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Perceptions of disputants on the role of coaching to enhance workplace mediation in South Africa

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Perceptions of disputants on the role of coaching to enhance workplace mediation in South Africa

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

Johannesburg, 2020

ABSTRACT

The practice of conflict coaching has emerged in countries outside of SA, with a body of knowledge growing on the application of coaching to mediation. Yet in SA there appears to be limited application of coaching to mediation. The research purpose was to determine disputants' perceptions of challenges experienced in the mediation of one-to-one disputes between professionals, and after exposure to coaching, to gain their perceptions on the potential role of coaching in enhancing workplace mediation in South Africa – towards developing guidelines on how coaching could be adopted in the mediation process.

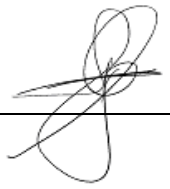
The study adopted a qualitative research approach, with data collection conducted through two sets of face-to-face semi-structured interviews with seven disputants (with fourteen interviews conducted) in a university, by an independent interviewer. The coaching of the disputants was facilitated by the researcher after the first set of interviews, and before the second set of interviews. The disputants were assigned codes by the interviewer, and after transcription of the interviews, the transcripts were submitted to the researcher for thematic analysis.

While most disputants perceived their mediation processes to be effective, all of them had experienced certain challenges in the pre-mediation phase, during the actual mediation itself and/or post-mediation. After receiving coaching as part of the study, the disputants all acknowledged that there were benefits of coaching. Their positive experience of coaching therefore assisted them to articulate how coaching could play a role in the pre-mediation and post-mediation phases. In pre-mediation, coaching could assist with the proactive de-escalation of the conflict experienced among the two disputants and with the preparation of the disputants for the mediation process. In the post-mediation phase, coaching could be used to facilitate closure in relation to the emotional aftermath, and follow-up with implementation of aspects of the mediation agreement. Furthermore, guidelines are recommended to key stakeholders on how coaching could be adopted within the mediation process.

KEY WORDS: Workplace conflict, workplace disputes, coaching, conflict coaching, mediation, mediation process

DECLARATION

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

Name: Charles R Gilbert Signature: 

Signed at Parktown, on the 9th day of August 2020

DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to my very supportive family, in particular my wife, Rene, who always encouraged me to push ahead and never complained about being late many evenings. Also my two sons, Scott and Kent, who always enquired about how the project is proceeding.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the MMBEC academic staff for delivering the academic program with such passion and professionalism, as well as providing advice and support. A very special acknowledgment to Dr Kathy Bennett, my supervisor, for her guidance, advice and encouragement for guiding me through this fantastic journey of intense learning.

A special word of thanks to the wonderful participants who agreed to be interviewed for this project; without their input, this research work would not have been possible. Lastly, I wish to acknowledge the interviewer, for her dedication and hard work during this project, her time management and willingness to contribute to the success of the project was just outstanding.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADR – Alternative dispute resolution

GSAEC - Graduate School Alliance for Education in Coaching

ICF – International Coaching Federation

SA – South Africa

CHAPETER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

Currently, coaching does not play a significant role in mediation or workplace disputes or the resolution of such disputes in South Africa. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of disputants on the potential role of coaching to enhance mediation of disputes or conflict in the workplace in South Africa. The insights gained have assisted in developing guidelines on how coaching may be applied to the mediation process in the workplace. The focus of the study was on the mediation of one-to-one workplace disputes; in other words, disputes or conflicts between two individuals.

This chapter consists of the context of the study, the research problem, the research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the research, definitions and assumptions.

1.2 Context of the study

Conflict is common to all workplaces. In nursing though, studies have shown it is a particular source of job stress and dissatisfaction (Northam, 2009). Northam (2009) further argued that how conflicts arise and how they are resolved have a great deal to do with the personalities of those involved. Huan and Yazdanifard (2012) suggested that conflict generally occurs when two or more people communicate. That is, when people think of conflict in simple terms, they tend to think it happens when serious issues and anger are invoked in the communication process.

This study focused on mediation of one-to-one conflicts or disputes in the context of the workplace in South Africa (SA). The traditional approach to dealing with disputes or conflicts in the workplace was the responsibility of the human resources department and/or legal affairs (Katz, 2017). This traditional approach did not always uncover and assist parties to deal with the underlying issues, nor address the needs and concerns giving rise to the dispute, and generally did not

facilitate mending the ongoing relationship between the parties in dispute (Katz, 2017).

Consequently, negotiation, mediation, arbitration and ombudsmen are alternative dispute resolution approaches which have been developed in several countries (Brubaker, Noble, Fincher, Park, & Press, 2014), with mediation having become one of the most popular (Katz, 2017). Mediation is defined as “a conflict resolution process in which a mutually acceptable third party, who has no authority to make a binding decision for disputants, intervenes in a conflict or dispute to assist involved parties to improve their relationship, enhance communication and use effective problem-solving and negotiation procedures to reach voluntary and acceptable understanding or agreements on contested issues” (Moore, 2014, p. 8).

Mediation emerged in SA through its popular use in labour disputes during the 1980s, and became acceptable and popular with the New Government of National Unity in the early 1990’s (Odendaal, 1998). Workplace mediation was implemented, as it is a sound intervention to maintain relationships, it is cost effective, it generally contributes to employee wellbeing and it helps to create a problem solving corporate culture (Bollen & Euwema, 2013). The researcher is an accredited mediator with experience in mediating several disputes in the workplace, and therefore has knowledge of the training and accreditation process of mediators in SA - a process undertaken by various accredited service providers, for example, Bowen Gilfillan Attorneys (https://www.bowmanslaw.com). Such training generally includes about two weeks of theoretical training as well as a three-day accreditation process. This training focuses predominantly on how to manage the mediation process effectively, rather than in-depth skills such as deep listening and connecting with the client.

Coaching has rapidly become a key part of many organisations’ learning and development strategy (Joo, Sushko, & McLean, 2012), due to the benefits of coaching being widely recognised (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014b). Chiswick (2016) argued that coaching, and especially one-to-one coaching, has emerged as a good alternative for facilitating long-term improvement in the

performance of professionals in the workplace, as well as transforming their thinking and insight to meet performance demands. Coaching has been described by Cox, Bachkirova, and Clutterbuck (2014a, p. 145) as “a human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools, and techniques, to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders”.

According to Cox et al. (2014a), the key techniques in coaching are associated with learning and with effective communication, and include listening, questioning, and promoting reflection, within a trusting coaching relationship. The coaching process therefore requires that the coach be competent in applying specific coaching principles and practices such as those espoused by the Graduate School Alliance for Education in Coaching (GSAEC) as described by Koortzen (2010). Maltbia, Ghosh, and Marsick (2010a, p. 5) confirmed these competencies as: (i) meeting ethical guidelines and professional standards, (ii) establishing the coaching agreement, iii) Establishing trust and intimacy with the client, (iv) coaching presence, (v) active listening, (vi) powerful questioning, vii) direct communication, (viii) creating awareness, (ix) designing actions, (x) planning and goal setting, and (xi) managing progress and accountability. Based on the nature of these coaching competencies, it requires at least a recognised and accredited course (which includes intensive coaching skills practice and an assessment of competence) to become a professional coach.

Coaching and mediation are two separate concepts, each with their own processes; yet both are aimed at the development of people capabilities and both of these processes can be applied to a one-on-one (dyadic) relationship intervention. The relationship between these processes is not immediately obvious, but the application of coaching skills and/or a coaching approach to mediation seems to have the potential of promoting synergies, thus impacting the development of the parties in disputes beyond what could be expected from a standard mediation process.

An extensive search revealed that no SA literature appears to exist specifically on describing the influence coaching might (or might not) have on the mediation process. However, the practice of conflict coaching has emerged in countries outside of SA, with a body of knowledge growing on the application of conflict coaching to mediation (Brubaker, Noble, Fincher, Park, & Press, 2014).

Conflict coaching has recently emerged as a mechanism to resolve conflict. According to Brinkert (2011, p. 81), “conflict coaching is a one-on-one process, to develop a client’s conflict understanding, interaction strategies and/or interaction skills”. Brinkert (2011) further suggests that conflict coaching emerged as a form of alternative dispute resolution.

This study aimed to provide insight into perceptions on how coaching could enhance one-to-one workplace mediation in South Africa, towards developing guidelines for applying coaching in the mediation process.

1.3 Research problem

The main problem is that the mediation process of workplace disputes or conflicts between professionals has challenges that may detract from its overall effectiveness (Raines, Kumar Pokhrel, & Poitras, 2013), for example, the mediator could push for a solution too quickly and disregard the benefits of the process for the disputants, while the disputants might also not be well prepared to engage in mediation (Raines et al., 2013). Nathan (2009) suggests that the general goal of mediation is to enable conflicting parties to reach agreements they find satisfactory and are willing to implement. Finding approaches to further enhance the mediation process of one-to-one workplace disputes in SA are therefore required. The research purpose was to determine disputants’ perceptions of the challenges experienced in the mediation of disputes or conflict between professionals, and after exposure to coaching, to gain their perceptions on the potential role of coaching in enhancing such workplace mediation in SA.

1.4 Research objectives

The objectives of this research were:

1. To identify challenges experienced in the mediation process which inhibit the effectiveness thereof.

2. To determine disputants' perceptions on how coaching could play a role in enhancing the mediation process.

3. To develop guidelines for applying coaching in the mediation process.

1.5 Research questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What challenges are experienced in the mediation process which inhibit the effectiveness thereof?

2. What are disputants' perceptions on how coaching could play a role in enhancing the mediation process?

3. What guidelines could be adopted for applying coaching in the mediation process?

1.6 Significance of the study

The study sought to establish views of disputants on how coaching could play a role in enhancing the process of mediation in the SA workplace and to develop guidelines for doing so. Nolan-Haley (2012) argues that mediation has distinguished itself from other forms of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms because of its voluntary nature, given that the disputants have full control over the process, as well as their input into crafting a mutually acceptable agreement. Therefore, it will be beneficial if coaching could be applied to enhance the mediation process in the workplace in SA. The guidelines developed in this study for applying coaching to mediation will be of benefit to coaches, who could extend their coaching practice to supporting mediation of conflict or disputes between professionals in the workplace, in their personal capacity and/or in working collaboratively with mediators. In addition, this study will be of value to mediators as it highlights how coaching could be applied to aspects in the

mediation process, which may then potentially translate into more effective or beneficial outcomes for the parties in dispute, and for the workplace context they are situated in. Furthermore, recommendations are made for providers of training programs for mediators on how to apply coaching to the mediation process as well as HR Professionals, who are required to manage the dispute resolution processes.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

The focus of this study was on disputants' perceptions of the challenges they experienced in mediation of one-to-one disputes or conflicts. The participants in this study were therefore disputants who have been exposed to mediation of disputes in the workplace between two professionals within the last 18 to 24 months. They are all based in one organisation in the Gauteng province of SA. As the sample only had experience of mediation, and not coaching, the disputants underwent coaching as part of the study, so they were able to share their perspectives on how coaching could enhance the effectiveness of mediation. It is noteworthy that the coaching provided during the study was provided by the researcher and the disputants were not exposed to any other form of coaching for the purpose of the research.

1.8 Definition of terms

The section defines key terms, as they are used in this study, in Table 1.

Table 1: Definition of terms

Key Terms	Definition	References
Coaching	"A human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools, and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders". The coachee refers to the person receiving coaching from a professional coach.	(Bachkirova, 2016, p. 1)
Conflict	"Conflict is defined as a state of social discord characterised by negative affect (e.g., frustration, anger, and anxiety) and the perception of interpersonal dissonance".	(Gilin Oore, Leiter, & LeBlanc, 2015, p. 301)
Conflict Coaching	"Conflict coaching is a one-on-one process, to develop a client's general understanding of conflict, his/her ability to interact and/or develop skills to interact".	(Brinkert, 2011, p. 81)
Disputants	A disputant is "one that is engaged in a dispute". In the context of the study, a disputant is a professional who has been involved in a mediated dispute.	https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/disputant
Mediation	"A conflict resolution process in which a mutually acceptable third party, who has no authority to make a binding decision for disputants, intervenes in a conflict or dispute to assist involved parties to improve their relationship, enhance communication and use effective problem-solving and negotiation procedures to reach voluntary and acceptable understanding or agreements on contested issues".	(Moore, 2014, p. 8)
Workplace mediation	"In the case of workplace mediation, the goal is to settle interpersonal employee conflicts arising out of a continuing or terminated employment relationship". Based on the above definition, for this study, workplace mediation refers to the mediation of one-to-one disputes or conflict between two professionals.	(Bollen & Euwema, 2013, p. 331)

1.9 Assumptions

This study assumed that the participants would remember their experience of mediation which occurred within the last 18 to 24 months, and the challenges they experienced. Bollen and Euwema (2013) suggest that very often, intense emotions are involved in mediation which suggest that the experience of mediation will be remembered by disputants. This study also assumed that the disputants were willing to discuss their perceptions about mediation, and that, after being exposed to a brief coaching intervention, they would be able to elaborate on their perceptions on how coaching could play a role in enhancing mediation in the workplace.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The key concepts are first discussed in this chapter, focusing on conflict, mediation and coaching. Thereafter, the literature is reviewed to address the research questions. The chapter will conclude with a summary of the literature review and the research propositions.

2.2 Key concepts and related processes

This section firstly focuses on the concept and nature of conflict which underpins the disputes being mediated between professionals in the workplace. Thereafter, the concepts and processes relating to mediation and coaching are covered. The definitions of mediation and coaching, the processes of mediation and coaching, the goals of mediation and coaching, as well as the key skills required for successful coaching, will be discussed.

2.2.1 Conflict

2.2.1.1 Definition of Conflict

Conflict is a universal feature of human society. It takes its origins in economic differentiation, social change, cultural formalities, psychological development and political organisations (Ramsbotham, Miall, & Woodhouse, 2011). For this study, conflict is defined as “a state of social discord characterised by negative affect (e.g. frustration, anger, and anxiety) and the perception of interpersonal dissonance” (Ayoko & Pekerti, 2008, p. 298) Furthermore, the nature of the social discord in their definition of conflict is “an expressed struggle between of at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals”.

2.2.1.2 Workplace conflict in context

Katz (2017) suggests that there is a commonly negative view about conflict and the human tendency to avoid it whenever possible. He further argues that avoidance or mishandling of conflict can have serious economic and psychological costs as well as negative impact on factors such as recruitment retention, productivity, and quality. Katz and Flynn (2013) suggest that ample evidence exists that workplace conflict that is not appropriately dealt with, has heavy direct and indirect costs for employers, employees, and organisational effectiveness and efficiency. Ayoko and Pekerti (2008) identified various types of conflict that occur in the workplace, which are briefly discussed below:

- **Task conflict** is described as group members' consciousness that there are disagreements about the actual tasks being performed even though the ultimate goal and objective of the task in the group may be shared,

- **Relationship conflict** pertains to disagreements based on personal and social issues that are not related to work. Research suggests that relationship conflict is negatively related to organisational outcomes especially evoking hostility, apathy and distrust,

- **Process conflict** is concerned with how task accomplishment should proceed in the work unit and who is responsible for what and how things should be delegated.

Early organisation theorists, such as Weber and Fayol, viewed organisational conflict as unpleasant, hostile, and senseless (Alghamdi 2011). Most scholars today recognise the inevitability of workplace conflict, suggesting that conflict could arise as a result of engagement of members in activities that are incompatible with those of colleagues within their network, or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or products of the organisation (Katz & Flynn, 2013). Conflict is a natural outcome of human interaction, and as such it is common at our workplaces. It arises in situations wherein individuals, groups, or organisations are striving to attain their objectives, and these are incompatible or inconsistent to one another (Danielsson, Bodin, Wulff, & Theorell, 2015). Näykki, Järvelä, Kirschner, and Järvenoja (2014) suggest that unresolved cognitive,

motivational and socio-emotional challenges and conflicts can be detrimental for effective collaborative learning, as they arouse negative emotions, frustration and even anger and move the focus of the group away from on-task activities, suggesting that conflict interferes with and inhibits teamwork.

