thus developing personal strategies in this regard. It seems that maintaining a positive attitude is key. Related to this was the discovery that most of the respondents had created unofficial mentors at work during their careers. However, the research indicates that mentoring schemes often do not work, unless they are structured effectively.

An element predicted in the literature, but surprisingly evident in the research, is the extent to which a lack of visibility through substitute networks for the historical Anglo American model from schools, universities and clubs is impeding the sourcing of black recruits.

Although expected from the literature, the extent to which a lack of experience is a limiting factor was highly apparent. What was surprising was the unanimity of respondents that job-hopping is destructive to black executives' careers, as they do not get the chance to practice the execution of their planning. Related to this is the deliberate practice of putting a black executive into a stretching role, with the full support of leadership. Another interesting finding was that experience at a state-owned entity could prove a useful training ground.

6.1.2 Issues and implications for a company's employment equity strategy

Fast-tracking has caused considerable damage, both to executives' careers, as well as generating significant resistance from white executives. Accordingly, when stretching the black executive, it is paramount to provide support in the form of leadership sponsorship, clear objectives for the BBBEE strategy, and a coach or mentor. The research did not indicate as much lack of commitment to BBBEE as expected, and the positive view of government pressure in this regard was somewhat surprising.

The propensity indicated in the literature to job-hop in the current environment, where there is a large mismatch between supply of quality black executives and the demand, shows up clearly. Exacerbating this effect is the tendency reported by some to escape undesirable cultures, close observation and tight performance monitoring by adopting an entrepreneurial route. Accordingly, strenuous efforts need to be made by organisations to retain their executives for extended periods by providing a supportive culture, clear career paths as well as financial incentives.

Talent management practices were surprisingly positively reviewed. Coaching is seen as beneficial for creating a pipeline; this was driven by the very positive experiences of executives who had been coached. Aspects relating to performance management surfaced throughout the research; this is a key success factor for implementation.

6.1.3 Coaching as a solution

Findings related to coaching strategy included the non-surprising finding that, generally, coaching should be used to address functional, not technical, skills. However, a few unexpected technical skills, as outlined below, did feature.

Matching coaches to executive's needs came out strongly, but only from those who had been coached. Somewhat surprisingly, many of the executives suggested that older white executives should be used due to their experience, and one respondent claimed that having a coach from a totally different world-view would be beneficial. Apparently, many white executives are pleased to be approached, assuming that they do not feel threatened.

Group coaching was mentioned in places, due to its cost effectiveness, which would allow for coaching to be rolled out to more levels of management.

As 50 areas of application for coaching were identified in the research, the findings were grouped under the Katz model of skills needed for managerial practice, namely conceptual skills, human skills and technical skills.

Conceptual skills

In this category of systemic thinking, the most significant finding was how important it is for black executives to be coached on aligning their personal objectives with those of the organisation. This involves an understanding of the predominant corporate culture, which puts heavy responsibility on the coach to establish clearly what is acceptable within the corporate.

Other skills mentioned include business acumen and handling ambiguity or dichotomies in life, and the inherent contradictions. These aspects can be dealt with during conversations on values.

Human skills

Some 40% of the findings revolved around human skills, both interpersonal and intrapersonal. Topics in order of mention for the *interpersonal* category include:

- **Enhancing leadership**, which can be tackled through both training and coaching.

- **Performance management**, with special emphasis on learning to be more direct, which is contrary to black culture. This is a new finding not apparently evident in the research.

- **Managing corporate politics**, which was particularly raised by executives who had not been coached, highlighting their observation of the penalties for ‘not playing the game’. This finding is consistent with the literature.

- **Building networks.** A surprising finding was that of the limited nature of networks within the black executive community, and the need expressed by

non-coached executives for special emphasis on this aspect. Some of the research points to this, and highlights how ineffectual racial minority networks can be.

- **Leadership style.** This aspect was mentioned mostly by coached executives, who pointed out how they have had to change their style, with many mentioning a coaching style. This does not appear in the coaching literature, but is starting to become prominent in the leadership literature.

- **Team leadership.** The ability to build and lead teams was important to some executives, although this is not often mentioned in the coaching literature.

In the *intrapersonal* category, topics mentioned were:

- **Raising self-esteem**, which seems to be rather unique to South Africa, perhaps due to its historical background?

- **Coaching for performance,** which is a classic application for coaching, although there are cultural overlays in South Africa due to black culture.

- **Raising self-awareness.** This covers values, strengths and upbringing, which is also a classic coaching application, borne out in global and local literature.

- **Emotional intelligence**. This factor appears increasingly in the leadership literature, although it does not appear prominently in the coaching literature.

- **Coaching through strengths,** a favourite of the positive psychology school, this did not appear much in the findings, but features in the literature, so this is somewhat surprising.

- **Coaching for transitions,** promoted by executives with a background in leadership development. This is one of the most promising areas for developing a pipeline and providing the support referred to earlier.

- **Listening skills,** somewhat surprisingly mentioned; presumably this would feature more with communication and relationship skills as mentioned frequently in the literature.

