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The perceptions of a women's coaching group in a South African business school context

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The perceptions of a women's coaching group in a South African business school context

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

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ABSTRACT

The context of this study relates to the perceptions of a women's coaching group in the business school context. The aim of this research is to explore ways in which group coaching, social capital, well-being, workplace engagement and job satisfaction can be improved in the workplace.

Participants who attended the women's coaching group and those who did not attend were interviewed, in face-to-face interviews, to gain a rich understanding of the perceptions and experiences of coaching.

Thematic analysis was used to establish the themes that emerged from the interview transcripts.

The findings of this study indicate that the perception of coaching, particularly by participants with limited exposure to coaching, is ambiguous and misinformed. The perception of coaching by participants who attended coaching was altered upon experiencing group coaching first-hand. The first impression was that coaching is a possible mechanism to vent (whereby employees come together to complain about work related issues), however the experience revealed group coaching to be solution focused, a space to reflect and a place where a sense of solidarity is experienced by women who attended.

The group coaching in this study enhanced the perceived social capital for participants which influenced their perception of their workplace engagement and job satisfaction in a positive way. Post coaching session's participants felt re-energised and better equipped to perform their tasks within the broader organisation.

The perception of well-being is subjective. Within this study, factors contributing to the perception of well-being were a sense of belonging, the relationship between the individual and the organisation, and the acknowledgment of the individual as a multifaceted being.

Staff growth and development, promoting social capital and inclusion in the workplace are important human resource factors which enhance the perception of well-being, job satisfaction and promote employee engagement in the workplace.

Within in this study, the female participants expressed a great need within a patriarchal organisation to acknowledge the authenticity of individuals and to encourage the expression of emotion in the workplace.

KEY WORDS

Group Coaching, Well-being, Workplace engagement, Job satisfaction, Social Capital, Patriarchy

DECLARATION

I, Michaela Mahes 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: Michaela Mahes Signature:

Signed at Johannesburg

On the 27 day of May 2019

DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my family. I further dedicate this study to all the women constantly pushing boundaries to be heard, and to progress in all facets of their life.

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Firstly, I would like thank Professor Terri Carmichael for her support, guidance and most of all, encouragement, which I needed quite often. You will forever be dear to my journey of studying and career advancement.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

This research explores the perceived effect of group coaching on well-being, social capital, workplace engagement and job satisfaction within a South African business school. A woman's coaching group is a possible mechanism to promote well-being, increase social capital and bring about a positive sense of workplace engagement and job satisfaction. This research also explores the concept of women requiring a separate space to deal with pertinent issues (Klugman, Kolb, & Morton, 2014).

The aim of the research was to engage with the employees who attended a woman's coaching group to explore their personal experiences and perceptions, both the benefits and limitations experienced.

This research explores the ways in which a woman's coaching group can improve female employees' well-being at a South African business school. This research could be used to promote further group coaching initiatives within the workplace with the aim of promoting well-being, social capital, workplace engagement and job satisfaction at other business schools or university faculties.

Sabharwal (2015) mentions that more women are attaining senior positions, yet still make reference to a term called the 'glass cliff'. Women in senior executive positions face immense challenges as they progress in their jobs which results in pushing them over the edge - termed the glass cliff. For example; women may be excluded from networking and receive less support from colleagues and more scrutiny than men do in the same leadership positions.

Maodzwa-Taruvinga and Divala (2014, p. 1962, 1963) explain the challenges faced as a result of South Africa's historical context, where education and women gaining access to education is limited despite laws aiming to transform this marginalisation. These authors further explain that within higher education sectors, women struggle to find their individual identities as these identities are

based on “qualifications, perceived capacities, roles and responsibilities”. Women lack the support and preparedness required due to gender and racialised power relations; they make reference to a phrase “uneven playing field”.

“The university is a microcosm of the larger society” reflecting some of the challenges still experienced within society despite the democratic dispensation of 1994 (Maodzwa-Taruvinga & Divala, 2014).

There is a need to promote inclusion in the workplace, for marginalised groups such as women and disabled people to feel heard and recognised within their organisation (Barak, 2016). Greater sense of belonging and inclusion within an organisation promotes a greater sense of well-being. Maodzwa-Taruvinga and Divala (2014) highlight the practice of reflection and understanding one’s narrative to gain success within higher education. Coaching is a mechanism used to promote self-awareness and deep reflection (Stelter, 2009). Group coaching also allows diverse people to come together to discuss pertinent issues, thereby promoting inclusion.

1.2 Context of the study

According to Crabb (2011), stimulating well-being is one of the factors that enhances engagement, satisfaction and performance in the workplace. Employees who perform better contribute effectively to the overall organisation (Crabb, 2011). This research explored the possible ways in which coaching groups can benefit employees and organisations. The concept of self and organisational improvement is a crucial component of coaching (Kahn, 2011). Coaching emerged in the 1970s in the fields of sport, management and psychology with the aim of improved performance (Hawkins, 2017). The premise on which coaching is built still remains improved performance in current times.