2.2.1.3 Conflict resolution

Some theorists, including Taylor (1992), Rahim (2001), Lam (2005), Wilmot and Hocker (2007), and Ritzer (2008), not only admit the inevitability of conflict as a natural occurrence in organisational life, but also argue that conflict can have a positive impact on the workplace environment. The human relations and interactionist perspectives place the emphasis on how conflict is managed as the critical element in determining if conflicts have a negative or positive effect on the workplace environment (Ayoko & Pekerti, 2008). Conflict resolution or conflict management therefore "involves designing effective strategies to minimise the dysfunctions of conflict and enhancing the constructive functions of conflict in order to enhance the learning and effectiveness of an organisation and developing broader strategies to lower dysfunctional conflict and improve functional conflict" (Katz & Flynn, 2013, p. 396).

Davidson and Wood (2004, p. 7) developed a four-stage conflict resolution model which is briefly outlined below:

Stage 1: Developing expectations for win-win solutions

Often, parties to a dispute assume that the result of a negotiation is that one party will win, and the other will lose. In such a case, it is necessary to clarify the process in terms of cooperative problem solving with a view to arriving at a mutually satisfactory conclusion.

Stage 2: Defining each party's interests

In order to arrive to arrive at a win-win solution, it is usually counter-productive to focus on positions for the disputants. This generally leads to arguments based on rights; however, it is easier to reconcile underlying concerns, needs, or interests. To keep the mode of cooperation, it is important to avoid criticism, blaming, or

threatening. The likelihood of a satisfactory outcome is improved when each person feels valued and listened to.

Stage 3: Brainstorming creative options

The next stage is to brainstorm creative options that address the concerns of both participants. Furthermore, instructions encouraging quantity, variety, and deferment of judgment generate a greater number of higher quality solutions than no instructions or alternative approaches.

Stage 4: Combining options into win-win solutions.

Select the best ideas from the brainstormed list and combine them in order to address as much as possible all the needs, concerns, and interests of the participants. Among the strategies that may be considered are increasing overall resources, reducing the cost of the agreement to a disadvantaged party, and conceding on lesser-valued issues in multi-issue disputes. If agreement is not reached, the area of disagreement is identified and the process is repeated.

While the above conflict resolution approach is suggested as a macro-approach for generating co-operative work norms within and across groups, in reality, it is challenging to achieve the level of integration required for this (Brubaker et al. (2014). Therefore, there is a need for one-to-one conflict resolution processes for addressing conflicts or disputes among professionals in the workplace, before these escalate and result in a negative impact on the individuals and the wider work groups involved. Alternative dispute resolution processes exist to deal with these workplace conflicts, with mediation, the subject of the current study, becoming an increasingly popular option (Katz, 2017).

2.2.2 Mediation

2.2.2.1. Definition of mediation

Mediation is an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process. Other alternatives to mediation include negotiation, arbitration and ombudsmen (Brubaker et al. (2014). Wall and Dunne (2012) noted that the definition of mediation has not

changed during the past decade, even though attempts were made to extend, shorten, and fine-tune it. After all the changes, the definition remains essentially the same, that is, mediation is aimed at assisting two or more disputing parties by a third party. For the purpose of this study, mediation is defined as a “conflict resolution process in which a mutually acceptable third party, who has no authority to make a binding decision for disputants, intervenes in the conflict or a dispute to assist parties to improve their relationship, enhance communication and use effective problem-solving and negotiation procedures to reach voluntary and acceptable understanding or agreements on contested issues” (Moore, 2014, p. 8).

The definition of mediation by (Moore, 2014) is preferred for this study as it is fairly comprehensive. It highlights the important elements of mediation, that is, involvement of disputants and intervention by an independent third party. The third party in this definition is referred to as a mediator, while the disputants (parties in dispute) may be individuals. This definition also encapsulates key features of the mediation process, as the precondition for embarking on the process is that there must be a degree of conflict between the parties. In addition, the process is voluntary and a prerequisite is that the parties must at least be willing to accept, tolerate or as a minimum, not oppose the mediator.

Alternative dispute resolution processes came into being as a result of efficiencies, accessibility and justice (Sternlight, 2006). By its very nature, mediation is a private process and the matter is totally removed from the public domain and the courts. While this might be true, it should remain the choice of the disputant/s on how they would want to resolve their disputes, unless their dispute is with a public institution or company.

Brubaker et al. (2014) suggest that ADR, contrary to most dispute resolution processes, could be applied before, during and after the dispute; whereas traditional dispute resolution processes, like arbitration, can only be used once conflict exists. According to Nolan-Haley (2012), mediation’s core value of party participation has been an important selling point, and as a result, most practice standards consider mediation as a voluntary process. Nolan-Haley (2012) further suggests that it is the democratic decision-making part of the mediation process,

where participants themselves decide the outcome that makes the process more desirable and acceptable to the parties. This argument is based on the fact that voluntarism and self-control enhances the development of the parties problem solving capabilities, and their ability to develop individual justice on their own terms, which are related to their own interests and values (Nolan-Haley, 2012).

In summary, various definitions of mediation exist, but authors generally agree that mediation is a voluntary process, managed by a third party, appointed by the disputants, and that the outcome is generally in the control of the disputants.

2.2.2.2 The mediation process

Mediation is best viewed as a process or intervention that is used worldwide in numerous kinds of conflicts and can be systematically studied within the broader context of negotiation and conflict management (Bercovitch & DeRouen Jr, 2004). Mediation is a dynamic process within which disputants will interrogate the issue at hand in the presence of a third party, who assists the disputants in coming to a mutually agreed resolution (Wall & Dunne, 2012). Wall and Dunne (2012) suggest that the process consists of the following six phases:

1. An individual has a goal,
2. This goal is compared with the current outcome,
3. A misalignment between the goal and the outcome is identified,
4. To address the misalignment, mediation techniques will be identified,
5. This specific technique is applied to align the current state, and
6. Finally, the current outcome is compared again with the goal so as to terminate or reinitiate the cycle.

The steps, as outlined above, provide a guide to the mediator and will further assist to structure the conversation, as well as inform the mediator about the appropriate process to follow. However, according to Moore (2014), processes used by mediators are generally a blend of various approaches and mediation cannot be a ‘one size fits all’ process. Furthermore, the mediation process generally fits on a continuum of increasing levels of direction by the third party; in this instance, the mediator. If the parties cannot get to an amicable agreement,

the third party would become more directive and begin to facilitate the discussion in order to encourage disputants to reach an agreement (Moore, 2014).

Bercovitch and DeRouen Jr (2004) further argue that the notion of mediation timing is used by many as a predictor of a successful outcome and suggest that for mediation to be effective, it must take place at a propitious moment in the life cycle of a conflict. Some argue that it occurs early in a conflict; others suggest that this moment occurs much later in a conflict. Timing certainly affects mediation effectiveness.

2.2.2.3 Mediation goals and outcomes

Raines et al. (2013) argue that irrespective where the mediation occurs (whether in a courtroom, a boardroom, or even a war zone), the basic objectives of mediation are almost the same everywhere; that is, to assist parties as they attempt to find solutions to problems, reduce the possibility of future disputes, and, when and where appropriate, build or repair relationships. Workplace mediation is aimed at resolving conflicts between employees, disagreements over work conditions, the integration of employees after a period of absence, and disagreements about an employee's termination (Bollen & Euwema, 2013). The focus of this study is on workplace mediation of conflicts between employees, that is, one-to-one mediation.

Research conducted by Bingham, Hallberlin, Walker, and Chung (2009) on the feasibility of workplace mediation indicated that 91% and 96% of parties and supervisors respectively would use mediation again. These results suggest that their goals were achieved from workplace mediation, which raises the question as to what the goals of mediation are. Mediation is fundamentally consensual, which implies that all the parties involved, must believe that they could derive some benefit from the process (Beardsley, 2011). However, Wall and Dunne (2012) suggest that there are a broad range of goals for mediation, as tabulated below:

Table 2: Mediation goals (Wall & Dunne, 2012)

1	Improving the relationship
2	Allowing the disputants an opportunity to blow off steam
3	Attaining justice
4	Reducing violence or the possibility thereof
5	Preventing future conflict
6	Improving communication between the parties
7	Integrating relationships
8	Overseeing restitution

The above goals are very important to the mediator, as well the disputants in the process, to understand why mediation is preferred or suggested above other dispute resolution processes. Ultimately, when embarking on this process, the disputants would want to continue engaging each other, or need to work together after the mediation is concluded, hence it is important for the disputants to understand the goals of mediation.

In terms of outcomes from mediation, Wall and Dunne (2012, p. 226) further suggest that these be divided into disputant outcomes, mediator outcomes and third party outcomes, which are outlined separately in Table 3.

Table 3: Mediation outcomes (Wall & Dunne, 2012, pp. 229-233)

Outcomes for Disputants	Outcomes for Mediators	Outcomes for Third parties
An agreement that settles the dispute. The current literature indicates that mediation is effective in producing this.	Principally, to resolve the dispute	Peace in a hostile environment
Cost of mediation – less expensive than other ADR methods.	Improve the relationship between the disputants	Reduces workloads on the judicial system

Outcomes for Disputants	Outcomes for Mediators	Outcomes for Third parties
Quick, could be arranged quickly and dealt with quickly	Personal satisfaction in resolving the dispute	Relieves workload for government agencies
Many also view the process as being just, both procedural and restoratively	Payment, regardless of the outcome	Mediation relieves hostility between parents (in divorce mediation) which could result in a more favourable agreement for the children involved.

The table above reflects the various outcomes for the respective parties during dispute resolution - and even though the outcomes for the parties in dispute are similar, the third-party outcomes are different as their reason for instituting mediation might not be to resolve the dispute. Ultimately, disputants engage in mediation to resolve the dispute, but more so, to restore whatever damage occurred as a result of the dispute. In terms of mediators, their focus is to assist the disputants to reach an amicable settlement, which will give them personal satisfaction. Creating a peaceful environment is one of the reasons why third parties engage or support mediation interventions.

2.2.3 Coaching

2.2.3.1 Definition of coaching

Fairley and Stout (2004) suggest that coaching has been popularised by incorporating practices from various disciplines, including Human Resources, Psychology and Management, to shift paradigms of how organisations and people function. That being said, there is no fundamental argument as yet that the coach must be a trained psychologist or a human resources practitioner. In fact, many coaches comes from various backgrounds, occupations and disciplines, underpinned by various types of coach training or education (Cox et al., 2014b).

Given this inter-disciplinary nature of coaching, there are numerous definitions of coaching. Two different definitions are outlined below:

- Coaching is defined as “a human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools, and techniques to promote desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially for other stakeholders” (Bachkirova, 2016, p. 144).
- Rogers (2012, p. 7) defines coaching as “a partnership between a coach and a client which aims to achieve speedy, increased and sustainable effectiveness through focussed learning in every aspect of the client’s life”. She further argues that coaches raise self-awareness in the client and help to identify choices, with the aim of closing the gaps between potential and performance.

These definitions highlight some of the fundamental features of coaching - that it is a process based on a relationship between the coach and coachee, which is aimed at facilitating learning and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee. Of the two definitions, the one that is preferred for this study is that of Bachkirova (2016). This definition clearly is more encompassing of critical factors that constitute the coaching process such as highlighting the fact that the process should be structured, that it is a human intervention, and it refers to various strategies that could be applied, with the ultimate purpose being to create a change in the behaviour of the coachee.

2.2.3.2 The coaching process

Coaching is an inter-disciplinary process drawing from a number of theoretical approaches that have been identified in the literature and coaches will apply what they find appropriate, based on their training or education (Cox et al., 2014b). Consequently, there are many different coaching processes and models available.

Most coaching processes include certain key phases to facilitate a process of learning and change in the coachee’s behaviour, for example, the four-stage GROW coaching model which is used widely in organisations (Passmore, 2007). The GROW model, developed by Whitmore (1992), consists of four coaching steps, briefly discussed below:

1. The first of the steps is the identification of a goal. In this step, the coach and coachee agree on which goal to be addressed during the coaching sessions.
2. The second step is a review of the current reality. This step is used to assist the coaches to do a reality check in relation to the goal.
3. The third step involves a consideration of options. Here the coachee will identify various options on how to achieve the goal as agreed in step
4. The fourth step is the conclusion and the agreement on a way forward in terms of the actions to be taken by the coachee.

An example of a six step integrative model for coaching professionals (listed below) in an organisational context, proposed by Passmore (2007, pp. 69-70), which includes the six steps as well as the purpose of each:

1. Creating the coaching partnership – before coaching can begin the coach needs to build a relationship with the coachee, this may include aims to develop the coaching partnership at the start as well as clarifying the client's goals,
2. Maintaining the coaching partnership - draws on emotional intelligence or how emotions should be managed in order to maintain focus. The coach needs to start here to create an effective relationship between the coach and coachee, and to maintain this throughout what we call the "coaching partnership." Without this initial investment in the relationship, progress on change will be difficult.
3. Behavioural focus - aims to support behavioural change through focussing the planning and coachee's problem-solving skills. Irrespective of the coaches' theoretical orientation, a focus on external behaviour and how this is adapted is a central feature of almost all executive coaching relationships.
4. Conscious cognition - in this stream, the coach would draw upon cognitive–behavioural techniques, which aims to focus the coachee's understanding of the relationship between behaviour and thoughts processes,

5. Unconscious cognition – aims to focused on self-awareness of the coachee by bringing aspects like thought and motivation that inhibit their behavioural performance,
6. Systemic – refers to the environment in which the coachee is working in. Furthermore, it is the task for the coach is to help the coachee to understand the wider system within which they work, and how this system influences the coachee's behaviour.

Cox et al. (2014a) suggested that the quality of the coaching relationship develops as a result of the understanding of the balance of power, how people learn, the manner in which people communicate, and the tools and techniques which will aid development. However, in coaching, the client agenda is important, and achieving that, is a key part of the coaching process and is also generally to the organisation's benefit (Cox et al., 2014a). Developing and maintaining the coach/coachee relationship is of utmost importance and without such a partnership, progress might not be possible at all (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011). Bachkirova (2016) argued that the relationship with the client is the main contributing factor to the success of the coaching outcome, rather than the orientation or training of the coach.

2.2.3.3 Coaching Goals

Despite various opinions about the objectives of coaching professionals in the workplace (including executives and managers), Kilburg (2004a) consolidated the types of goals which are typically addressed through coaching, into a list as reflected in Table 4.

Table 4: Typical coaching goals (Kilburg, 2004b)

1.	Improve behavioural repertoire
2	Increase capacity to manage an organisation
3.	Improve psychological and social competencies
4.	Increase ability to manage through crises
5	Improve career management and professional advancement
6.	Improve work-life balance
7	Improve the organisation/team effectiveness

Adapted from Kilburg's Typical Goals of Coaching (2004; pp 260-262)

Jones and Brinkert (2007) agree with the goals as defined in Table 4, but further suggest that (i) goal setting, (ii) activities related in support of goal setting, as well as (iii) encouraging learning through practice at work, should also feature in coaching goals. The coaching relationship is also considered to be different from organisational performance management relationships, for example, the supervisor-subordinate relationship. Furthermore, the existence of a power relationship between line managers and their subordinates, which is absent in the relationship that a coachee would have with an independent coach. Managers and supervisors might propose coaching as a developmental intervention for their staff, but to fit with the relational definition of coaching, the developmental relationship that facilitates learning and development would be with a coach, rather than the manager or supervisor (Jones at al., 2015).