- **Work-life balance** hardly featured at all, unlike the literature where it is a common coaching goal both globally and locally. One can only speculate that this is a low priority for black executives in South Africa, given the other pressures they experience.

Technical skills

Relatively few technical skills featured, representing less than 10% of mentions. The few prominent ones included:

- **Business thinking**, a somewhat surprising finding, as one would imagine that business school courses would be a better source. Presumably this is a result of executives being fast-tracked in South Africa, and therefore not gaining the expertise.

- **Financial management,** again this surprising for similar reasons to above; this does not normally feature in coaching literature.

- **Time management** is not such a surprising finding; this could have a dramatic effect on executive performance, but does not normally feature strongly in the coaching literature. The concept of “African time” was summarily dismissed by one prominent respondent.

6.2 Implications for stakeholders

This section provides recommendations for sets of stakeholders, at two levels:

- Which factors in the environment need addressing to prevent the inhibition of the career progression of black executives?

- What coaching needs are perceived by black executives for developing into more effective leaders?

6.2.1 Implications for leadership

Addressing the contributing factors

Black male executives are likely to feel isolated and rejected by the historical corporate culture, and experience some explicit or implicit racism. Thus it is incumbent on top

leadership in the organisation to take account of this and create a supportive environment for current and potential black executives. This may involve effecting a change strategy that sets out to change the corporate culture in terms of leadership style into one that integrates aspects of both Eurocentric and African modes, i.e. supporting both individualist and humanistic aspects.

A critical role for leadership is to determine and then convey, in an honest and transparent manner, the socio-economic needs for BBBEE, how it will affect the organisation, and the implications for all staff members, especially whites. This aspect needs to become a cornerstone aspect of the vision and mission of the company, because if this does not become embedded and executed, South Africa as a whole will suffer. Thus it is also important to foster an organisation that is not only tolerant of diversity, but appreciates that by leveraging our differences, South African organisations can become “best in class”.

It is crucial to identify the potential leaders, possibly by using the nine-box matrix to map potential executives. Once identified, these leaders need to be placed in challenging ‘hard’ roles to stretch them, protected to some extent, and supported by interventions such as mentoring, further education and coaching.

To maximise retention rates, these black executives must be offered a clear career path, without necessarily making specific commitments, but pointing out that the expectation is that they will be operating at a predetermined level within a specified period.

Leadership needs to work with human resource practitioners in the company to proactively create new networks that can be used to attract and recruit high-potential black executives

Addressing coaching needs

This research has shown clearly that coaching is an excellent mechanism to help black executives grow into better leaders. In particular, it can be used to offset the lack of experience gained at home or at work, and close gaps quickly that may have taken five to ten years to fill under normal circumstances.

Thus the softer skills of leadership performance management, managing corporate politics, networking, building teams, building confidence, as well as general business acumen and even financial skills, can all be rapidly accelerated during a coaching programme of one year.

Accordingly, top leadership needs to be aware of the significant contribution a coaching programme can make, and to provide active support in terms of sponsorship, time and budget.

6.2.2 Implications for black male executives

Selecting or creating an appropriate environment

Black male executives can take some findings from this research to optimise the work environment they select, if considering a new role, or at least influence their current employer.

Apart from doing some research on the explicit but, more importantly, implicit discrimination that a target organisation might exhibit, it might be worth investigating the current ratio of black executives, to see if the organisation is close to achieving a critical mass, which could then significantly affect the experience. Similarly, a due diligence might also yield some information on the culture or leadership style experienced by other executives, to see if there is any apparent shift away from purely Eurocentric to one that may be taking on aspects more akin to African leadership.

Black male executives particularly need to be aware of the tendency for the traditional respect for elders to manifest in a form where executives fail to challenge their peers or superiors, just because they seem older or more senior. Gaining experience in an overseas operation would go a long way to countering this effect.

Black male executives should look for, or create pressure for, a comprehensive talent management framework, which includes a pipeline management tool such as the Drotter pipeline and nine-box potential matrix. Certainly one should look for, or encourage, the transparent commitment to career path options, set out over distinct timeframes.

Coaching and mentoring

The research clearly shows that successful black male executives believe strongly that coaching should be used as a primary leadership development tool. Accordingly, the executives should look for, or ask organisations for, external one-on-one coaching before becoming a senior executive, or at least external group coaching, particularly if they are heading for, or experiencing, a transition in roles.

It is also worth noting that the successful executives in the study had mostly sought out their own informal mentors and thus, if the organisation does not also offer this support, proactively set out to find one or more mentors.

A useful point made by some of the executives is that getting experience at a state-owned entity is worthwhile. They also were vociferous in condemning the impact of job-hopping on an executive's career, pointing out if you did not stay in one role for at least three years, one runs the very significant risk of being involved in planning and strategising for a role, but never executing, which is where the hard experience comes in. Related to this is the tactic of deliberately seeking demanding roles, to provide the stretch that can accelerate a career.

Generally the respondents indicated that coaching is best suited to grow functional skills, but there were cases where coaching could be beneficial for building technical skills, such as pragmatic business acumen or confidence in financial terminology.