This paragraph explores traditional social constructs. In some instances, women assume inferior positions in the workplace in both private and public sectors and are seen to assume a nurturing role. Female students predominantly tend to be found in the Health Sciences and Humanities faculties as opposed to the Engineering faculties (Shackleton, Riordan, & Simonis, 2006).

Sabharwal (2015) make reference to gender-based stereotypes which influence the experiences of women in the workplace; for example, leadership traits such as risk-taking and decision making are often associated with males, making it increasingly difficult for women to prove themselves worthy in leadership positions. Klugman et al. (2014) explain that women and men require an equal range of choices in the workplace. The group coaching context is a possible opportunity to raise issues relating to social constructs and the notion of equal choices in the workplace, and how to navigate around such constructs in the workplace.

1.3 Research problem

“In the last two decades, female labour force participation has fallen slightly, from 57 to 55 percent” (Klugman et al., 2014, p. 134). Women assume roles to which they have been socialised through social norms, cultural heritage and government policies and practices (Klugman et al., 2014), thus, emphasising the need for women to have a mechanism within the work context to address such challenges in a supportive environment. One of the main characteristics of coaching is the provision of a safe reflective space where there is unconditional positive regard, non-judgement and empathy (Stelter, 2009).

The Employment Equity Report of South Africa shows that there is a huge gender gap in the labour force. Senior management is occupied by 79.4% men, even though 43% of females are professionally qualified. As women are becoming more aware of these inequalities, they are conscious of a separate space required to discuss the inequalities they face (Khuzwayo, 2016). Socialisation based on gender, for example how a girl or boy should behave from a young age, leads to gender-based expectations later on in their careers and life span. According to Ye Wang et al. (2015), coaching can address the gender gap by assisting female managers to decide what they hold to be true with regards to their behaviour, values and purpose, despite the expectations and societal pressures.

A women's coaching group in the workplace is a possible mechanism to offer a separate space to deal with an array of issues. Group coaching is an effective mechanism to provide a safe reflective space where relationships can be built and issues around gender gaps can be discussed (Stelter, 2009).

The women's coaching group is a mechanism based on a humanistic coaching approach. The humanistic approach emphasises a non-judgemental space, assumes unconditional positive regard, trust, respect and empathy (Palmer & Whybrow, 2014). This allows women to speak freely and feel safe in sharing their experiences. As explained by Stelter (2009), the world is fast-paced; coaching provides a safe reflective space which leads to improved being, holistically. Thus, it links directly to the element of well-being which is explored further in this research.

There is an increased drive within business to improve employee well-being, productivity, performance, job satisfaction, engagement in the workplace and inclusion; to establish a competitive advantage for the organisation. Organisations are required to create an enabling environment for employees to stimulate their growth and development as well as "keep their finger on the pulse of their employees' feelings", which is discussed further within this study (De Vito, Brown, Bannister, Cianci, & Mujtaba, 2018, p. 20).

1.4 Research objectives

This research focus explores the experiences and perceptions of a women's coaching group within a business school. This study engaged with the participants who attended the coaching group sessions to understand how they perceive and experience coaching sessions. This research also explores the perceptions of the women who do not attend the women's coaching group and those who attended at the onset yet no longer attended the sessions.

1.5 Research questions

1. What are the benefits and/or limitations of a women's coaching group?
2. What is the understanding of social capital within the coaching context?

3. How is well-being perceived in the workplace?
4. How is workplace engagement promoted?
5. What factors contribute to job satisfaction?

1.6 Significance of the study

Grant (2006) refers to coaching as a collaborative approach towards self-directed learning which links to improvement. Looking at group coaching as a mechanism for contributing to well-being, Diener and Diener (2009, p. 653) describe well-being as subjective to a person, based on their "evaluative reactions to his or her life". Therefore, the concept of well-being varies from person to person, based on what is meaningful and important to the individual.

There are also Western and African notions of well-being. For example, in collectivist African cultures, the perception of well-being is understood in relation to the well-being of the family or community, less emphasis is placed on the individual, whereas Western cultures experience well-being in an individualistic manner, and are taught about the importance of self in order to obtain life satisfaction (Diener & Diener, 2009).

According to Whitmore (2010), business coaching is about unlocking one's potential and improving performance. According to Kahn (2011), business coaching is engaging in meaningful communication with individuals and businesses. These elements of coaching discussed sets coaching as a positive mechanism for improved well-being and meaningful communication, which is the foundation of the woman's coaching group explored in this research.

Schaufeli (2013, p. 1), makes reference to the concept of employee engagement, meaning "a desirable condition for employees" within an organisation, which is one of the areas of exploration within this study. There are three behaviours of engaged employees, according to Schaufeli (2013): 1) employee speaks positively about their organisation, 2) employee has a desire to be part of the organisation and 3) gives extra time to the organisation. This is discussed further in this study.