2.2.3.4 Basic skills of coaching

The literature revealed several frameworks relating to coaching skills or competencies. For example, Baron and Morin (2009) listed the following basic skills for coaches: (i) meeting ethical standards, (ii) espouse rational skills like empathy, respect, trust, presence and availability, (iii) have the capacity to generate a trusting relationship, (iv) possess the capacity to communicate effectively, like active listening, questioning and direct communication, (v) have the capacity to increase self-awareness, and develop appropriate action plans, and, (vi) have the ability to facilitate learning and results (establishing development plan, assessing learning and identifying obstacles).

On the other hand, Maltbia et al. (2010a) suggest that the GSEAC competencies for coaching, as summarised hereto, are critical (i) meeting ethical guidelines and profession standards, (ii) establishing the coaching agreement, (iii) establishing trust and intimacy with the client, (iv) coaching presence, (v) active listening, (vi) powerful questioning, (vii) direct communication, (viii) creating awareness, (ix) designing actions, (x) planning and goal setting, and (xi) managing progress and accountability. While Rogers (2012) clearly recognises the above sets of skills, she emphasises that creating trust, as well as practicing professionalism, are particularly important skills for coaches as well.

Concluding from the above lists of competencies, what is important is the building of trust first and foremost, which is at the heart of the coaching relationship, as well as the management of the relationship, in so far as the coachee needs to understand upfront that the coaches' role is to assist and provide support for achieving the coachee's goals.

2.3 Challenges experienced in the mediation process

This section reviewed literature from across different types of mediation in relation to the first research question of the study, which was: what challenges are experienced in the mediation process which inhibits the effectiveness thereof?

Bollen and Euwema (2013) suggest that workplace mediation does not operate in a vacuum, as the context or environment where the process takes place, may affect the conditions of mediation, the mediation process and the potential mediation outcomes. This work context applies to both the disputants and mediator (Bollen & Euwema, 2013), and an important consideration for workplace mediation is about the continuation of the relations between the disputants, whether it is one-to-one or inter-group mediation. Workplace mediation can be more 'democratic' than other dispute resolution mechanisms as it provides disputants with a greater voice in terms of how the process is conducted, as the main reasons for referring disputes to mediation were found to be poor communication, poorly perceived management practice and style, and problems with relationships (Bennett, 2013).

Of relevance to the focus of the present study, Stipanowich and Lamare (2014) identified some perceived barriers to the use of ADR, including mediation, in the workplace or business context. Predominantly the following barriers stood out: (i) unwillingness of other party to participate in the mediation process, (ii) business lawyers and clients still lacked experience with mediation, (iii) disputants' lack of experience with mediation, (iv) a lack of desire from senior management to implement mediation, and (v) the potential lack of finality (that is, a non-binding resolution) and a compromised outcome.

In addition to the above barriers to effective mediation, the specific challenges which mediators face are discussed next, followed by those challenges faced by the disputants. Thereafter, the role of emotions in the mediation process is considered and finally, strategies for dealing with some of the identified challenges in workplace mediation are addressed.

2.3.1 Challenges facing mediators

Mediators are faced by a range of complex problems, issues, factors and tasks (Nathan, 2009). However, the focus of the current study is on one-to-one mediation, which should not have to deal with as many issues and perspectives which occur in inter-group mediation. Nonetheless, in all forms of mediation, Lampe (2001) alludes to the important role of the mediator, which is to assure that the bargaining balance is maintained between disputants to avoid intimidation or overreaching by a more powerful party over a weaker party.

Nathan (2009) proposes the following common challenges facing the mediator, irrespective of whether the mediation is done with groups or individual disputants: (i) whether the conflict is ripe to be mediated, (ii) partiality of the mediators is critical as it can jeopardise the outcome; (iii) for peace-making, the mediator has to focus on the deep-rooted causes of the conflict as well as the crises that arise; (iv) disputants are often intransigent and uncooperative; (v) disputants, more often than not, have great animosity towards each other as well as deep mistrust, are of the view that their differences are irreconcilable, are non-negotiable on their positions, and fear that a settlement will entail unacceptable compromises; (vi) the mediator tries to push too quickly for a resolution and might compromise the process; and (vii) not capturing what was agreed to and the conditions to such an agreement.

2.3.2 Challenges facing disputants

The mediation process is intended for the disputants to resolve the dispute between them. Welsh (2003) suggested that while disputants are generally satisfied with mediation and its outcomes, they would want to experience the following benefits:

- A system that generally provided them with a fair and acceptable result,

- A system that meets the procedural justice criteria, gives disputants a voice and that allows full participation and dignity of disputants,

- A system that helps participants achieve other personal and emotional goals such as reconciliation or makes them feel better, emotionally and psychologically.

However, Saundry, Bennett, and Wibberley (2013) who observed that the experiences of disputants had not been explored in the literature, have identified, through their research on 25 disputants' experiences of workplace mediation, the following challenges facing disputants:

- Disputants often felt isolated, where mediation was supposed to bring parties together and get them to work better together,
- Disputants often found it difficult to prepare their cases as they could not confide in or consult with managers, colleagues or HR as a result of the confidential nature of the process,
- As a result of the tendency for late referral for mediation, the conflict was then well manifested and, according to disputants, the chances for a sustainable solution were more often than not unlikely,
- Some of the participants felt pushed towards an agreement, especially where an external mediator was contracted,
- While agreements were achieved for most of the disputes, sustainable changes to behaviour and outcomes only occurred for half of the cases. The non-sustainability was attributed to some parties not being committed to the process, thus reaching an agreement with no intention to comply. In addition, there was a lack of follow-up in relation to the agreement reached, particularly when external mediators were used.
- Mediation and the push for an agreement, could result in unfair treatment being suppressed especially in performance-related mediations,
- For some disputants, the inefficiencies around management of the mediation process and absenteeism due to the process resulted in emotional trauma for them.

It is evident that, despite the above challenges faced by disputants, they also derived value from the process (Saundry et al., 2013). For example, almost all of the disputants in their study would recommend mediation to others, or they would consider participating again under the right circumstances.

2.3.3 The role of emotions in the mediation process

Given the potential for emotions in conflicts or disputes, which Nathan (2009) attributes as often being due to deep-seated root causes, Picard and Siltanen (2013) conducted an exploratory inquiry into the presence of emotions attached to mediation. The research sample involved twelve mediators, with extensive experience and understanding of mediation. The study revealed that emotions are significant in terms of managing the self as a mediator as well as the disputants, suggesting this is a key challenge in the mediation process. Furthermore, that these emotions emerge, change and decline over the process of mediation. Picard and Siltanen (2013) recognise that our social relations contribute to our emotional states; for example, our experiences from the past often determine how we feel today and are linked to what we anticipate happening in the future. Emotions generally influence how we see and react to everyday events and they also affect our motivation (Picard & Siltanen, 2013). Bollen and Euwema (2013) stressed that very often, intense emotions are involved in disputes, and the mediation thereof should be considered in the search for a long-lasting and constructive solution, which was corroborated by Saundry et al. (2013) in their research findings.

2.3.4 Strategies for dealing with the challenges experienced in workplace mediation

Brubaker et al. (2014) emphasise that the focus of conflict resolution in the workplace will change and that mediators should be aware of this in order to be prepared to guide disputants accordingly. The proposed changes are as follows:

- **Shift from intervention to prevention** – organisational leaders do accept that unresolved conflict is costly, which requires leader to deal with conflict proactively,

- **Shift from ad hoc to appropriate** – generally, fully integrated conflict management mechanisms are not common in big organisations, however more and more organisations are implementing conflict management systems, appropriate to their culture and size,
- **Shift from resolving conflict to managing conflict** – the mediators that are working with a transformative perspective, encourage an atmosphere of recognition and empowerment, thus shifting the conflict dynamic.

It is important that mediators are aware of the above challenges, barriers or shifts in focus for mediation, as highlighted in the literature, in order to develop mechanisms to counter and cope with these barriers, should such arise during a mediation intervention or process. Raines et al. (2013) suggest several strategies to counter challenges in the mediation process which are summarised below: Firstly, they stress the importance of the reputation of the mediator as credibility will depend on that. Secondly, a good reputation in many instances is the best calling card. Thirdly, the need for good relationships with attorneys, judges and authorities, with access to cases. Fourthly, to provide some education to attorneys and those with access to cases, to be able to differentiate between low- and high-quality mediation, which will allow them to allocate cases accordingly. Lastly, the fundamental importance of matching the case with the particular specialty or approach of the mediator.

2.3.5 Proposition 1

The key challenges emerging from the literature could be summarised as: unwillingness of the parties to participate, the presence of the disputants' emotions, the partiality of the mediator, the mediator trying to push too quickly for a resolution, and the deep rooted mistrust of the parties in dispute.

The first proposition is that disputants do experience and identify a variety of challenges in workplace mediation.

2.4 The potential role of coaching in mediation

This section reviewed literature in relation to the second research question of the study, which was: what are disputants' perceptions on how coaching could play a role in enhancing the mediation process? The literature in this section also relates to the third research question, which was: what guidelines could be adopted for applying coaching in the mediation process?

While there appeared to be no literature describing the influence coaching might (or might not) have on the mediation process, the practice of conflict coaching has emerged in countries outside of South Africa. Thus, a body of knowledge has emerged on conflict coaching (Brubaker et al., 2014) which was reviewed in this section to explore the potential application of conflict coaching to mediation. Mediation and conflict coaching are both dispute support services to assist disputants in dealing with conflict (Herrmann, 2012). In this section, conflict coaching was defined first. Thereafter, factors were identified for selecting conflict coaching or mediation for helping disputants address their conflict. Finally, the literature on how conflict coaching may be applied to the mediation process, was reviewed.

2.4.1 The definition, goals and process of conflict coaching

"Conflict coaching is a one-on-one process, to develop a client's general understanding of conflict, his/her ability to interact and/or develop skills to interact with others" (Brinkert, 2011, p. 81). The concept of conflict coaching was mentioned first by Stern in 1994, as cited by, Jones and Brinkert (2007) when they commented on the potential importance of addressing the topic of conflict management in coaching. Brinkert (2011) suggests that conflict coaching emerged from the fields of alternative dispute resolution and coaching. Furthermore, conflict coaching was originally viewed as an alternative to mediation, and as a result, it can be used in various ways to support individuals in handling conflict with others (Brinkert, 2011).

According to Brinkert (2006, p. 520), conflict coaching "is a didactic process in which a coach, trained in conflict resolution or executive coaching, works with a client to develop the client's conflict-related understanding, interaction strategies

and interpersonal skills". Carden (2018) suggests that conflict coaching centres around the growth of an individual within a business structure, so that they may better identify conflict styles, strategise conflict management solutions, engage in negotiations and confidentially manage conflict outcomes through the support of a conflict coach. Furthermore, conflict coaching emerged and gained prominence in the conflict resolution field largely because one or more parties did not want to participate in mediation (Carden, 2018). Brinkert (2006) further argues that conflict coaching is perfectly situated at the intersection of two fields, both composed of individuals from various academic and professional backgrounds.

C. Noble (2012) further suggests that conflict coaching is built on the foundation of the following three pillars:

1. The pillar of coaching, referring to how and why coaching actually works;

2. The pillar of alternate dispute resolution, referring to mediation and other relevant dispute resolution processes; and

3. The pillar of neuroscience – referring to focussing the client's attention, helping the client to gain insight and to become mindful and aware.

Winslade and Pangborn (2015) argue that the goal of conflict coaching is strictly speaking not to 'conflict resolution', but rather talking to the client on his/her own, aimed at helping the client articulate how he/she might conduct himself/herself in the ongoing evaluation of the conflict, whether or not mediation will take place or not. Herrmann (2012b) proposed that the main purpose for those involved in conflict coaching is to get a better understanding of constructive communication, decision-making, problem solving and conflict resolution. While this is not a comprehensive list of reasons why people do get involved with conflict coaching, Brubaker et al. (2014), suggest that conflict coaching could also be applied when disputants want to manage their own conflict situation, and a resolution to the conflict might not necessarily a priority.

C. Noble (2012) suggests that there are pertinent reasons for the growth of conflict coaching, of which some are: (i) interpersonal disputes are inevitable and poorly managed conflicts are very costly, (ii) organisations have limited individual

methods for helping people managing their disputes independently, (iii) conflict coaching offers a short-term future focused and defined goal oriented process that helps people to improve the way they engage in conflict, and (iv) conflict coaching supports and prepare disputants to engage actively and effectively in ADR processes such as mediation.

A process for conflict coaching is proposed by Brinkert (2011) in the following model, which incorporates four stages:

Table 5: Model for conflict coaching (Brinkert, 2011, p. 81).

Stage 1	'Discovering the story'	Initial story, Refining story Testing the story
Stage 2	'Exploring perspectives'	Perspectives Identity Emotions Power
Stage 3	'Crafting the best story'	Initial story Refining story Testing story
Stage 4	'Enacting the best story'	Communication skills Conflict styles Negotiation Other ADR process.

Adapted from (Brinkert, 2011, p. 81)

As outlined above, Stage 1 refers to 'Discovering the story', which implies that the coach familiarizes him/herself with the initial story before working with the client to refine it and test it again. Stage 2 refers to 'Exploring' perspectives which the client has in relation to the emotions and power prevalent and to make sense of the story. Stage 3 refers to 'Crafting the best story' which implies guiding the client to develop a vision for the best story and testing it. Finally, Stage 4 is all about 'Enacting the best story' which suggests that the coach is assisting the client to select and hone in on the communication and skills required to live the story during interactions with others.

Given the broad range of uses for conflict coaching, Brinkert (2011) proposed the following preferred uses after a study was conducted with nurse managers on how they would implement conflict coaching in their working environment: (i) integrating new employees into the work environment, (ii) assisting an individual consistently involved in a conflict situation, (iii) development of potential for formal roles in leaderships, and (iv) to develop a greater sense of accountability of professionals and to improve their own abilities to effectively intervene with others experiencing conflict.

Carden (2018) argues that the biggest difference between mediation and conflict coaching is that conflict coaching develops an individual with the tools to face the current and future conflicts, by equipping individuals with strategies and skills in the learning environment; while mediation allows the two parties to work out their own solution through dialogue facilitated by a trained mediator. Furthermore, where mediation succeeds with allowing both parties to express themselves, conflict coaching can sometimes fail because discovering the story is ultimately in the hands of the client as they work to piece together a conflict puzzle on their own.

Carden (2018) further suggests that a benefit of conflict coaching is that its long-term impact can include a manager's continued development in conflict leadership, they are learning from a coach and long after the coaching ends, they can continue to apply the conflict concepts to both large-scale and small-scale business engagements.

2.4.2 Factors for selecting conflict coaching or mediation

Herrmann (2012b) investigated the concept of how conflict coaching compares to mediation and found some similarities. Herrmann (2012b, pp. 44-50) argued that each process is characterised by factors determining whether mediation or conflict coaching may constitute the more appropriate mechanism to help disputants with their particular conflict. The study highlighted the following six factors, which determines a course of action and process to be embarked upon:

1. **Number and willingness of disputing parties** - the number and willingness of the disputants is one crucial criterion determining the suitability of the two discussed conflict support services.
2. **Complexity of conflict** - Individuals may generally demonstrate problematic conflict conduct at the work place with more than one party and as such, a broader approach, like group coaching or mediation might be required to address this.
3. **Objectives of client and sponsor** - the main purpose of those participating in conflict coaching is to get a better understanding of constructive communication, decision-making, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. It is important to note that the objectives of those taking part in conflict coaching may focus on improvement of general communication and conflict management skills, rather than strategies on how to resolve a particular dispute, as in mediation.
4. **Role of practitioner and parties** - mediators focus on facilitating the negotiations between the parties and assisting all parties equally in identifying their interests, and as such, they do not act on behalf of one party or take sides, but are usually described as neutral or independent. The issues discussed during the mediation process are defined by all attending parties, whereas conflict coaching is an individualised process specific to the client.
5. **Time** - a mediation process usually takes between two to five hours, whereas a typical conflict coaching session lasts from 45 to 75 minutes. Conflict coaching is usually held on an ongoing basis over a specific period of time – short, medium or long term. Hence, mediation is in most cases a one-time process, while conflict coaching tends to be conducted over a number of sessions.
6. **Confidentiality** - mediators do not voluntarily disclose to anyone who is not a party of the mediation, any information obtained during the mediation unless required by law or with consent of the participants. The International Coach Federation (ICF) Code of Ethics requires conflict coaches to “maintain the strictest levels of confidentiality with all clients and sponsor information” (https://coachfederation.org/code-of-ethics). A conflict coach

> does not report to management about the participant's progress in any way (Herrmann, 2012b, p. 49).