When being matched with a coach, apart from looking for a background that is pertinent to the executive's particular needs and wants, it is worth considering taking a coach from a different cultural group as a deliberate way of creating stretch. Several of the executives suggested taking older white coaches for this reason.

Topics raised in the research by the executives that they regard applicable for coaching are listed below in priority. Black executives should consider these topics, to see if they should be put on the coaching agenda, or even used as a basis for justifying a coach.

Interpersonal aspects

- Leadership development – practical observation and inclusion of leading leadership concepts and leadership styles.

- Developing and managing performance, both for oneself and for teams and subordinates.

- Managing corporate politics – learning how to observe what is expected, 'how to play the game'.

- Building networks. Methods for communicating both within the organisation and the industry.

- Ability to build and lead teams.

Intrapersonal aspects

- Raising confidence/assertiveness, with particular regard to the influence of black culture.

- Raising performance levels, which is a classic coaching application for setting direction and goals, and processes for monitoring.

- Increasing self-awareness – through exercises such as personal vision, values, strengths assessment, and personality profiling. A 360-degree assessment can be useful here, particularly the 'stop' and 'start' comments.

- Assessment and development of emotional intelligence.

- Enhancing listening skills, perhaps in conjunction with communication skills (visual vs. auditory vs. kinaesthetic) and developing better intuition.

- Time management – ensuring the executive is aware of urgency vs. importance, and how to plan weekly activities.

6.2.3 Implications for HR practitioners

Addressing the contributing factors

For human resource practitioners, the research offers wide-ranging implications, whether inside the organisation or operating independently.

There seems to be insufficient awareness of the kind of conditions in which black male executives operate. It is important that practitioners highlight this fact at every opportunity, and initiate programmes that assist all staff within organisations with the strategically societal and organisational obligations this puts on all South Africans at work.

A career-mapping framework, such as the Drotter potential-performance matrix, is crucial to identify and support promising black executives through their executive journey. HR leaders need consciously to decide what form of leadership culture will suit the organisation, and take steps to implement a uniquely blended South African model.

A major contribution that can be made by HR is to establish a variety of networking channels that can be used to attract and retain black executives. This will involve activities outside the organisation and oblige HR professionals to work together at an industry level to create these channels. Unfortunately, it would appear that the BMF is no longer positioned to carry out this role, so alternate channels are required.

To become a leading world-class organisation, HR has a responsibility to design and implement effective talent management processes for all staff, to address the sourcing, selection, retention and development of staff. Regarding this research, leadership development needs to play a key role, and HR needs to find a way to create a pipeline of high-potential executives, with the playing field tilted towards black executives, but without causing resentment from white managers. Achieving business growth is one of the easier ways of doing this, as the overall ratios can be adjusted over time without having to push anyone out or down. During this process, HR should be wary of appointing black executives into softer roles; rather stretching roles that could accelerate experience should be chosen. Special emphasis is required on support programmes for black executives. Coaching is particularly effective when an executive is making a transition between levels.

A major role for HR within organisations is to communicate clearly and frequently about the need for BBBEE initiatives to effect the socio-economic changes the country needs. Sources for data on this can be taken from the National Development Plan and Employment equity report, where glaring discrepancies can be authoritatively displayed

to staff. Once the needs are made clear, HR then needs to communicate clearly about the policy implications, e.g. career opportunities for white males, and how these will be handled.

A deliberate strategy to adopt both Eurocentric and African leadership models, leveraging off the best diversity management practices, should make the organisation much more attractive to work in, and attract the best staff. In combination with this and clear career mapping, specific retention measures should be taken to minimise job-hopping. This can take the form of long-term financial incentives or opportunities to participate in development activities.

Designing and implementing a comprehensive performance management process will create an environment where not only do black executives have clear and objective expectations, but they can demonstrate their competence against benchmarks.

Addressing coaching needs

When HR specialists or departments are considering their strategy, this research shows that black executives believe strongly that coaching is an appropriate intervention. They have outlined the priority of their suggested needs.

Accordingly, within the organisation's talent management and leadership development strategy, coaching should be a primary tool to address functional skills which, in this research, were broken into conceptual and human skills. Training, e.g. at business schools, should typically be used for technical skills.

From a cost point of view, external one-on-one coaching should be used for senior executives, external group coaching for middle management, and internal coaching used more at supervisory levels.

For high-potential candidates, a formal internal mentoring programme would add further value, addressing those nuances in the organisation that an external coach may not be aware of.

When designing a coaching programme for senior managers, this research shows that the programme should be designed to cater for the following aspects, in priority order:

- Take care with matching the executive with the coach.
- Look for factors that will support that particular executive's needs.
- Look for an element of difference, to create stretch from different world views.

Interpersonal aspects

- Aligning personal objectives with those of organisation – understanding the culture and how to fit in.
- Practical issues related to business issues at work – real-world business acumen applied to the organisation and its customers and suppliers.
- Leadership development – practical observation and inclusion of leading leadership concepts and leadership styles.
- Developing and managing performance, for oneself and for teams and subordinates.
- Managing corporate politics – learning how to observe what is expected, how to 'play the game'.
- Building your own networks. Methods for communicating both within the organisation and the industry.
- Ability to build and lead teams.