The above findings have identified important criteria distinguishing mediation and conflict coaching as independent approaches to conflict resolution. It has become clear that certain elements of conflict will determine whether mediation or conflict coaching is the more suitable dispute resolution process (Herrmann, 2012b). Carden (2018) suggests that the single most important distinction between conflict coaching and mediation is the fact that the (conflict) coach prepares the disputant for the pending mediation process. Furthermore, where mediation is successful in allowing both parties to express themselves, conflict coaching could sometimes fail as discovering the basis for conflict is predominantly in the hands of the client as they need to find a way to describe the conflict in their own way.

2.4.3 How conflict coaching may be applied to the mediation process

Conflict coaching could be expanded in future to be part of ADR processes, as proposed by Jones and Brinkert (2007) rather than being seen as two alternative options. They argue that there is a continuous need for a one-on-one ADR process, with a strong and tailored skills emphasis, and that there is increasing interest in the field of conflict coaching as a way to integrate and promote existing ADR processes.

According to Brinkert (2011), conflict coaching has developed as a result of a lack of processes or interventions assisting an individual client. Conflict coaching could therefore be applied in conjunction with other dispute resolution processes, like mediation (Brinkert, 2011; Herrmann, 2012). Although the validity of combining these processes is acknowledged, mediation and conflict coaching are often regarded as two independent support processes (Herrmann, 2012b).

Brubaker et al. (2014) highlight some trends in how conflict coaching can be applied to ADR processes, such as mediation. These trends refer to (i) one-on-one coaching, (ii) pre-meditation coaching, and (iii) post-mediation coaching:

(i) **Trends in one-on-one coaching:** The primary focus of one-to-one conflict coaching is about trained coaches helping disputants to optimise their

ability to engage in conflict. This could apply to disputants who want to self-manage a conflict or potentially problematic situation and that a resolution may not be the main objective, as it may be used also to prevent unnecessary conflict. In addition, Brubaker et al. (2014) propose that conflict coaching is a viable option, as an early intervention tool in informal self-help efforts, where an organisation wishes to design and implement appropriate dispute resolution mechanisms. Providing staff with the opportunity to consider and proceed on their own initiative with the help of a trained coach adds a new dimension.

(ii) **Trends in pre-mediation coaching:** Brubaker et al. (2014) further suggest the practice of pre-meditation coaching, which could include process information as well as preparatory discussions. Increasingly, mediators are using coaching techniques to assist disputants to prepare more intentionally for mediation. There are however variations in how this is done in practice; it may involve several private sessions in which the mediator assists each party to focus on identifying concerns, or to consider how they would present themselves during mediation; and to articulate the desired outcome/s or to prepare the disputant on how to respond to difficult situations. Furthermore, coaching techniques are applied to assist disputants to become more resilient to engage with their conflict situation.

(iii) **Trends in post-mediation coaching:** This is a practice that has been introduced recently where coaches assist disputants after the conclusion of the mediation process (Brubaker et al., 2014). This generally involves debriefing on the progress of the dispute resolution outcomes agreed, as well as when disputants agree to learn a new skill emanating from the mediation process in relation to improving their interpersonal or communication skills, for example. In other words, this coaching is focussed on building skills which could have been identified during the mediation process - and which the disputant agrees to develop, for certain behavioural changes required to sustain the agreement.

Carden (2018) also suggests how conflict coaching may be applied to ADR in the workplace. For example, a conflict coach may train their client in the art of mediation as a strategy or tool for particular disputes within the organisation. Furthermore, conflict coaches may be used to assist parties in preparing for

mediation for a rights-based process. In addition, Carden (2018) proposes that it would not be detrimental to an organisation to implement both coaching and mediation as they have distinctive benefits. However, based on the downfalls and benefits of both of these conflict strategies, conflict coaching would be a better choice for developing individual business leaders so they may confidently manage at a variety of organisational levels.

2.4.4 Proposition 2

According to the literature, several authors have highlighted the important role conflict coaching could play in a variety of ways in the mediation of conflict situations. In particular, the value of one-to-one coaching interventions for disputants during pre-mediation (to prepare the disputant to engage constructively in the mediation process) and post-mediation (to develop the disputant's behavioural changes required to sustain the agreement reached during mediation).

The second proposition, in relation to research question 2, is that disputants, who have experience of coaching, will articulate a variety of ways that coaching could play a role in enhancing workplace mediation.

2.4.5 Proposition 3

The literature gave a few broad guidelines for applying coaching in the mediation process, but these were not very specific, for example, the number of coaching sessions before or after mediation seemed to be variable – and these would depend on the context or nature of the conflict and what was included in the mediation agreement.

The third proposition, in relation to research question 3, is that disputants, who have experience of coaching, will suggest broad guidelines that could be adopted for applying coaching in the mediation process.

2.5 Conclusion of Literature Review

The literature identified a range of key challenges which are experienced with the mediation process, with emphasis on challenges perceived by disputants. The literature also highlighted definite themes in so far as the role of coaching as well as the role of mediation in resolution of one-to-one conflict or disputes in the business environment. Furthermore, the literature clearly emphasised that mediation offers an approach that is theoretically appealing and practically useful, and it is an effective and constructive process. The concept of conflict coaching was introduced, as well as various ways on why and how it could be applied in a conflict situation in the workplace. From the literature, it is clear that conflict coaching is not a substitute for mediation, but rather a precursor to it. Brubaker et al. (2014, pp. 4-6) in particular refer to various trends in conflict coaching; that is, one-on-one coaching, pre-mediation coaching as well as post-mediation coaching.

The focus of the current study was on investigating the potential role of coaching in enhancing workplace mediation, towards developing guidelines on how coaching could be applied in the mediation process of one-to-one disputes or conflict in the SA workplace.

Table 6: Research questions and propositions:

Research Question	Proposition
1. What challenges are experienced in the mediation process which inhibits the effectiveness thereof?	1. Disputants do experience and identify a variety of challenges in workplace mediation.
2. What are disputants' perceptions on how coaching could play a role in enhancing the mediation process?	2. Disputants, who have experience of coaching, will articulate a variety of ways that coaching could play a role in enhancing workplace mediation.
3. What guidelines could be adopted for applying coaching in the mediation process?	3. Disputants, who have experience of coaching, will suggest broad guidelines that could be adopted for applying coaching in the mediation process.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology and design that were followed to address the research questions. Research methodology addresses the process and procedures of the research. The study was conducted in terms of qualitative research principles. This chapter first outlines the research approach, followed by the research design, then the sampling approach and the development of the instrument for data collection. The data collection was done via two sets of face-to-face interviews, after which, analysis of the data was conducted. This chapter also outlines strategies adopted for ensuring trustworthiness of the research and ethical considerations of the study.

3.1 Research approach

This study was conducted by applying qualitative research methods, as it focused on exploring disputants' perceptions of workplace mediation of one-to-one disputes or conflict, and the potential role that coaching could play in enhancing the process of mediation. Myers (2019) suggests that qualitative research is beneficial when the researcher wants to understand the context in which people do things, or behave or perceive their experiences, in relation to a phenomenon of interest. Furthermore, it is designed to help researchers understand the social and cultural context within which people live and experience the phenomenon. Silverman (2016) describes qualitative research as a theoretically based rigorous methodology, responsive to ethical considerations and various audiences, of relevance to this study with an interest in different disputants' perceptions. A qualitative approach has therefore assisted this study as it brought to the fore disputants' perceptions and their context in relation to the research questions.

3.2 Research design

Qualitative research is "an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us to understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible", according to Merriam (1998, p. 5), and therefore, choosing the type of qualitative inquiry for a study is not

straightforward. This choice needs to align with the purpose of the study (Cresswell, 2014). However, such a choice may not fit with one of the typical forms of inquiry, with Merriam (1998) and Caelli, Ray, and Mill (2003) agreeing that, in addition to the traditional types of qualitative enquiry, there is a generic or basic qualitative approach which may also be adopted.

The current study is not a case study and does not align clearly with the traditional forms of qualitative inquiry, thus resulting in the selection of the basic qualitative approach. Basic qualitative research, is explained by Merriam (1998, pp. 11-12) as being an approach which "simply seeks to discover and understand the perspectives and worldviews of the people involved. Basic qualitative research is well placed in identifying recurrent patterns in the form of themes or categories; and it may delineate a process". This approach was congruent with the purpose of this study, which was to identify challenges perceived by disputants of individual workplace mediation and, after being exposed to coaching, their perceptions of the potential role that coaching could play in enhancing the process of workplace mediation.

Kahlke (2014, p. 47) highlights some of the advantages for the basic qualitative research approach, as follows:

- This approach could be utilised in many studies, and is an excellent fit to most studies.
- For researchers conducting investigations on a topic or in an area where few theories or empirical studies have been available, this approach is natural and sometimes inevitable.

Some disadvantages suggested by Kahlke (2014) are:

- The lack of an established methodology makes for speculative research.
- Such generic qualitative approaches are lacking robust critical literature.

3.3 Data collection methods

The data collection was done through two sets of face-to-face interviews by an independent interviewer, with each of the participants. This interview method was

most useful and appropriate for the study as the focus was on soliciting the perceptions and experiences of disputants who had participated in workplace mediation to answer the research questions. In qualitative research, interviewing is the most frequently used method when collecting data, however, this approach relies heavily on participants to provide willing and accurate information (King, Horrocks, & Brooks, 2018). The interviewee was encouraged to be an active participant in order to provide in-depth information.

The interviews were semi-structured which means that the interview guide contained a few key questions the interviewer had asked, but had the advantage of allowing flexibility and time for the participants to express their views and experiences. The selected semi-structured interview was based on its ability to narrow down some areas or topics that needed to be explored in this research (Rabionet, 2011). Semi-structured interviews therefore provide a good mechanism for collecting of rich data, but have some disadvantages. Cachia and Millward (2011) argue that if the time allocation for the interview is not enough, the interviewee will feel rushed and will provide short answers, which will be time consuming to probe for rich data from the interviewee.

The participants were disputants who experienced mediation by the researcher in the same organisation, thus due to conflict of interest, an independent interviewer was used to encourage disputants to participate voluntarily in the study and to express their views openly during the interviews. The interviewer was employed as a Researcher student in the research office of the same organisation, yet independent from the work unit of the researcher and the participants, who has experience in interviewing for research studies. The interviewer was paid from research funding by the research office of the organisation.

The first set of interviews focused on the disputants' perceptions of the challenges experienced in mediation (to address research question 1). Once the first set of interviews were finalised, the disputants underwent two coaching sessions by the researcher to give them exposure to coaching. The researcher applied the GROW coaching model, which is outlined in section 2.2.3.2 of Chapter 2. The researcher decided to use this coaching model as it is one of the most familiar

and popular coaching models, and also easier for coaching clients to understand. The coaching did not focus on anything relating to the disputes or mediation process that the disputants experienced. Instead, the focus was on coaching the disputants on a developmental or performance goal they chose, to give them an experience of being coached. After the two coaching sessions, another round of face-to-face interviews were conducted by the independent interviewer to explore the disputants' views on the possible role of coaching in mediation (to address research question 2) and how coaching could be applied to enhance mediation in the workplace (to address research question 3). The planned time-line for the first interviews, then the two coaching sessions, and followed by the second interviews, is depicted in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Time line for data collection

Time line for data collection			
First interviews	**First coaching sessions**	**Second coaching sessions**	**Second interviews**
First week in June 2019	First week in July 2019	First week in August 2019	Second week in September 2019

3.4 Population and sample

3.4.1 *Population*

For the purpose of this study, the population comprised the disputants who had participated in one-to-one workplace mediation in a university, in the Gauteng province of SA.

3.4.2 *Sample and sampling method*

The sample consisted of disputants who were involved in mediation of a dispute or conflict within the last 18 to 24 months. This sample was interviewed, then put through a brief coaching intervention of two sessions, and interviewed again after the coaching.

The sampling method adopted for this study was purposive sampling. According to Palys (2008), purposive sampling is selecting a specific sample of participants who have the relevant experience and perceptions of the phenomenon being researched. In reality, it was very difficult to find a sample with a sufficient number of participants who have experience of both being a disputant in workplace mediation and of being coached. For this reason, in this study, disputants with experience of individual workplace mediation (that is, mediation focused on a dispute or conflict between two individuals or professionals in the workplace) were required, and with no prior experience of coaching. As part of the research design, the sample of disputants were given exposure to coaching so that they would have relevant experience of the phenomenon (that is, both mediation and coaching) being explored. Table 8 indicates the specific selection criteria that were used for the sample.

Table 8: Selection criterion for the sample

Sample	Selection criteria
Disputants who have experienced mediation	Disputants, who experienced workplace mediation of a one-to-one dispute or conflict in the last 18 – 24 months, and who had no prior experience of coaching. (See note below).

Note: No two disputants who were involved in the same mediation intervention were sourced, as the intention was not to get into any specifics about a particular mediation intervention from a dyadic perspective. In addition, this measure assisted disputants to be open and honest in sharing their perspectives, and to be more willing to participate in the study.

The researcher is a human resources professional and mediator in the university where the sample was drawn from. The researcher approached disputants in the university who met the criterion, to participate voluntarily in the research. To encourage disputants to participate in the study and to express their views openly during the interviews, an independent interviewer was used, as the researcher had been involved in the mediation of the disputes.

Table 9 below shows the planned sample size, followed by Table 10 which indicates the actual sample size achieved for the study.

Table 9: The planned size of the sample

Sample	Number in sample
Disputants exposed to mediation	8 (16 interviews)
TOTAL number of Participants	**8**

Table 10: Actual profile of Sample

Sample	Number in sample
Disputants exposed to mediation	7 (14 interviews)
TOTAL number of Participants	**7**

The actual sample used in Table 10 has provided sufficient rich data to identify themes to answer the research questions. Malterud, Siersma, and Guassora (2016) suggest that if the aim of the study concerns a very specific or rare experience, this would in itself limit the number of eligible participants, which was the case in this study.

3.5 The research instrument

The face-to-face semi-structured interviews were the only form of data collection. Al-Yateem (2012) argues that data collection through the face-to-face, semi-structured interview technique is very powerful for extracting rich data, which was required in this study. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) recommend that a qualitative interview guide should consist of the following: (1) the research questions should guide the interview questions; (2) use of script at the beginning and the end of

the interview; (3) use open-ended questions; (4) start with easy questions and move to the more complex ones later; and (5) start with “tell me about…”.

A set of interview questions, for the first and second interviews respectively, was developed to ensure data was gathered to address each of the three research questions (see Appendix A). The first interview focused on research question 1 (that is, the challenges that participants experienced in mediation), and the second interview (after the participants had received coaching) extracted data in relation to research questions 2 and 3 (that is, the participants’ views on the role coaching could play in enhancing workplace mediation and possible guidelines for using coaching to enhance workplace mediation). The interviews were based primarily on open-ended questions, with some prompts to extract rich data, and provision was made for the interviewee to provide additional comments after the set questions.

The researcher carefully briefed the independent interviewer on the interview guide for both interviews to be conducted with the participants. In particular, the interviewer, when conducting the interviews, needed to be mindful in not leading the participants (Elo et al., 2014). Grimm (2010) recommends that piloting of the research instrument is a very important step as it will eliminate any errors and will also ensure that the timing of the questions, as well as duration of the entire interview, is checked and verified. For this research project, piloting of both the first and second interview guide was done on one participant by the interviewer, and was then de-briefed with the researcher to modify the interview guide where deemed necessary. There was no need to modify the instrument.

3.6 Procedure for data collection

The participants were approached directly by the researcher in order to obtain their voluntary consent. The researcher did this by meeting with disputants who met the selection criterion, to give them information about the study, to explain what is required of them and what steps would be taken to ensure their anonymity (for example, using an independent interviewer and not including their names). When participants gave their consent, an informed consent letter was sent to participants that were signed (see Appendix B).

Once the participants agreed to voluntarily participate in this study, the names and contact details were provided to the interviewer, a Researcher employed by the research office of the university, experienced in interviewing for research purposes and independent from the work environment of the researcher (student) and the participants. The interviewer scheduled the interviews as well as the venue in advance to ensure appropriate time was set aside in order to gather sufficient and rich data to address the research questions. It was anticipated that the duration of the interviews would be at least sixty minutes to a maximum of ninety minutes. On average, the interviews lasted from 40 to 55 minutes. The interviewer conducted all the face-to-face interviews in the two rounds of interviews, while the researcher facilitated the coaching sessions between the two sets of interviews.

All interviews were audio-recorded, after gaining permission from the respondents to do so. The interviewer allocated participant codes to the interviews (that is, P1, P2, P3 and so forth) and forwarded the audio-recordings to a transcriber, who is independent from the university, for verbatim transcription of the interviews, which were then analysed by the researcher (Al-Yateem, 2012). The interviewer advised the transcriber to use the allocated participant codes for the participants' names and to remove any other identifiers from the transcripts. To ensure anonymity of the participants in the eyes of the researcher, the interview transcripts were sent to participants by the interviewer (and not by the researcher) to verify the accuracy of the contents, before it was sent to the researcher for analysis.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

Qualitative data analysis can be quite daunting as it involves consolidating, reducing, and interpreting what the participants have provided, for the researcher to make meaning to answer the research questions (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). The data collected through the interviews, in the form of interview transcripts, were analysed manually. The thematic analysis method was used to analyse the data, referred to as conventional content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Braun and Clarke (2006) argue that thematic analysis is a flexible, accessible and

popular method of data analysis, which provides the qualitative researcher with a foundation in the basic skills required to engage with other similar approaches. A combination of inductive analysis (based on coding of the participants quotes), with deductive analysis was used, in that themes were clustered into pre-determined categories of (1) pre--mediation, (2) during mediation and (3) post-mediation as focused on by Brubaker et al. (2014), when highlighting trends in coaching in relation to mediation. An example illustrating how the themes and clustering of themes within categories, evolved in relation to research question 1, is given in Appendix C.

The interview transcripts were scrutinised and read repeatedly in order to get a holistic understanding, and participants' responses were noted where these were relevant to the research questions. Codes were created in order to capture the essence of the language used in the participants' quotations (Saldaňa, 2009). Codes were then linked and sorted according to relationships to create categories and themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015). Furthermore, Merriam and Tisdell (2015) argue that a good coding scheme will ensure that the data is trustworthy. After the creation of the categories and the codes, the quotations from the participants were captured alongside the categories and themes in order to support the categories and themes.

3.8 Limitations of the study

In terms of the methodology, and as Madrigal and McClain (2012) contended, it is effective to automate qualitative data collection because of the cost involved, as well as the fact that manual analysis is time consuming. Doing manual analysis was indeed a limitation of this study as it was much more time consuming. Qualitative research entails that the researcher should find meaning from the data available which could result in subjective analysis of data by the researcher (Madrigal & McClain, 2012). The sample was limited as it only included disputants involved in disputes mediated by the researcher, and not by other mediators. In addition, the disputants were only exposed to a brief coaching intervention of two sessions each, which might have restricted their perceptions on how coaching could be applied to enhance workplace mediation. Furthermore, the independent

interviewer did not have actual experience of coaching, and this may have adversely affected her ability to probe more in-depth for richer data, during the second set of interviews which focused on the potential role of coaching in mediation, and guidelines for applying coaching to mediation.

3.9 Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, the concept of trustworthiness is used to address validity and reliability, terms used for ensuring the rigour of quantitative research (Lietz, Langer, & Furman, 2006). The four components of trustworthiness (that is, dependability, credibility, transferability and confirmability) are outlined next in relation to this study.

3.9.1 Dependability

Dependability refers to the constancy of the data over similar conditions (Cope (2014, p. 1). Cope (2014) further suggests that a study could be considered to be dependable when another researcher concurs with the decision trails at each stage of a research process. Through the researcher's process, a study would be deemed dependable if the study findings and results are replicable with similar participants in similar conditions.

A methodical description of the data collection and analysis phases are documented in this chapter, after the field work was completed, with an example in the appendices. This approach has helped to serve as a form of audit trail thereby facilitating replication of this research by another researcher. Audit trails document the course of development of the completed analysis. In developing an audit trail, a researcher provided an account of all research decisions and activities throughout the study (Carcary, 2009). In addition, through the use of purposive sampling, and the provision of coaching to the participants, it was assumed that the participants did have the necessary experience of the phenomenon to provide rich, meaningful data for the researcher to draw appropriate conclusions for the study to be dependable.

3.9.2 Credibility

Credibility refers to the truth and integrity of the data and the researcher's view or the participant views, interpretation and representation of such data, (Polit & Beck, 2012, p. 294). Credibility is enhanced by the researcher describing his or her methods and experiences (as a researcher). A qualitative study is considered credible if the descriptions of human experience are immediately recognised by individuals that share the same experience (Cope, 2014, p. 1). The use of participants' verbatim quotes to support the themes identified in this study were utilised to help to foster credibility.

3.9.3 Transferability

Morse (2015) suggests that transferability is achieved when readers feel as though the story of the research and its findings overlap with their own context, thereby facilitating them to intuitively transfer the research to their own situation. The research findings will further be presented in a manner that the descriptions will be recognised by others who have had the experience, or appreciated by those who have not had the experience. This means the findings included verbatim quotes from the participants.

3.9.4 Confirmability

Confirmability refers to the researcher's ability to demonstrate that the data represent the participants' responses and not the researcher's biases or viewpoints (Cope, 2014) The researcher demonstrated confirmability by describing how conclusions and interpretations were established, and how the categories and themes identified were derived from the data. In reporting qualitative research, this can be demonstrated by providing specific quotes from the participant's discussions, that depict each emerging theme, and by showing how the coding of data led to the development of categories and themes. In addition, the researcher has also reviewed and discussed the emerging themes with his supervisor when analysing the data, to engage another more objective view of the themes.

3.10 Demographic profile of respondents

The demographic profile of the sample is made up of a cross-section of race and gender, as well as varying ages. Three of the participants were white females, with two in the professorial ranks and one as a principal technician. The white females' ages ranged between 50 and 72 years. There was one coloured male, in the professorial ranks, with his age between 40 and 45. There was one African female, employed as an administrator, with her age between 28 and 35. In addition there was one Indian male (a scientist, with his age between 33 and 37) and one Indian female (a financial officer, with her age between 30 and 35).

3.11 Ethical considerations

Information was provided upfront to the participants. The researcher engaged the participants individually in order to discuss the study as well as the process. Such information included consent forms as well as a letter outlining the purpose of the study.

In accordance with Babbie (2015, p. 65), the invitation consent documents in this study included the following ethical aspects:

1. *Maintaining confidentiality:* Ensuring no harm from information sharing, and that anonymity would be ensured in the research report;
2. *Giving information:* Upfront outline of what the research topic is about, and what will be required from the participants (that is, they will be interviewed and audio-recorded);
3. *Ensuring no deception:* A truthful explanation about benefits of the research;
4. V*oluntary participation:* Participation is voluntary and the participants have the right to withdraw at any point;
5. *Access to information:* Respondents would be afforded the right of access to the relevant information, such as the research findings; and
6. *Access to the researcher:* Participant would be afforded the right to contact the researcher at any point for follow-up questions (Babbie, 2015).

After the respondents agreed to voluntarily participate in the research project and had completed the consent forms, individual interviews were arranged and face-to-face interviews conducted by an independent interviewer. The interviewer was requested to complete and sign a confidentiality agreement. Company permission was obtained for the participants (that is, the disputants). Approval of the research topic (see Appendix D) and ethical clearance was granted by the University of Witwatersrand (See Appendix E). Anonymity and confidentially were ensured as names of participants were not used in the study; instead codes were allocated to each participant by the interviewer and other identifiers were removed when the interviews were transcribed, for example, the department they work for. The interview data collected were stored on-line in a password-protected computer by the interviewer, and the final interview transcripts (without identifiers) and the data analysis sheets were stored on-line in a password-protected computer by the researcher. All research data will be destroyed on completion of the examination of the research project. The ethical considerations in this research project has been applied with due consideration, understanding and application of the plagiarism principles of research.

4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the findings from the analysis of the interviews to address the three research questions. As this is a qualitative study, the findings will also be discussed in relation to the literature.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the perceptions of disputants on the potential role of coaching to enhance mediation of workplace disputes or conflict in the workplace in a South African University. The interview data were collected from seven participants who were involved in individual disputes in the last 18 to 24 months, and who had no prior experience of coaching. Two sets of interviews were therefore conducted by an independent interviewer, with the first set occurring before the coaching sessions and the second set, after the coaching sessions were concluded. All disputants needed to receive and experience coaching to be able answer the questions in the second set of interviews, in relation to the potential role of coaching to enhance the mediation process.

The findings from the thematic analysis of the interview transcripts will be presented next for each of the three research questions. The themes identified for each question will be supported by verbatim quotes from the participants (or disputants), who were assigned codes ranging from D1 to D7 to ensure anonymity. The themes will be discussed in relation to the literature.

4.2 Findings and discussion pertaining to Research Question 1

Research question 1 of the study was: What challenges are experienced in the mediation process which inhibit the effectiveness thereof?

In the first set of interviews, participants were first asked how they perceived the effectiveness of the mediation they had experienced, before enquiring specifically about any challenges they encountered in the mediation. The purpose was to establish a sense of how mediation had been experienced by them.

4.2.1 Perceived effectiveness of the mediation

The perceptions of the participants on how effective the mediation was are reflected in Table 11, with key words in their quotes bolded for emphasis.

Table 11: Perceived effectiveness of the mediation process

Participant	Quote
D1	"Mediation **was beneficial**, it gave a different perspective in perceiving matters just from my side".
D2	"Mediation **was good** and it was really good that the dispute was mediated as it resulted in some changes, the outcome was also good in that I had an opportunity to raise my concerns".
D3	"Mediation **was effective**, as I felt that we have reached consensus and the relationship improved".
D4	"Mediation **was not effective** as it had not resolved the problem"
D5	"The mediation **was not effective"**
D6	"Mediation **was very good** because it provided a safe space for the issues to be brought up and discussed between both parties".
D7	"Mediation **was not effective**, as at the end, the agreement was that we would continue to disagree, as the complainant was not prepared to continue to work with me".

The above table of participant quotes, shows that four participants (D1, D2, D3 and D6) agreed that the mediation was effective, good or beneficial for reasons that the dispute was resolved, the mediation session provided a safe space to share views, that they reached agreement, and that the process actually improved the working relationship. This finding is supported by Saundry et al. (2013) who found that, despite facing challenges in mediation, disputants derived enough value from the process that they would recommend mediation to fellow colleagues, provided it takes place under circumstances that are conducive to a fair mediation process. On the other hand, three participants (D4, D5 and D7) felt

that the mediation was not effective as the dispute was not resolved. Stipanowich and Lamare (2014) found that the potential lack of finality on reaching agreement is one of the barriers to successful mediation, which will further render the mediation process ineffective.

Other positive aspects of the mediation process, raised by at least five of the disputants, were that the mediation provided a safe space to raise their views and opinions, that the conversation was constructive, that the process was professionally conducted, that the mediator ensured that no one dominated the conversation, and that having a mediation process gave them comfort knowing that they were protected during these conflict resolution processes. In support of this finding, Bollen and Euwema (2013) found that workplace mediation is much more effective than other dispute resolution mechanisms as it provide disputants with a voice.

4.2.2 Perceived challenges in the different phases of mediation

Even though four of the participants experienced the mediation process to be effective, all participants had experienced certain challenges in the mediation process, as expressed when they were specifically asked about their challenges, to address research question 1. Themes, representing their challenges, were identified in the three different phases of mediation as depicted in Table 12.

Table 12: Challenges experienced in the different phases of mediation

Phases of mediation	Themes
Pre-mediation phase	1. Lack of clarity about the mediation process 2. Time delays in commencing the process
During mediation phase	1. Lack of integrity of disputants 2. Imbalance or unfairness of the process

Post-mediation phase	The challenge of the emotional aftermath and lack of follow-up

The above themes, per mediation phase, are discussed in turn.

Challenges experienced in the pre-mediation phase

Table 13 outlines the responses of the participants for the first theme identified in the pre-mediation phase, which related to a lack of clarity about the mediation process.

Table 13: Theme 1: Lack of clarity about the mediation process

Participant	Quote
D1	"With regards to mediation, we went into the process without knowing what to expect"
D3	"We went into the mediation process without knowing what to expect, what would happen"
D4	"I did not know what he was going to say, it went differently to how I thought it would be"
D5	"I believe that there should be an open and clear explanation of how the process is going to be conducted, as well as what the goals of the process are"
D6	Although the issues were raised, there were a couple of things that were not clear … I didn't know what the next step was and how to move forward"

Five of the seven participants, as indicated above, expressed concerns about the lack of clarity of the mediation process. Three (D1, D3 and D5) suggested that they did not know what to expect or what would happen in the process, while one (D4) expected a different process to what was actually experienced, and one (D6) suggested that a couple of issues about the process were not clear.

Stipanowich and Lamare (2014) found that disputants' lack of experience with mediation was a barrier to effective mediation. By implication, disputants

therefore require more clarity about the mediation process, as found in the present study. The second theme or challenge experienced by participants in the pre-mediation phase was about the time delay in commencing the mediation process, as is reflected in Table 14.

Table 14: Theme 2: Time delays in commencing the process

Participant	Quote
D1	"Time could be a barrier - people may not be willing to take time or avail themselves to sit down and discuss issues"
D5	"The time it took for the process to begin and the lack of support from the system was one of the biggest challenges… and all the initiative had to come from me".

As shown above, two of the participants (D1 and D5) suggested that the time delays in starting the mediation process were quite a challenge, referring to disputants either not dedicating time to participate in the actual process (D1) or the time taken to set the process in motion, due to the lack of support and commitment from the system (D5). Saundry et al. (2013) found that there is a tendency of late referrals to mediation, which delays commencement of mediation. Furthermore, commencement of mediation is often delayed by senior management's lack of willingness to use mediation (Stipanowich & Lamare, 2014).

Challenges experienced during the mediation phase

Two types of challenges were experienced by participants during the mediation process itself, which are outlined next. The first theme related to the perceived lack of integrity of disputants, depicted in participants' quotes in Table 15.