Intrapersonal aspects

- Raising confidence/assertiveness, with particular regard to the emphasis placed in black culture.
- Raising performance, a classic coaching approach for setting direction and goals, and processes for monitoring.
- Increasing self-awareness – include exercises such as personal vision, values, strengths assessment, personality profiling. A 360-degree assessment can be useful here, particularly the 'stop' and 'start' comments.

- Linked to self-awareness, but a specific topic that deserves particular attention is the assessment and development of emotional intelligence. The new EQi II emotional intelligence assessment would be effective here.

- Leveraging success through strengths.

- Enhancing listening skills, perhaps in conjunction with communication skills (visual vs. auditory vs. kinaesthetic) and developing better intuition.

- Time management – making sure the executive is aware of urgency vs. importance, and how to plan weekly activities.

Somewhat surprisingly, some of the respondents wanted their coach to help them with business or strategic thinking and financial management.

6.2.4 Coaching practitioners

The value arising out of this research for coaching practitioners is to highlight the areas where black executives may need particular emphasis in their coaching programme.

If coaches or coaching companies were not aware of the level of racism and discrimination experienced by black executives, they should take special note of the circumstances under which their clients operate.

This might even take the form of recommending back to the HR staff, e.g. Learning and Development, that more extensive and widespread diversity management training should take place, as well as talent management processes using the pipeline and the nine-box Drotter grid, with clear career path mapping.

Coaches should also familiarise themselves with the differences between Eurocentric and African cultures and leadership styles. The Hofstede GLOBE studies provide an excellent source for this, as well as the literature on Ubuntu. Specifically, coaches should take account of the tendency for black executives not to speak out, e.g. in a meeting, for fear of showing a lack of respect to those subconsciously seen as elders.

As major events in their youth seem to have affected successful black executives, during coaching it could be worth exploring these, for example by doing a lifeline exercise, and incorporating that into the coaching conversation.

One contribution coaches can make to limit job-hopping, is to point out how destructive it can be to spend only a short time in a job, without learning how to execute.

Team coaching can be used more cost effectively with teams of middle managers, or to support an executive undergoing one-on-one coaching.

Check with coaches at the outset of the programme to establish which of the following factors are evident from the research on black executives, before embarking on one's 'normal' approach:

Interpersonal aspects

- Understanding the culture and how to fit in.
- Practical issues related to business issues at work – real-world business acumen applied to the organisation and its customers and suppliers.
- Leadership development – practical observation and inclusion of leading leadership concepts and leadership styles.
- Developing and managing performance, both for themself and for teams and subordinates.
- Managing corporate politics – learning how to observe what is expected, how to 'play the game'.
- Building networks. Methods for communicating within the organisation and the industry.
- Ability to build and lead teams.

Intrapersonal aspects

- Raising confidence/assertiveness, with particular regard to the emphasis placed in black culture.

- Raising performance, the classic coaching approach for setting direction and goals, and processes for monitoring.

- Increasing self-awareness – include exercises such as personal vision, values, strengths assessment, personality profiling. A 360-degree assessment can be useful here, particularly the ‘stop’ and ‘start’ comments.

- Linked to self-awareness but a specific topic that deserves particular attention is the assessment and development of emotional intelligence. The new EQi II would be effective here.

- Leveraging success through strengths.

- Enhancing listening skills, perhaps in conjunction with communication skills (visual vs. auditory vs. kinaesthetic) and developing better intuition.

- Time management – ensuring the executive is aware of urgency vs. importance, and how to plan weekly activities.

Be prepared to look for areas where coaching is not usually used, such as confidence in business or financial acumen, and strategic thinking.

6.2.5 Implications for policy makers

For policy makers, the implications of this research are limited except for education and BBBEE policies.

To increase the supply of potential black executives, the departments of secondary and higher education need to continue working on the supply of high-calibre executives by providing both secondary and tertiary education that will culminate in world-class candidates as stipulated in the National Development Plan.

Business schools play a key role here, so the higher education department should take a cautious approach to tinkering with the accreditation of MBA courses to avoid creating uncertainty among institutions and employers. Leadership, business acumen and financial skills are still sorely needed in senior management ranks.

Closer working co-operation is required between industry and the tertiary and FET institutions, with research needed to ensure students are graduating with the skills most needed by industry.

The Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Labour and Black Economic Empowerment Commission need to continue fostering changes in employment equity through the broad-based black economic empowerment strategy, code of good practice and funding initiatives, to continue exerting pressure on the private sector until significant movement in the employment of black males in senior management positions is evident. This will eventually bring about the critical mass of black executives referred to in the research.

The commission for employment equity needs to continuously research and communicate progress in the field, giving leadership and HR practitioners access to the latest trends and achievements.

6.3 Suggestions for further research

This research set out to build on the existing body of knowledge that has been established both globally and South Africa. It focused particularly on the factors inhibiting the progress through career progression to employment equity of black males in senior positions and the perceptions of executives' needs in coaching.

The research has identified and prioritised those factors and needs, but further research is needed.

Firstly, a quantitative analysis study with a much larger sample could be carried out using the inhibiting factors and coaching needs identified here. These could then be more readily generalised than the qualitative method used here, and could also cover a national sample not limited to Gauteng.

Secondly, the study could be repeated, this time with black female executives, to see what differences in factors and needs emerge.

Further studies could be carried out on the levels of racism and discrimination perceived by executives in the workplace, and to evolve and test strategies for change. Related to this could be a study on what constitutes 'critical mass' of black executives in their mind's eye.

The distinction made in the research between the benefits of coaching versus mentoring deserves further attention, and perhaps a longitudinal study could show the benefits and drawbacks of both approaches.

Another study could take the same topics, but this time research the perceptions of senior white managers, and in so doing, help to bring about strategies to achieve critical mass/momentum.

Further research could be carried out in more depth on factors arising from, and the impact of, upbringing on an executive's success.

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APPENDIX A: SOUTH AFRICAN AGE DISTRIBUTION

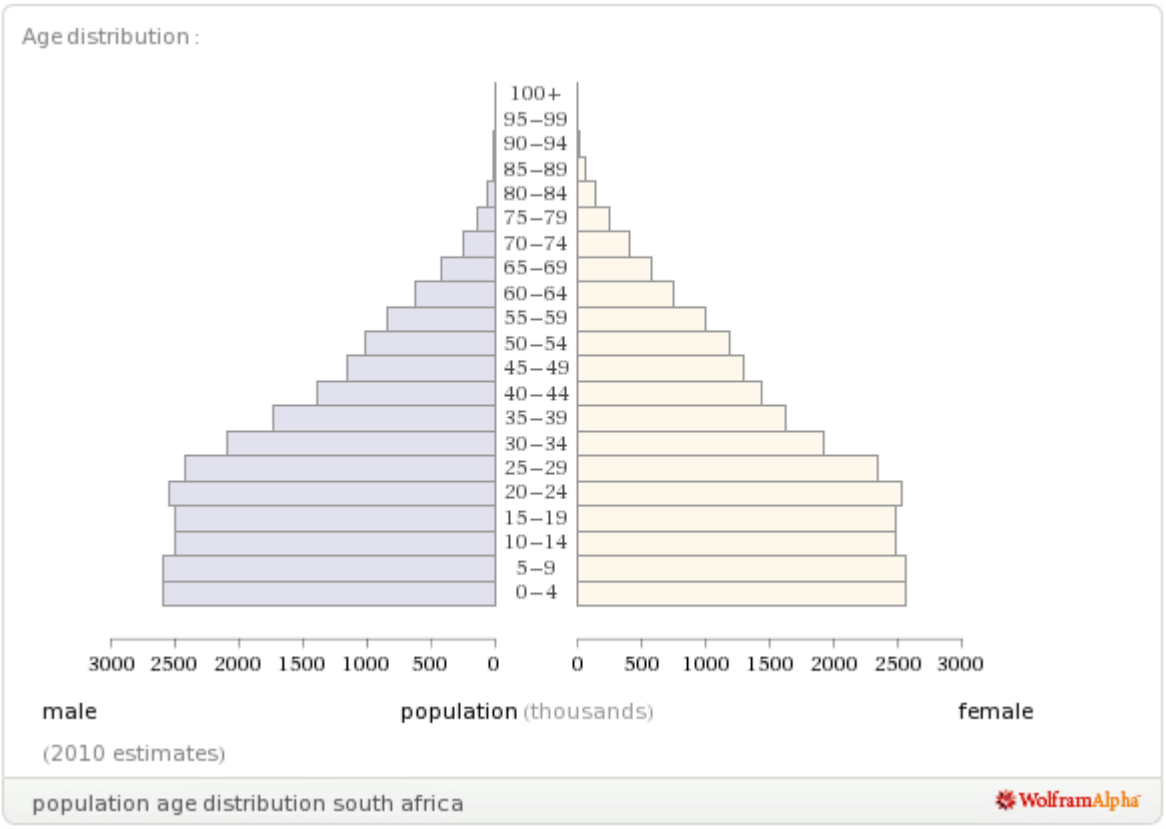

Figure 15: Age distribution for South Africa (WolframAlpha, 2011)

APPENDIX B: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Letter to participants explaining the research:

Dear Participant,

Thank you very much for your time and for agreeing to take part in this research exercise.

The research is being completed in order to complete a Masters in Management for Business and Executive Coaching degree at Wits Business School.

The purpose of this research is to identify the perceived coaching needs of Black executives in South Africa.

In the interview I will be drawing on your personal experience to answer a number of questions that have been developed based on literature research. Your input as a senior executive will be of great value in identifying areas where coaching can help accelerate the supply of future Black leaders for corporate South Africa in order to address the imbalance of employment equity and support faster economic growth.

The names of individual participants and the organisation being surveyed will be kept confidential in the research report, but the overall findings will be published.

Many thanks,

Hugh Myres

083 302 3802

j.hugh.myres@gmail.com

6.4 Discussion guide:

6.4.1 Background demographics

Name of participant Date, location and time	
Title Position of participant in organisation (ask for org chart)	
Where they grew up as a child (urban or rural region)	
Where they went to school (geography and institution)	
Number of years working	
Number of years working as a manager (of others)	
Number of years working as a manager of other managers	
Highest level of education	
Qualification From which institution	
Has coaching been used in the organisation for leadership development, and at what level? How effective has it been?	