Table 15: Theme 1: Lack of integrity of disputants

Participant	Quote
D5	"I was very angry and what triggered my anger was that the person that I was having a dispute with, was lying, granted that the mediator may not have been aware of it"
D7	"A lot of the issues raised by the complainant were not really true and correct, which seemed to be the focus of the mediation …The complainant was in the driving seat and I have not had an opportunity to mention any other matters"
D1	"The biggest barrier would be personalities, because if the person being asked to come into the meditation is not open-minded about it, the discussion will not go anywhere, especially if there are hidden agendas and those type of things"

In terms of the above responses, two of the participants, D5 and D7, experienced a lack of integrity in the other disputant (that is, the other party involved in their dispute) during their mediation process. They both believed that the other disputant was dishonest. Earlier it was noted that both D5 and D7 viewed their mediation process to be ineffective, and it seems that this perceived challenge may have contributed to the overall view of their mediation. On the other hand, participant D1, who had perceived the mediation process as being effective, emphasised that disputants with hidden agendas and not being open-minded to the mediation process would be one of the "biggest" barriers to an effective mediation process.

In support of this theme, Nathan (2009) found that disputants are often uncooperative and intransigent, which speaks directly to the lack of integrity of some disputants. The lack of integrity of disputants was further highlighted by Saundry et al. (2013) and Stipanowich and Lamare (2014) who found that the lack of commitment or unwillingness of some disputants to participate genuinely in the mediation process could result in a non-sustainable resolution.

The second challenge identified during the actual mediation process related to the perceived imbalance or unfairness in power dynamics of the two disputants involved. Table 16 contains participant quotations that provide evidence of this theme.

Table 16: Theme 2: Imbalance or unfairness in power dynamics

Participant	Quote
D2	There was a perception at first about who are the senior people in the room, but later, after the process started and we all spoke, I guess we were at the same level …The only issue that was not ok was a person stated that I am senior and I won't be questioned by a junior staff member"
D4	"There was a union representative representing the complainant, so at one point, I was wondering why I don't have a representative?"
D5	"The process must be made as fair as possible, without any conflict of interest …This process was quite intimidating as I was taking on someone with a reputable personality/standing."

As shown above, three participants spoke in different ways about how unfairness in the process, or imbalances in power between the disputants, can be a challenge - as these factors can lead to perceptions of an ineffective mediation process in the eyes of the disputants themselves. One participant (D2) referred to how seniority of some participants in relation to others involved in the mediation could pose a challenge, while another participant (D4) referred to not being afforded the opportunity to have a representative when observing the other disputant had a union representative present. A third participant (D5) felt that the process was intimidating as the dispute was against a senior staff member.

This finding concurs with several authors. Nathan (2009) found that unfairness or power dynamics affects the process negatively when mediators are too keen to get to an agreement quickly, and as a result, might compromise the process. Saundry et al. (2013) support this, having found that some disputants felt pushed towards an agreement, especially where external mediators are involved in the mediation process. These findings align with Welsh (2003) who argued a while back, that for mediation to be effective, it was important that the process be fair, that it gives disputants a voice and it allows full participation with dignity.

Challenges experienced during the post-mediation phase

One challenge was identified that related to the post-mediation phase. This theme was about the emotional aftermath and lack of follow-up after mediation about the outcomes agreed during the mediation process, with participant quotes describing this theme contained in Table 17.

Table 17. The challenge of the emotional aftermath and lack of follow-up after mediation

Participant	Quote
D1	"I would have expected to have a discussion after the mediation process, to follow through on what was discussed and identify possible problems and if things did not go well"
D3	"Yes, I was sorry that she felt prejudiced, and that I invaded her private space, but that is where we left it"
D5	"[*after the mediation*] I was isolated in my working environment and my colleagues distanced themselves …strong measures must be put in place to prevent victimization or abuse once the dispute has been resolved"
D7	"It would have helped to discuss the outcomes because, seeing things in writing, actually talking about them and having someone to discuss it with is different"

Four participants (D1, D3, D5 & D7) identified the lack of follow-up after the mediation process as a challenge. Two participants, D1 and D7, spoke about the need for having a follow-up discussion with the disputants. D1 believed that such a discussion would follow through on the outcomes agreed in the mediation and assist to "identify possible problems" still requiring resolution, while D7 felt that a follow-up discussion would have helped to further clarify and process the written outcomes agreed during the mediation. The other two participants (D5 and D3), on the other hand, referred to the emotional aftermath after mediation. D5 spoke about the experience of being "isolated" in the work environment after the mediation process, alluding to the need for some emotional support or follow-up after the mediation process. D3 spoke about having remorse and having a

concern about having infringed the other disputant's rights; however, through saying "…but that is where we left it", implied that there was a need for further emotional closure. Of note, participants D5 and D7 both viewed the overall mediation process as being ineffective, and this finding suggests that the lack of follow-up after mediation may have contributed to their view, because participants were still requiring closure and/or emotional support in dealing with the aftermath of the mediation.

Saundry et al. (2013) agreed with this finding that disputants often felt isolated after mediation, whereas mediation is intended to bring disputants closer together. Bollen and Euwema (2013) emphasised that often intense emotions are involved in mediation and that an effective and sustainable solution needs to be found. They therefore argue for the importance of considering the continuation of relations between the disputants in the workplace after mediation, and the need for follow-up after mediation in this regard. Furthermore, the research by Saundry et al. (2013) established that there is a lack of follow-up after mediation, especially where external mediators were involved. In further support of the need for follow-up after mediation, Stipanowich and Lamare (2014) found that a lack of finality of the mediation outcomes often results in a non-binding mediation agreement, which will result in a compromised outcome after mediation.

4.2.3 Conclusion for proposition 1

Based on the literature review in this study, the first proposition was that disputants do experience and identify a variety of challenges in workplace mediation. The findings of the study concur with this proposition, even though four of the seven participants viewed the mediation process to be effective. The findings also went further in categorising the disputants' challenges within the different phases of mediation, that is, challenges experienced during the pre-mediation phase, challenges experienced during the mediation process itself, and challenges experienced in the post-mediation phase.

4.3 Findings and discussion pertaining to Research Question 2

Research question 2 of the study was: What are disputants' perceptions on how coaching could play a role in enhancing mediation?

After the first set of interviews which focused on the participants' experiences and perceptions of mediation, the participants were then exposed to coaching (which was performance coaching focused on current issues they were experiencing), receiving two coaching sessions each. The second set of interviews occurred after the coaching intervention. The participants now had gained experience of coaching and these interviews focused on participants' views on the possible role of coaching in mediation to address RQ2.

4.3.1 The perceived effectiveness of received coaching

The participants were first asked how they perceived the effectiveness of the coaching they had received, before enquiring specifically about the possible role of coaching in mediation. The purpose was to first gain a sense of how they had experienced coaching, as this experience would form the basis of how they would perceive coaching playing a possible role in mediation. All seven participants agreed that the coaching they received as part of this study was effective or good, and that it had worked well for various reasons. As the participants only received two coaching sessions each due to time constraints of the study, there was a concern by the researcher as to whether this would be sufficient to give them a real experience of coaching. A surprising finding therefore was that all the participants clearly derived value from receiving only two coaching sessions.

Four themes were identified across the participants that highlight what the participants found to be effective, or what worked for them, in the coaching. These themes are (1) coaching assists with the identification of development goals, (2) coaching helps with identifying personal triggers, (3) coaching improves leadership skills, and (4) coaching develops relationship skills. Each of these themes will be discussed next.

The first theme related to participants' perceptions that coaching assists with identifying one's development goals, and supporting quotes are shown in Table 18.

Table 18: Theme 1: Coaching assists with the identification of developmental goals

Participant	Quote
D2	I was quite happy with the coaching as we focussed on some personal and quite a lot of work-related issues ... In terms of my developmental goals, we identified what I would require to achieve my goals"
D3	It was good from both a personal and work perspective, it was very effective as we identified some development goals and the way forward and where I want to be … what worked well was it was very much beneficial as it provided me with some principles for self-development.
D4	"The coaching focused more on what I will be embarking on next since I have just completed my PhD"
D5	What worked well was that I have been seeing a lot of positive changes after my coaching sessions, of which the biggest was my insight into career development

Four participants identified coaching as helpful in identifying and clarifying development areas, expressed in different ways. For D2 and D4, the coaching helped to clarify their next development goals or steps; for D3, it provided some principles for self-development; and for D5, the coaching provided insight into career development goals.

These findings suggest that the coaching process is both goal and development focussed for the benefit of the person being coached, which is evident in the coaching literature. Passmore (2007) found that setting goals is particularly important and suggested that it should be the first step in the coaching process, referring to the GROW model of coaching, which was the coaching model applied in this study. The findings of Cox et al. (2014a) supported his view and further argued that setting the coaching agenda (including goal-setting), and achieving this, is important for the success of the coaching process for the individual.

Coaching has further been defined by Bachkirova (2016; p. 144) as “a human development process” that promotes “desirable and sustainable change for the benefit of the coachee”.

The second theme related to participants’ perceptions that coaching helped them to identify some of their personal triggers, and supporting quotes are contained in Table 19.

Table 19: Theme 2: Coaching helps with identifying personal triggers

Participant	Quote
D2	What worked well is that it was beneficial and assisted my in identifying some triggers and blind spots.
D4	What worked well is that I have changed the way I work, and even apply some of this at home – this [coaching] also assisted me in identifying triggers and challenges and how to deal with it.
D6	What worked well was that the coaching helped me to think about myself and being critical which is never easy, it helped me to change my mind-set and think differently about issues.
D7	I was happy on how the coaching sessions were conducted and what worked well was that I could identify some triggers and how to deal with such triggers”

The above four participants all viewed coaching as assisting them to increase their self-awareness through identifying certain of their personal triggers (D2, D3, D4 & D7) or blind spots (D2). Participant D7 referred to this self-awareness as “thinking about myself and being critical”. Two of these participants also suggested that in addition to the identification of some of their triggers, the coaching also helped them to deal with the triggers (D4 & D7), while D7 spoke about how the coaching helped to “change my mind-set and think differently about issues”.

This finding concurs with how much of professional coaching is conducted, as coaching raises self-awareness in the client or coachee, as the basis for making choices or action planning (Rogers, 2012). The focus on developing clients’ self-

awareness is often a step in the coaching model used; for example, in Passmore (2007) six-step integrative model of coaching, the fifth step is about cognitive unconsciousness, referring to the self-awareness of the client. For this reason, the ability to develop self-awareness in the client is considered an important coaching competence of professional coaches (Maltbia, Ghosh, and Marsick (2010b),

The third theme related to participants' views that coaching improves leadership skills, and supporting quotes are provided in Table 20.

Table 20: Theme 3: Coaching improves leadership skills

Participant	Quote
D1	What worked well was that the coaching created an awareness and helped me to recognise where I am lacking in leadership skills.
D6	Worked well, as it assisted me to strategise and to better manage my staff

Two participants viewed the coaching as assisting them to improve their leadership skills. This was achieved through developing more awareness of what was lacking in leadership skills (D1) and through development of specific leadership skills, such as more effective strategizing and people management skills (D6). This finding aligns with leaders' and managers' key goals that they focus on in coaching, as identified by Kilburg (2004a), which were improving their management skills and behavioural repertoire to lead more effectively in organisations.

The fourth theme related to participants' views that coaching develops relationship skills, with supporting quotes shown in Table 21.

Table 21: Theme 4: Coaching develops relationship skills

Participant	Quote
D1	"Coaching helps understand yourself first and by understanding yourself, you will be able to deal with different type of personalities …. When you work with people who have different thought patterns, it creates personality clashes because people don't understand themselves and so it becomes difficult for them to understand others and work as a team"
D2	"Coaching has helped me improve my relationship with my colleagues and helped understand myself a bit better … it further assisted me manage my relationships with both managers and colleagues a bit better and to be a bit more tolerable"
D3	"Personally, it has helped me improve my working relationships … It has taught me how to manage working relationships as well"
D4	"The coaching for me helped my personal space, which had an impact on how I choose to deal with issues with my colleagues"

The four participants above spoke about how the coaching helped them to develop their relationship skills in the workplace. This was achieved through the coaching by increasing self-awareness as a basis for understanding and interacting with other people (D1 & D2), and by focusing on how to manage working relationships more effectively (D1, D2 & D3), or in dealing with issues with one's colleagues (D4). Participants also alluded to the value of improving relationships for dealing with conflict more effectively. While D1 referred to being able to deal more effectively with different personalities, by avoiding personality clashes with them, D3 spoke about learning to be more tolerant of others.

This finding, in particular, possibly had some influence on the participants' perceptions of how coaching could be applied to mediation, as this theme spoke to how coaching assisted them in relation to their issues of conflict, different personalities and difficult working relationships. For this reason, this finding aligns with benefits of conflict coaching in the literature, because the coaching that these participants received focused on aspects of conflict. Brinkert (2011) found that conflict coaching is aimed at the development of skills to interact with

others, which is intended to improve relationships. Furthermore, that conflict coaching will help in integrating an employee into the work environment much quicker and therefore, improve interpersonal relationships with other staff. The main purposes of conflict coaching were suggested by Herrmann (2012) as gaining understanding and skills in how to communicate constructively and to problem solve effectively when in a disagreement with another person, to be able to resolve the conflict.

4.3.2 The possible role of coaching in mediation

The findings for the possible role of coaching in mediation will now be discussed, to answer research question 2. With an appreciation of what coaching really is and the value derived from it, through having received some coaching, it was interesting to note that all participants could see a possible role for applying coaching to the mediation process. However, four participants (D4, D5, D6 and D7) suggested that there was not a role for coaching during the actual mediation process itself, but that coaching could play a role only in the pre-mediation and post-mediation phases. Aligned with this view, Brubaker et al. (2014) have also only highlighted the role of coaching in the pre-mediation and post-mediation phases. Table 22 contains supporting participant quotes that indicate the view that coaching could not play a role in the actual mediation process.

Table 22: Coaching not seen to have a role in the actual mediation process

Disputant	Quote
D4	"I don't think it could actually play a role during the actual mediation process"
D5	"Coaching could play a role in the pre-mediation and post-mediation process, but I don't think in the actual mediation process"
D6	"I don't think coaching could play a role here *[during the mediation process]* as one is still trying to find solutions"
D7	"…but I don't think coaching could play a role during the mediation process"

Following on from the above table, the themes identified for the possible role of coaching in the pre-mediation and the post-mediation phases are outlined in Table 23 below.

Table 23: The possible role of coaching in pre-mediation and post-mediation phases

Possible role of coaching per phase of mediation	Themes
Pre-mediation role of coaching	1. Proactive de-escalation of conflict and the need for mediation 2. Preparation for the mediation process
Post-mediation role of coaching	Coaching for emotional closure

The above themes in the pre-mediation phase will be discussed first, followed by those in the post-mediation phase.

Possible role of coaching in the pre-mediation phase

Two themes were identified for the possible role of coaching in the pre-mediation phase and these will be discussed in turn. The first theme related to the possible role of coaching in the proactive de-escalation of conflict and the need for mediation, with supporting quotes in Table 24.

Table 24: Theme 1: Proactive de-escalation of conflict and the need for mediation

Participant	Quote
D1	"Coaching is like a conflict diffuser"… "I believe that if the staff members were coached before, there would be less conflict, resulting in less mediation processes".. "

D2	"I believe that if the disputants had been coached prior to the actual mediation process, maybe she would have realised that there was no issue"
D3	"Having coaching sessions during the pre-mediation phase would have helped a lot …I think if people have coaching sessions, there would not be a need for a mediation process"

Three participants in the table above viewed a possible role of coaching in de-escalating conflict – and potentially the need for mediation. One participant (D1) viewed coaching as a "conflict diffuser" and suggested that coaching could be given to staff members in general, as a means of de-escalating conflict, and that this would most likely result in having less of a need for mediation in the workplace. The other two participants (D2 and D3) spoke specifically about the role of coaching in de-escalating conflict in the pre-mediation phase, arguing that in doing so, the disputants might realise they do not have a real issue or they may think differently about the issue, possibly negating the need for mediation.

Brubaker et al. (2014) found that conflict coaching may be generally applied when disputants want to manage their own conflict situation (as a form of self-help) and when resolution to the conflict might not be important, therefore diminishing the requirement for a mediation process. Similarly, conflict coaching is seen by Winslade and Panghorn (2015) as being focused on assisting disputants in evaluating their current conflict and determining ways to conduct themselves, irrespective of mediation taking place.

The second theme related to the possible role of coaching in preparation for the mediation process, with supporting quotes shown in Table 25.

Table 25: Theme 2: Preparation for the mediation process

Participant	Quote
D1	"Coaching, I think, could be utilised to prepare the person in dispute for the mediation"

D5	“I think coaching could be applied in the pre-mediation phase where there is preparation for the actual medication meeting”
D7	“I think if we had coaching beforehand then one could possibly react differently during the mediation meeting …There has to be a clear explanation on how the process is going to be conducted and what is expected from both parties”

All three participants (D1, D5 & D7) believed there would be value in having coaching to help prepare the disputants for the actual mediation process, and how to participate in it. Two of the participants (D1 & D5) thought that coaching could be utilised to prepare persons in dispute for the actual mediation process, with D7 explaining that this preparation would need to clarify the mediation process and expectations of both disputants. In addition, participant D7 felt that that having coaching beforehand could influence how disputants react or participate more constructively during the mediation process.

This finding is well supported by the conflict coaching literature. Carden (2018) argues that conflict coaching helps develop the individual with tools to face the conflict situation. Brinkert (2011) found that conflict coaches work with clients to develop the client’s conflict-related understanding, the way the client interacts and interpersonal skills, which will assist in dealing with the conflict in the actual mediation process. In addition, an increasing number of mediators, according to Brubaker et al. (2014), are using coaching techniques to assist disputants to prepare more intentionally for a mediation intervention, and these coaching techniques could also assist disputants to become more resilient to engage with their conflict situation.

Possible role of coaching in post-mediation phase

One theme was identified for the possible role of coaching in the post-mediation phase, which will be discussed next. This theme related to coaching for emotional closure after the mediation has been concluded, with supporting quotes provided in Table 26.

Table 26: Theme: Coaching for emotional closure

Participant	Quote
D4	"…coaching [if provided after mediation] ,might have changed my attitude, …I am backing off now …finding ways to cope with any problems"
D5	"Coaching could also be applied after the actual mediation process where there are high emotions and victimization may be experienced and a support structure is needed … After our mediation process, I was in limbo, I didn't know where to go or what to do… but after being coached *[as part of the current study]*, I am now aware of the importance of planning for my career development"
D6	"Having had the coaching sessions *[as part of this study]* has put the mediation in a better perspective and I have been able to move on and be more constructive"

The above three participants saw a role for coaching in facilitating emotional closure for disputants after the mediation, which D4 explained would have assisted with changing D4's own attitude after the conclusion of mediation. Participant D5 felt that coaching could be valuable after mediation when there may be a high level of emotions and when victimisation of one or both disputants might possibly be experienced. This participant also referred to his own emotional state of being "in limbo" after the mediation, suggesting that this type of emotional aftermath would probably be the case for other disputants, and that coaching could assist with this. The third participant (D6) reinforced the view of D5 as to the need for post-mediation coaching. Participant D6 qualified this through explaining how received coaching as part of this study, even though it had been 12 months since the mediation was concluded, had assisted D6 to gain a better perspective of the mediation and to move on because the coaching, as stated by D6, "helped me to change my mind-set and think differently about issues *[that had been relevant to the dispute]*".

Brubaker et al. (2014) found that a recent introduction into conflict resolution is the practice where coaches assist disputants after the conclusion of the mediation process. Furthermore, this post-mediation practice involves a debriefing on how the dispute has progressed as well as the outcomes agreed to, which may help

to facilitate emotional closure for the disputants, which was identified as a need in the current study's findings. In addition, this type of post-mediation coaching may focus on developing disputants' skills or behaviours required to sustain the outcomes of the mediation agreement (Brubaker et al., 2014).

4.3.3 Conclusion for proposition 2

Based on the literature review in this study, the second proposition was that disputants, who have experience of coaching, will articulate a variety of ways that coaching could play a role in enhancing workplace mediation. The findings support the proposition as the disputants have identified the role that coaching could play, both in pre-mediation as well as post-mediation, but no role for coaching was identified during the actual mediation process itself.

4.4 Findings and discussion pertaining to Research Question 3

Research question 3 of the study was: What guidelines could be adopted for applying coaching in the mediation process?

Participants were asked during the second set of interviews to give possible guidelines for adopting coaching during the pre-mediation and post-mediation phases. Participants had already indicated under research question 2 that they did not see a role for coaching during the mediation process itself, which aligns with the trends in coaching being integrated with mediation observed by Brubaker at al. (2014).

4.4.1 Guidelines for coaching in pre-mediation and post-mediation phases

Participants suggested some general guidelines for adopting coaching in the pre-mediation and post-mediation phases, with one theme identified for each phase which explains the guidelines for that phase, as shown in Table 27.

Table 27: Guidelines for coaching in pre-mediation and post-mediation phases

Guidelines for coaching per phase of mediation	Themes
Pre-mediation coaching guidelines	Coaching for clarification and focus
Post-mediation coaching guidelines	Coaching for closure

The above two themes will be discussed in turn.

Pre-mediation coaching guidelines

The first theme related to guidelines pertaining to coaching for clarification and focus, with supporting quotes in Table 28.

Table 28: Theme: Coaching for clarification and focus

Participant	Quote
D2	"Coaching could definitely assist in clarifying the issues and will further assist the disputant to focus on the facts … Someone who is coached before the mediation process, in my opinion will be much more solutions focussed and will focus on the end game and not the problem"
D5	"I think coaching could be applied in the pre-mediation phase where there is preparation for the actual mediation meeting"
D6	"I think that there should be a coaching session just before the actual mediation meeting in order to prepare yourself and know what is expected of you"
D7	"Coaching should be implemented as a form of briefing during the pre-meditation phase"

The above four participants felt that pre-mediation coaching for clarification could be adopted as a guideline in the mediation process. Three of the participants (D5, D6 & D7) felt that this coaching could clarify the mediation process and

expectations of the disputants, act as “a form of briefing”, and enable the disputants to be prepared for the actual mediation. Participant D6 suggested that this coaching should happen just before the mediation in order to prepare the disputants for mediation. Of note, D6 referred to “a coaching session”, implying one session; whereas the other participants made no reference to the number of sessions as they spoke about “coaching”, possibly implying it to be a process comprising a few sessions. Participant D2, on the other hand, saw the role of this pre-mediation coaching being broader - explaining that it could assist the disputants to clarify the issues in the dispute and to focus on the facts, thereby assisting the disputants to be more solutions-focused in the mediation process.

Cinnie Noble (2012) found that conflict coaching supports and prepares disputants to engage actively and effectively in ADR processes such as mediation. This type of pre-mediation conflict coaching is supported by Brubaker et al. (2014) who also proposed that this coaching would involve several private coaching sessions, rather than one as suggested by participant D6, in order to: (1) identify disputants’ concerns, (2) consider how the disputants would present themselves during mediation, (3) how to articulate their desired outcomes from mediation, and (4) prepare the disputants on how to respond to difficult situations in the mediation process. In terms of guidelines for conflict coaching, Herrmann (2012a) explains that conflict coaching is not a one-off session and is on-going over a specific time period - short, medium or long term, depending on what has been agreed in terms of the goals of the coaching, which would be applicable to pre-mediation coaching.

Post-mediation coaching guidelines

The second theme related to guidelines pertaining to coaching for closure, with supporting quotes provided in Table 29.

Table 29: Theme: Coaching for closure

Participant	Quote
D1	"Coaching should be offered after the mediation process so that it is more transparent and the reason for the coaching is purely to improve the conflict situation"
D5	"Coaching should be soon after the mediation process was concluded"… I think that after the mediation process, the state of emotions of both parties would not be good for the parties involved so I believe that having a coaching session after the actual mediation meeting would be quite beneficial"
D6	"There should be a coaching session after the mediation process in order to see how the parties are processing the outcome of the mediation and how they can move forward"

The above three participants felt that coaching could be used after the conclusion of the actual mediation for the purpose of closure Two participants (D1 and D5) suggested that coaching should be offered after the mediation process, with D1 stressing that it needs to be soon after, as it is important to foster transparency and for improving the outcomes of the conflict situation. Participant D6 elaborated further on the purpose of this post-mediation coaching, to ascertain how the disputants are processing the outcomes of the mediation and how they can proceed with these to move forward. D6's reference to "how" the disputants are processing the outcomes suggests that aspects of emotional aftermath should be raised and dealt with in this post-mediation coaching, while D5 clearly speaks to the need for dealing with the emotional aftermath. While D6 and D7 both spoke about it being one coaching session after mediation, participants D1 and D5 spoke more generally about coaching, possibly implying that the coaching may involve several sessions, or at least, more than one.

Brubaker et al. (2014) found that the need for post-mediation coaching is for debriefing on the progress of the mediation outcomes that were agreed, and on the actual skills development of the disputants if this was part of the mediation agreement for changes in behaviour required to sustain the agreement. Of note, some participants emphasised the need for dealing with the emotions or

emotional aftermath of mediation, which concurs with Welsh (2003) who argued that disputants would view an effective mediation process as one which assists them to feel better, both emotionally and psychologically. While Brubaker et al. (2014) do not indicate the number of sessions required for this post-mediation coaching, the implication is that several sessions would be necessary, especially if skills development of the disputants is required (Hermann, 2012).

4.4.2 Conclusion for proposition 3

Based on the literature review in this study, the third proposition was that disputants, who have experience of coaching, will suggest broad guidelines that could be adopted for applying coaching in the mediation process. The findings support the proposition as the disputants have identified a number of potential guidelines for pre-mediation coaching of disputants, and for post-mediation coaching of disputants. The coaching, whether pre-mediation or post-mediation, would most likely comprise several sessions, at least more than one, and should be guided by the goals the coaching required. The recommended guidelines for adopting coaching in workplace mediation of one-to-one disputes will be outlined as part of the conclusion chapter, and will draw from the findings for research question 2 and 3, together with guidelines suggested in the literature.

4.5 Summary of the discussion and findings

This section focused on the findings pertaining to research questions 1, 2 and 3, and discussion of the findings in relation to literature.

The findings for question 1 pertaining to what challenges were experienced in the mediation process by disputants, which inhibit the effectiveness thereof, were detailed in section 4.2. The themes that emerged as challenges that were experienced during the pre-mediation process were: (1) Lack of clarity about the mediation process, and (2) the time delay in commencing the process. The challenges identified during the actual mediation process were: (1) Lack of integrity of disputants, and (2) Imbalance or unfairness of the process. The main challenge identified during the post-mediation process includes was the emotional aftermath and the lack of follow-up.

The findings for question 2 pertaining to what were disputants' perceptions on how coaching could play a role in enhancing mediation, were detailed in section 4.3. The themes that emerged were: (1) Proactive de-escalation of conflict and the need for mediation, (2) Preparation for the mediation process, and (3) coaching for emotional closure.

The findings for question 3 pertaining to what guidelines could be adopted for applying coaching in the mediation process, were detailed in section 4.4. Guidelines were identified for pre-mediation coaching of disputants for clarification and focus, and for post-mediation coaching of disputants for closure. The recommended guidelines for adopting coaching in workplace mediation of one-to-one disputes will be outlined as part of the conclusion chapter.

Chapter 5 will focus on the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the conclusions for each of the three research questions, followed by recommendations to key stakeholders and finally suggestions for future research.

5.2 Conclusions regarding Research Question 1

The purpose of this research question in the study was to understand the challenges experienced by disputants during the mediation process. Research question 1 was: What challenges are experienced in the mediation process which inhibit the effectiveness thereof? Even though most of the disputants found their mediation process to be effective, all of them highlighted certain challenges they had experienced. The conclusion for this question was that disputants do experience and identify a variety of challenges in workplace mediation, which concurs with the literature (Stipanowich & Lamare, 2014); (Nathan, 2009); (Saundry et al., 2013). The current study went further in categorising the disputants' challenges within the different phases of mediation. The challenges experienced during the pre-mediation phase were (1) lack of clarity about the mediation process, and (2) time delays in commencing the mediation process. The challenges experienced during the mediation process itself were (1) lack of integrity of disputants, and (2) imbalance or unfairness in power dynamics of the process. The main challenge experienced in the post-mediation phase was the emotional aftermath and lack of follow up. Potentially some of these challenges experienced in mediation could therefore be reduced or eliminated through the application of coaching to the mediation process, which was the focus of the next research question.

5.3 Conclusions regarding Research Question 2

Research question 2 was: What are disputants' perceptions on how coaching could play a role in enhancing mediation? The purpose of this research question in the study was to obtain a perception from disputants on how coaching could be applied during the mediation process. As the disputants had no experience of being coached, all of them received two coaching sessions as part of the study design. All the disputants found the coaching experience to be positive, highlighting benefits they had experienced, particularly the development of relationship skills as they perceived these skills to have an influence on conflict management skills. Their positive experience of coaching assisted them to articulate how coaching could possibly enhance the mediation process. The conclusion for this research question is that the disputants perceived that coaching could play a role in the pre-mediation and post-mediation phases, but not during the actual mediation itself. The findings on how coaching could play a role during the pre-mediation were: (1) proactive de-escalation of the conflict experienced among the two disputants and possibly the need for mediation; and (2) preparation of the disputants for the mediation process. In terms of coaching potentially enhancing the post-mediation phase, the main finding was to have coaching for emotional closure in relation to the emotional aftermath, typically experienced by disputants, to facilitate closure. The literature has highlighted trends in the application of conflict coaching to mediation in other countries (Brubaker et al., 2014; Noble, 2012) which concur with the findings of this study.

5.4 Conclusions regarding Research Question 3

The purpose of this research question was to establish what guidelines could be adopting for applying coaching in mediation. Research question 3 was: What guidelines could be adopted for applying coaching in the mediation process. The conclusion for this research question is that certain guidelines may be adopted for applying coaching in the pre-mediation and post-mediation phases. In the pre-mediation phase, the goal of the coaching should be to assist the disputants with clarification and focus, meaning that the coaching needs to clarify the mediation process, in terms of what is expected and how to respond, and focus on

understanding the disputants' conflict issues and desired outcomes from the mediation process to help foster a solutions-orientation. In post-mediation coaching, the coaching should commence soon after the conclusion of the mediation, and the goal of the coaching should be on closure, which referred to focusing on the outcomes of the mediation (that is, what was agreed) and progress thereof, plus facilitating the processing of any emotional aftermath experienced by the disputants. These guidelines are aligned with the trends identified by Brubaker et al. (2014) in how conflict coaching is being integrated with mediation. In the current study, participants did not clearly indicate the number of sessions for pre-mediation and post-mediation coaching, but did imply that the coaching may involve several sessions, or at least, more than one session, as argued by Hermann (2012). According to Brubaker et al. (2014), several coaching sessions would be required in the pre-mediation and post-mediation phases, and emphasised that if skills development of the disputants was part of the mediation agreement reached, then this would extend the duration of post-mediation coaching.

A more detailed account of guidelines on how coaching could be applied to workplace mediation in SA will be outlined in the next section.

5.5 Recommendations

Recommendations are made to the key stakeholders in SA who may benefit from the findings of this study, those being (1) Human Resources professionals, (2) coaches, (3) mediators, and (4) mediator training providers.