6.4.2 Survey questions

Interviewer needs to establish some rapport and trust before engaging on specific topics, e.g. divulging that he came back from Australia in 1993 to make a contribution to Africa; is deeply passionate over transfer of skills, that's why became an executive coach, re-emphasising confidential nature of research.

Section 1

"What factors affect black executives in their leadership development that need to be addressed in order to accelerate their career development".

Setting the scene: How well do you think South Africa is doing in achieving employment equity for black males at senior management level?

What factors do you think contribute to this status?

Question 1: What is your view on the level of supply of black executives in the South African economy? How could we improve?

Question 2: In your experience, how do your or other companies operating in South Africa gain visibility of potential black executives, to attract and select them?

Which professional or social networks does the company access in attracting new executives?

Question 3: What is your view on the level and quality of the qualifications black executives exhibit today?

Question 4: What is your view on the extent of the experience black executives have gained in senior management today?

Question 5: What do you think that a company's typical perception of black executive's performance is?

What do you think the reasons for this are?

Could this perception have been affected by black executives being fast-tracked through rapid promotion?

If necessary, how could we go about changing this perception?

Do you think any factor in your upbringing has any major effect on you as a leader?

Question 6: To what extent do you think misalignment between the corporate and personal culture can restrain the rate of leadership development?

Question 7: Please describe your organisation's talent management practices?

To what extent do they create a supply of black executives in the pipeline?

Do you have a succession planning process? How are potential executives being selected?

Are any steps taken to retain black executives? If so, what are the more effective ones?

Section 2

What are the perceived coaching needs of black executives for developing into more effective leaders?

Question 8: In your experience/from what you have heard, which aspects of your leadership development could most effectively be addressed with coaching?

Which core skills/competencies do you think are more suited to coaching?

Which other competencies do you think could be suited to coaching?

Which aspects do you think are less suitable for coaching?

Who in your organisation is most appropriate to receive coaching?

Does your company offer a formal leadership development programme? If so, what does it cover and what methodologies are used?

Final question: Are there any other issues which we have not covered about coaching on which you would like to make a comment?

6.5 Research participants' information document

This document will be supplied to participants at the interview, as per the document provided in the research design course (Remenyi, 2011:34).

Name of researcher Employer	Hugh Myres 083 3023802, j.hugh.myres@gmail.com Resonance Coaching
Title of research project	The perceived coaching needs of Black executives in South Africa
Purpose of study	The purpose of this research is to establish how Black executives in South Africa see coaching helping them to develop into more effective leaders.
Description of study	The research will consist of an interview and a short questionnaire on demographics.
Duration of study	Nine months
What is involved and how long will it take?	Participants will be asked to take part in an interview. You will be asked if you are prepared to have a voice recording made of the interview and you may decline to do so. The time required is approximately one hour.
Why have you been asked to participate?	You have been asked to participate due to your experience as a Black executive who has been through leadership development

What will happen to the information given in the study?	The information will be held in a confidential manner while the work is being collated. Notes, transcripts and recordings will be kept under lock and key
What will be done with the results of the study?	The results of the interviews will be reported in the findings section of the research report. This will be done completely anonymously.
In what way will the study be beneficial and to whom?	It is hoped that this study will provide useful knowledge to executives, HR practitioners and coaches on factors affecting Black executives in their leadership development and establish how coaching can assist.
Who has reviewed this study to ensure that it complies with all the requirements and ethical standards of the University?	The Ethics committee at the University of the Witwatersrand have approved this research in proposal form and granted permission for the research to commence.
Can permission be withdrawn having previously been granted?	Yes, all participants retain the right to have their contributions to the research withdrawn at any time prior to the submission of the document.
Can you refuse to answer any question?	Yes. The participant has the right to refuse to answer any question in the interview, and to end the interview at any time

6.6 Letter of Consent

The Graduate School of Business Administration

2 St David's Place, Parktown,

Johannesburg, 2193,

South Africa

PO Box 98, WITS, 2050

Website: www.wbs.ac.za

Masters of Management RESEARCH CONSENT FORM

The perceived coaching needs of Black executives in South Africa Study

INFORMATION SHEET AND CONSENT FORM

Who I am

Hello, I am Hugh Myres. I am conducting research for the purpose of completing my Masters in Management in Business and Executive Coaching at Wits Business School.

What I am doing

I am conducting research on how black executives see coaching helping them to develop in being better leaders. I am conducting a qualitative study with 16participantsto establish what perceived factors affecting Black executives in their leadership development need to be addressed in order to accelerate their career development, and to identify the perceived coaching needs of Black executives for them to develop into more effective leaders.

Your participation

I am asking you whether you will allow me to conduct an interview with you. If you agree, I will ask you to participate in one interview for approximately one hour. I am also asking you to give us permission to record the interview. I record interviews so that I can accurately capture what is said and confirm later that my notes are completely accurate.

Please understand that **your participation is voluntary** and you are not being forced to take part in this study. The choice of whether to participate, or not, is yours alone. If you choose not take part, you will not be affected in any way whatsoever. If you agree to participate, you may stop participating in the research at any time (up until the research is submitted) and tell me that you do not want to go continue. If you do this there will also be no penalties and you will NOT be prejudiced in ANY way.

Confidentiality

Any study records that identify you will be kept confidential to the extent possible by law. The records from your participation may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that research is done properly, including my academic supervisor. (All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential.)

All study records will be destroyed after the completion and marking of my research report. I will refer to you by a code number or pseudonym (another name) in the thesis and any further publication.

Risks/discomforts

At the present time, I do not see any risks in your participation. The risks associated with participation in this study are no greater than those encountered in daily life.

Benefits

There are no immediate benefits to you from participating in this study. However, this study will be extremely helpful to us in understanding how black executives see coaching helping them to develop in being better leaders.

If you would like to receive feedback on the study, I can send you the results of the study when it is completed sometime in the middle of 2012

Who to contact if you have been harmed or have any concerns

This research has been approved by the Wits Business School. If you have any complaints about ethical aspects of the research or feel that you have been harmed in any way by participating in this study, please contact the Research Office Manager at the Wits Business School, Mmabatho Leeuw. Mmabatho.leeuw@wits.ac.za

If you have concerns or questions about the research you may call my academic research supervisor Conrad Viedge, on 011 717 3585.

CONSENT

I hereby agree to participate in research on how black executives see coaching helping them to develop in being better leaders. 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 (up to the submission of the research report) 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 -recording of my participation in the study.

……..

Signature of participant **Date**:……..

APPENDIX C: CODING ANALYSIS

CODES-PRIMARY-DOCUMENTS-TABLE			
Report created by Super - 2013/02/25 06:38:33 PM			
HU: [C:\Users\Hugh\Documents\Coaching\WBS\Research\Atlas\Coaching Masters sanitised.hpr7]			
Code-Filter: All [142]			
PD-Filter: All [13]			
Quotation-Filter: All [808]			
	Coached	Not coached	TOTALS:
Human Resource Strategy	50	53	103
Leadership Development	50	53	103
Equity employment issues	46	43	89
Supply of Executives	45	39	84
Coaching approach/strategy	39	33	72
Negative cultural effects	41	31	72
Perception of Black executive performance	42	28	70
Coaching for conceptual skills	36	31	67
Coaching for Human skills - intrapersonal skills	31	33	64
Equity employment strategy	32	27	59
Education	31	26	57
Gaining visibility	25	32	57
Influence of upbringing	32	25	57
Job Hopping	32	22	54
Experience	34	14	48
Coaching for Human Skills - Interpersonal skills	19	27	46
Performance Management	25	21	46
Black culture	18	22	40
Contributing Factors	20	20	40
Positive cultural effects	20	20	40
Coaching for technical skills	11	14	25
Coaching Solution	11	14	25
Mentorship	10	10	20
Retention	9	9	18
Succession planning	9	7	16
TOTALS:	**718**	**654**	**1372**

Figure 16: Codes sorted by prominence of quotations and in categories

CODES-PRIMARY-DOCUMENTS-TABLE
Report created by Super - 2013/02/25 06:43:06 PM
HU: [C:\Users\Hugh\Documents\Coaching\WBS\Research\Atlas\Coaching Masters sanitised.hpr7]

Code-Filter: All [142]
PD-Filter: All [13]
Quotation-Filter: All [808]

	Coached	Not coached	TOTALS:
Human Resource Strategy	50	53	103
Leadership Development	49	53	102
Employment equity issues	46	43	89
Supply of Executives	45	39	84
Coaching approach/strategy	39	33	72
Negative cultural effects	41	31	72
Perception of Black executive performance	42	28	70
Coaching for conceptual skills	36	31	67
Coaching for Human skills - intrapersonal skills	31	33	64
Employment equity strategy	32	27	59
Education	31	26	57
Gaining visibility	25	32	57
Influence of upbringing	32	25	57
Job Hopping	32	22	54
Experience	34	14	48
Coaching for Human Skills - Interpersonal skills	19	27	46
Performance Management	25	21	46
Black culture	18	22	40
Contributing Factors	20	20	40
Positive cultural effects	20	20	40
Coaching for technical skills	11	14	25
Coaching need - understand the corporate culture	17	8	25
Coaching Solution	11	14	25
Impact of fast-tracking	10	13	23
Supply levels still too low	8	15	23
Mentorship	10	10	20
Creating talent pipeline	10	9	19
Gaining experience	11	8	19
Progress on employing black executives	10	9	19
Retention	9	9	18