5.5.1 Human Resources professionals

The guidelines for applying coaching to workplace mediation in SA, which was the main purpose of this study, are outlined in the Table 30. These guidelines, drawn from the findings to both research questions 2 and 3, are aimed at the relevant human resources (HR) professionals in SA organisations who are responsible for facilitating and managing workplace conflict procedures and processes. These guidelines therefore would imply that the relevant HR unit modify their dispute resolution procedures and processes to include coaching in

the pre-mediation and post-mediation phases – and that the mediators involved (whether internal and/or external) would need to understand the role of coaching in the mediation process. The coaching would need to adhere to professional coaching ethics, particularly in relation to ensuring confidentiality and managing boundaries between the coaching and the mediation.

Table 30: Guidelines for applying coaching to workplace mediation in SA

Phase of mediation	Guidelines for adopting coaching in mediation
Pre-mediation	**<u>Coaching for clarification and preparation for mediation:</u>** - Recommend 2-3 coaching sessions with each disputant. - Explore the conflict issue from the disputant's perspective, understanding the root cause of or the basis of the conflict, and explore the disputant's emotions in relation to the conflict. - Explore possible desired outcomes to the conflict to focus on fostering a solution-orientation. - Clarify what is expected during the mediation process and the disputant's role. - Explore how to conduct oneself during the mediation process. - ***NOTE: Where the dispute is not that intense, and seemingly resolvable***, explore the option of not going to mediation, and rather continue with conflict coaching towards resolving the conflict themselves (that is, the two disputants), which would require a focus on agreed conflict coaching outcomes.
Post-mediation	**<u>Coaching for closure</u>:** - Recommend 2 -3 coaching sessions with each disputant, but may be longer if skills development of both disputants was part of the mediation agreement. - The first coaching session should happen at least 2 weeks after the conclusion of the mediation process. - Re-cap the disputant's experiences of the mediation process - and anything related to this being experienced in the disputant's

	work context, exploring what went well and what did not go well, and listening for and understanding any emotional aftermath being experienced. - Review the mediation agreement, clarify any misunderstandings and confirm what needs to be implemented, and by whom, as per the time-lines agreed. - Focus on coaching to facilitate closure for the disputant in terms of any emotional aftermath being experienced post-mediation.

In terms of the above guidelines, coaching professionals who have a recognised coaching qualification or certification should be used to render the coaching services required, which may be part of an organisation's executive coaching panel or would have to be sourced. Whether an organisation uses internal or external mediators, or a combination of these, only mediators who have a qualification or certification in coaching, could facilitate the entire process, that is, the pre-mediation coaching phase, the actual mediation itself, and the post-mediation coaching phase – but would need to carefully manage the boundaries between coaching and mediation, when in these different roles. It is also recommended that after the post-mediation coaching has been concluded, the mediator meet once with the disputants to ensure the mediation agreement has been implemented and that there has been effective closure.

5.5.2 Coaches

Coaches, who have experience in facilitating conflict coaching or may be interested in expanding their coaching practice into conflict coaching applied to workplace mediation, need to:

- Adopt the guidelines in Table 30 for informing them in how to apply conflict coaching to workplace mediation
- Understand the mechanics of how the mediation process works and how it is conducted
- Also acquire some training in mediation, in order to assist mediation clients or disputants with preparation for mediation during pre-mediation coaching, as per the guidelines outlined in Table 30

5.5.3 Mediators

Mediator, who have an interest in applying a coaching approach to the way they facilitate workplace mediation, could:

- Adopt the guidelines in Table 30 for informing them in how to apply conflict coaching to workplace mediation
- Familiarise themselves with the principles of coaching and how the process works, while working with professional coaches to render the coaching services required in the pre-mediation and post-mediation phases.
- Upskill themselves, by acquiring certification in coaching skills, to be able to coach professionally and apply coaching to the pre-mediation and post-mediation phases of workplace mediation processes that they facilitate.

5.5.4 Mediator Training Providers

- Mediator training providers should review their training material to include material on coaching in general and in particular, conflict coaching to be applied to the pre-mediation and post-mediation phases as outlined in Table 30.
- Trainers should further upskill themselves to be able deliver the material during training sessions, or use professional coaches to deliver this part of the training.

5.6 Suggestions for further research

Suggestions for future research could focus on:

- An evaluation on the effectiveness of mediation, as perceived by disputants, when coaching is applied to the pre-mediation and post-mediation phases in accordance with the guidelines in Table 29, comparing it with disputants who have not experienced coaching during their mediation experience.
- Exploring mediators' perceptions on differences observed in the degree of closure experienced by disputants after mediation, by comparing

disputants who received coaching as part of the mediation process with disputants who did not receive coaching.

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APPENDIX A - Research Instruments

MMBEC research interview guides for the two interviews

(Adapted from Jacob and Fergusson, 2012)

A.1 First interview: Disputants exposed to mediation (before coaching)

Good day …..

I am (name of interviewer) and I am conducting interviews for a research study being done by Charles Gilbert for purposes of completing his MMBEC at the Wits Business School. The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of disputants' perceptions of individual workplace mediation and the potential role that coaching could play in enhancing the process of workplace mediation in South Africa. Individual workplace mediation refers to the mediation process of disputes or conflict between two professionals,

Your participation is voluntary and will be for about one and a half hours (maximum) in this first interview. As mentioned in the consent form you signed, I am going to audio-record this interview to ensure that your responses are accurately captured. I trust this is in order?

1. Tell me a bit about yourself as well as your background?

2. You have been involved in a dispute within the last 18 to 24 months, which was mediated. When reflecting back on the mediation you experienced, how effective was it in resolving the dispute or conflict? *[Additional prompt: What have the results of the process been for you, others or the university?]*

3. In terms of the mediation process you experienced, what went well? And what did not go that well?

4. Based on your experience of this mediation, what challenges or barriers do you perceive inhibited the effectiveness of your mediation process? (That is, the mediation process of disputes or conflict between two professionals) *[Possible prompts: what do you mean by that? Please give me an example of …? Tell me more about ….]*

5. Based on your experience of mediation, what specific challenges do you perceive related to the different phases of individual workplace mediation: (1) the pre-mediation phase (that is, before the mediation process began and preparing for mediation), (2) the actual mediation process (facilitated by a mediator), and (3) the post-mediation phase (after agreement or resolution was achieved to achieve sustainability of the agreement or outcomes achieved from the mediation)? *[Possible prompts: what do you mean by that? Please give me an example of …? Tell me more about….]* *NOTE: The interviewer needs to seek specific challenges in relation to each of the 3 phases, as these phases are emphasised in the literature – to give time for this.*

6. Would you like to add any additional information or comments before we close the session

Thank you for participating and sharing.

The interview transcript will be sent to you shortly to verify the accuracy of the contents. I may have to come back after our interview for further clarification.

You will be contacted by the researcher in relation to scheduling two coaching sessions, which will give you the experience of being coached, before you have a second interview with me.

A.2 <u>Second interview</u>: Disputants exposed to mediation and have received coaching

Good day …..

I am (name of interviewer) and I am conducting interviews for a research study being done by Charles Gilbert for purposes of completing his MMBEC at the Wits Business School. The purpose of this research is to gain an understanding of disputants' perceptions of individual workplace mediation and the potential role that coaching could play in enhancing the process of workplace mediation in South Africa. Individual workplace mediation refers to the mediation process of disputes or conflict between two professionals,

Your participation is voluntary and will be for about one and a half hours (maximum) in this first interview. As mentioned in the consent form you signed, I am going to audio-record this interview to ensure that your responses are accurately captured. I trust this is in order?

1. During our first interview, we discussed the challenges you experienced or perceived in workplace mediation, having been a disputant in a mediation process.

2. You have now experienced being coached (that is, two coaching sessions). When reflecting back on the coaching you received, how effective was it in assisting you in terms of what you chose to focus on *[Possible prompt: a performance or development goal you focused on?]*

3. How did the coaching specifically assist you? What worked well? And what did not work that well?

4. With your experience of both mediation and coaching, how do you think that coaching could play a role in enhancing the process of individual workplace mediation? *[Prompt: How might coaching address some of the challenges you identified in the first interview?]* <u>*NOTE:*</u> *The interviewer needs to have read*

the contents of the first interview transcript so the specific challenges can be raised as prompts in this interview.

5. How could coaching play a specific role in the different phases of individual workplace mediation: (1) the pre-mediation phase (that is, before the mediation process begins and preparing for mediation), (2) the actual mediation process (facilitated by a mediator), and (3) the post-mediation phase (after agreement or resolution is achieved to achieve sustainability of the agreement or outcomes achieved from the mediation)? *<u>NOTE:</u> The interviewer needs to seek specific ideas in relation to each of the 3 phases, as these phases are emphasised in the literature – to give time for this*

6. If there were guidelines for how to apply coaching to individual workplace mediation, what should be included to improve the effectiveness of such mediation processes?

7. Would you like to add any additional information or comments before we close the session?

Thank you for participating and sharing.

The interview transcript will be sent to you shortly to verify the accuracy of the contents. I may have to come back after our interview for further clarification.

APPENDIX B - Letter of consent

Masters in Management of Business and Executive coaching (MMBEC).

The researcher

I am Charles Gilbert, and I am conducting research for the purpose of completing my MMBEC at the Wits Business School.

Purpose of the research

I am conducting research to understand disputants' perceptions of individual workplace mediation and the potential role that coaching could play in enhancing the process of workplace mediation in South Africa. I am conducting a qualitative study with disputants who have been exposed to individual workplace mediation in the university. Note: Individual workplace mediation refers to the mediation process of disputes or conflict between two professionals.

Your participation

I am requesting your permission for two interviews by an independent interviewer (not the researcher/student) from the research office of the university, requiring 60 - 90 minutes (maximum) with you, at a convenient venue, to be arranged with you by the interviewer. If you do agree, I would request that you allow the interviews to be audio-recorded to accurately capture your views. The audio-recordings of both interviews will be sent by the interviewer to a transcriber, which is independent from the university, for transcription. Your name, role and department will not be revealed in the interview transcripts as you will be assigned a participant code by the interviewer. The interview transcripts will be sent to you by the interviewer to verify the accuracy of the contents, before being sent to the researcher who then will analyse the interview transcripts.

The first interview will focus on the challenges you experienced or perceived as a disputant in a workplace mediation process within the last 18 - 24 months. Note, the interview will not focus on the nature of the dispute, but rather on the challenges they experience during the process. **After your first interview, you will need to receive coaching** (that is, two coaching sessions of one hour each)

by the researcher on a development or performance to gain of your choice to gain experience of being coached, thus enabling you to answer questions about the potential role of coaching in workplace mediation **in your second interview** with the independent interviewer.

Please understand that your participation is **completely voluntary** and do not feel obliged to do so. If you choose not to participate, you will not be affected in any way. If you agree to do so, you still have the right to withdraw at any time, once again, without any impact on you.

Confidentiality

Any study record that identifies you will be kept confidential to the extent possible by law. The record of your participation may be reviewed by staff members that have to ensure that the research is properly done, like my academic supervisor. (Everyone involved in the research is required to keep identity confidential).

All research material will be destroyed upon completion of the research report. I will refer to you by a code number in the thesis and any further publication.

Risk and discomforts

At the present time, I do not see any risk in your participation in your study.

Benefits

The immediate benefits will be information that will assist the researcher to form an opinion on how coaching could be applied to individual workplace mediation, and how. If you wish to receive feedback on the study, the results will be available in early 2020, which will be shared with participants who would like to get the results of the study.

Who to contact should you have been harmed or have any concerns about the study

This research has been approved by the Wits Business School. If you have any complaints about any ethical aspect or wish to raise any concerns about your

participation in the research, you are welcome to contact the Business School Research Officer, Mr. Veli Mongwe on veli.mongwe@wits.ac.za

If you have any concerns or questions about the research itself, you are welcome to contact my Research Supervisor, Dr Kathy Bennett on kbennett@global.co.za

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the research. Please sign the attached.

Charles R Gilbert.

A. General consent

Consent:

I hereby agree to participate in the research about understanding disputants' perceptions of individual workplace mediation and the potential role that coaching could play in enhancing the process of workplace mediation in South Africa. I understand that I am participating freely and not being forced in any way to do so. I further understand that I could stop my participation at any point should I not want to continue and this decision will not affect me negatively in any way.

I understand that this is a research project whose purpose is not really to benefit me personally in the immediate or short term.

I understand my participation will remain confidential.

_____ _____

Participant Signature Date

I hereby agree that the interview be audio-recorded.

_____ _____

Participant Signature Date

APPENDIX C - Example of thematic analysis

Theme development in terms of RQ1: challenges experienced during the mediation process, which inhibits the effectiveness thereof.

<u>Stage 1:</u> The initial themes identified across the transcripts

Initial themes identified
Varying personalities
Effluxion of time
Level of honesty of participants
Perception of one party having the upper hand
Lack of clarity
Power balance of disputants

<u>Stage 2</u>: Initial clustering of themes into categories (per phase of mediation)

Category	**Themes**
Pre-mediation	Lack of clarity Effluxion of time
During mediation	Perception of one party having the upper hand Varying personalities Level of honesty of participants Power balance of disputants
Post mediation	Lack of emotional closure after mediation

<u>Stage 3</u>: After further clustering of themes and refinement of the wording of themes – with supporting participants' quotes

Category	Themes	Participant quotes
Pre-mediation	1. Lack of clarity about the mediation process	"With regards to mediation, I went into the process not knowing what to expect" "We went into the process not, what know what to expect, would happen"
	2. Time delay in commencing the process	"Time could be a barrier – people may not be willing to take time of avail themselves to sit down to discuss issues" The time it took for the process to begin and the lack of support from the system was one of the biggest challenges"
During mediation	1. Lack of integrity of participants	"I was very angry and what to triggered my anger was that the person that I was in dispute with, was lying and the mediator may not have been aware of it"
	2. Imbalance or unfairness of the process	"The biggest barrier would be personalities, because if the person being asked to come into the mediation with is not open-minced about it, the discussion will not go anywhere" "There was a union representative representing the complainant, so at

		one point, I was wondering why I don't have a representative" "The process must be made as fair as possible, without any conflict of interest"
Post mediation	The challenge of the emotional aftermath and lack of follow-up after mediation	"I would have expected process, to have discussion after the mediation to follow thorough what was discussed and identify possible problems and if thigs did not go well" "(After the mediation) I was isolated in my working environment and my colleagues distanced themselves"

APPENDIX D - Approval of research topic

UNIVERSITY OF THE
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03 January 2020
Person No: 888321
PAG

Mr CR Gilbert
116 John Adamson Drive
Mongomery Park
2195
South Africa

Dear Mr Charles Gilbert

Master of Management: Approval of Title

We have pleasure in advising that your proposal entitled *The perceptions of disputants about the role of coaching in workplace mediation in South Africa* has been approved. Please note that any amendments to this title have to be endorsed by the Faculty's higher degrees committee and formally approved.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Marike Bosman
Faculty Registrar
Faculty of Commerce, Law and Management

APPENDIX E - Ethics approval certificate

UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, JOHANNESBURG

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

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE **PROTOCOL NUMBER: WBS/BA888321/506**

PROJECT TITLE	The perceptions of disputants on the role of coaching in workplace mediation in South Africa
INVESTIGATOR	Mr Charles Gilbert
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR	MMBEC
DATE CONSIDERED	10 December 2019
DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE	Approved unconditionally
RISK LEVEL	LOW RISK
EXPIRY DATE	28 February 2020

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE 17 February 2020 **CHAIRPERSON** _____
(Dr MDJ Matshabaphala)

cc: Supervisor: Kathy Bennett

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

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

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

_____ 18/02/2020
Signature **Date**

PLEASE QUOTE THE PROTOCOL NUMBER ON ALL ENQUIRIES