Lack of experience	14	2	16
Leadership development used in organisation	5	11	16
Organisation needs to take risks by appointing senior black execs	5	11	16
Succession planning	9	7	16
Poor perceptions of Black Executive performance	8	7	15
Visibility through black business orgs, e.g. BMF	6	9	15
Visibility through top universities	5	10	15
Job hopping is destructive due to inappropriate experience	11	3	14
Exposed to mentorship	5	8	13
Impact of upbringing	8	5	13
Retention strategy	6	7	13
Black culture in terms of respect for elders and remuneration	3	9	12
Critical mass of Black executives	6	6	12
Culture clash	7	5	12
culture insensitivity	8	4	12
propensity to job hop	8	4	12
Impact of values	6	5	11
supportive culture	4	7	11
coaching improves the quality of executives	7	3	10
grew up in family which respected schooling	5	5	10
coaching for self-esteem	3	6	9
coaching improves performance	5	4	9
Coaching need - leadership skills	6	3	9
Coaching need - performance management/being direct	3	6	9
Coaching need - raise self-awareness - values, meaning	3	6	9
Communicate to explain why BBBEE	3	6	9
going to "white" universities	6	3	9
succession planning	4	5	9
Talent Management	2	7	9
Black Execs need to earn it	4	4	8
coaching for business thinking	4	4	8
coaching for context	4	4	8
Coaching need - financial management	5	3	8
feel inferior	4	4	8
grew up with role model	4	4	8
Impact of culture	5	3	8
Impact of Ubuntu	5	3	8
Need for transformation	4	4	8
no networks	6	2	8
supply of black executives improving	5	3	8
Black executives' performance is watched closely	4	3	7

Black executives do not perform	4	3	7
coaching for the talent pipeline	5	2	7
Coaching need - managing corporate politics	1	6	7
country would benefit from development	3	4	7
grew up with family executives	4	3	7
high expectations	4	3	7
lack of succession planning	5	2	7
Need to improve the quality of education	4	3	7
Racism	3	4	7
Coaches are matched	4	2	6
Coaching need - develop networks	1	5	6
coaching not for technical skills	3	3	6
entrepreneurs rather than executives	6	0	6
giving performance feedback to Black managers	6	0	6
Grew up in rural area	5	1	6
improving perception of Black executive performance	2	4	6
link between tertiary, government and industry needs	3	3	6
Need for Government to play a role	3	3	6
quality of education improving	3	3	6
Black executives put into softer roles or without portfolio	2	3	5
coaching leadership style	4	1	5
Coaching need – EQ	1	4	5
coaching need - team leadership	2	3	5
Coaching supports all applications	2	3	5
Execs stretched in new roles	4	1	5
gaining experience at SOEs or public sector	4	1	5
lack of talent management	4	1	5
Managers as coaches	3	2	5
poor education	3	2	5
Specify career path for retention	3	2	5
use older white executives for coaches	4	1	5
visibility of execs through social media	2	3	5
White managers felt pleased to be asked to mentor	2	3	5
BMF not functioning effectively	2	2	4
Coaching for functional skills	0	4	4
Coaching middle management level	1	3	4
Coaching strengths	0	4	4
education creating pipeline	3	1	4
Fast tracking creates resentment	1	3	4
gaining experience overseas	2	2	4
Lack of commitment to BBBEE	2	2	4
Lack of retention strategy	3	1	4

Need more skills to grow the economy	3	1	4
poorer Black universities	2	2	4
Pressure from Government	2	2	4
visibility through school contacts	1	3	4
Blacks in entitlement mode	1	2	3
Coaching at all levels in organisation	1	2	3
coaching early in career	0	3	3
coaching for transitions	2	1	3
coaching need - understanding individual motivation	1	2	3
coaching not for fixing poor performers	3	0	3
coaching supplemented by training	3	0	3
coaching to overcome hurdles	2	1	3
Educated overseas	0	3	3
EE act creates demand	1	2	3
hard skills now not soft	3	0	3
Leadership needed to create and support opportunities for Black executives	0	3	3
Mentors used internally	2	1	3
politeness barrier	2	1	3
Pressure from shareholders	3	0	3
visibility through golf	3	0	3
war for talent	3	0	3
Black culture demonstrating respect at funerals	0	2	2
Black executives need to execute	0	2	2
coach needs to understand corporates and culture of organisation	0	2	2
coaching for academic improvement	1	1	2
coaching for stakeholder management	0	2	2
coaching for time management	1	1	2
coaching in groups	2	0	2
Coaching need - communications	0	2	2
Coaching need - listening skills	1	1	2
Coaching need - work life balance	2	0	2
coaching using whites	2	0	2
demise of FETs	2	0	2
EE started with Sullivan codes	2	0	2
global mobility	2	0	2
need for broad based tertiary: FETS	1	1	2
visibility of execs through radio	0	2	2
White execs have experience but are threatened	1	1	2
Whites still dominant in EE Stats	0	2	2
Coaching for board level positions	1	0	1
Coaching leadership ethics	0	1	1

Coaching need - attention to detail	1	0	1
Create EE positions outside of the budget	1	0	1
Create growth to allow capacity for transformation	0	1	1
Lack of trust	0	1	1
Leadership	0	1	1
Losing staff due to networking at University	0	1	1
Malicious compliance	1	0	1
Shaya Nyama	1	0	1
Talent Fronting	0	1	1
Traditional Afrikaans Universities have transformed better	1	0	1
Use growth to fix EE ratios	1	0	1
visibility through poaching	0	1	1
TOTALS:	**1185**	**1085**	**2270**

Figure 17: codes sorted by number of quotations