Group coaching can provide growth at organisational, group and individual levels (Spence & Grant, 2007). Britton (2010, p. 5), defines group coaching as “a small group process throughout which there is the application of coaching principles for the purposes of personal or professional development, the achievement of goals, or greater self-awareness along thematic or non-thematic lines”. Joo, Sushko, and McLean (2012) explain that staff development is becoming more appealing to employees and employers to improve quality within the workplace. All these definitions display similarities in that they acknowledge the coach-coachee relationship, and they emphasise goals and improvement (at individual and organisational levels).

The outcomes of this research could inform future coaching programmes within the business school context to improve the quality of work experience and provide a competitive advantage through engaging employees and better productivity (De Vito et al., 2018). The feedback and conversations were well-informed and in-depth, as they were conducted among the participants who attended these sessions within the business school.

1.7 Delimitations of the study

The scope of this study focused on women within the business school context who attended the woman’s coaching group. The study explored a business school within the South African context. This study included non-attending women of the woman’s coaching group to gain insight to their perceptions about the woman’s coaching group concept. There are various levels of management that attend these sessions all of which were included in the study voluntarily.

This study excluded in-depth discussions about the following:

- Burnout
- Stress
- Leadership styles

1.8 Definition of terms

For the purpose of this study, the preferred definition used to refer to executive coaching is as a mechanism to unlock one's potential and lead to improved performance in the workplace (Whitmore, 2010). According to Brown and Grant (2010) *group coaching* involves a coach (or coaches) with multiple coachees, with the aim of change and growth.

Well-being is an holistic approach to an individual on all the dimensions that affect them. Being in harmony with regards to material, relational and subjective experience brings about well-being (van Dick & Haslam, 2012). The dimension of subjectivity pertaining to self-awareness, perception and values is an important component in relation to coaching. Similarly, Diener and Diener (2009) explain well-being as a subjective reaction to life.

Workplace engagement involves desirable conditions for employees and the organisation (Schaufeli, 2013). Workplace engagement is concerned about the employee's experience with his/her work.

Social capital "is the set of resources rooted in relationships" (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p243). Building social capital for the individual or organisation involves networking, collaboration and co-operation. Social capital involves "networks of mutual acquaintance and recognition" (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998, p. 243). Social capital in organisations are built by establishing relationships of "trust, honesty, and mutual respect" among individuals (Vogus, 2018, p. 165).

Job satisfaction refers to the overall judgement about one's job relating to either a positive or negative experience (Judge, Weiss, Kammeyer-Mueller, & Hulin, 2017). Factors that affect one's judgement of one's job include "work tasks, pay promotions, supervision or co-workers" (Judge et al., 2017, p. 357).

1.9 Assumptions

Female managers who attended the group coaching may have influenced the discussion or the process for their particular internal agenda of driving a particular pressing topic within the business school. This may have influenced how

participants at the sessions perceive their experience or reflect upon the value of the sessions.

Because these sessions were held during work time (during lunch time periods), participants may have not attended because of their high-pressured work environment.

1.10 Structure of the report

1.10.1 *Chapter 2*

Chapter two consists of the literature review in which the key terms and key concepts of this study are described and critiqued. The key concepts of discussion are group coaching, social capital, well-being, employee engagement and job satisfaction. At the end of the chapter, research propositions are posed, providing possible responses to the research questions posed in Chapter one.

1.10.2 *Chapter 3*

Chapter three discusses the methodology applied in this study.

1.10.3 *Chapter 4*

Chapter four presents and discusses the findings of this research, linking concepts and patterns which emerged from participants back to the literature review, to incorporate the common themes.

1.10.4 *Chapter 5*

Chapter five discusses the conclusions of each of the five research questions which are the core focus of this research. The research questions are highlighted within the chapter for ease of reference.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review discusses various viewpoints relating to issues in the workplace, as perceived by women, and the effect on their well-being. It also discusses a women's coaching group as a possible mechanism to explore the concept of well-being, contribute to social capital, employee engagement and job satisfaction. This review explores the concept of women having a separate space to discuss their issues as experienced in the workplace.

2.2 Background discussion

According to Berry and Franks (2010), women spend much of their time proving they are equal to men and proving their capabilities. This proves tiresome to women in organisations. Traditionally, women have assumed a primary care-giver role and thus may experience more disruptions to career advancement opportunities than men (Clarke, 2011). One of the main challenges faced in the workplace is exclusion - based on various categories such as race, gender, disability, traditional social constructs and status - where employees do not feel part of their organisation and equal to one another (Barak, 2016).

Kahn (1990) explains personal engagement as allowing an employee to express themselves freely; cognitively, emotionally and mentally. When employees are stimulated, they engage better with tasks, other employees and their organisation in a positive manner. Schaufeli (2013) explains the concept of employee engagement wherein employees feel positively towards their organisations and their work environment. Workplace engagement is described as a "desirable condition for employees as well as for the organisation they work for" (Schaufeli, 2013, p. 1). The coaching group is a means to discuss what desirable conditions or feeling positively in the workplace are interpreted by employees within the context.

Stelter, Nielsen, and Wikman (2011, p. 131) refer to group coaching as a "community of practice and as a context for social learning". Community of practice provides a sense of belonging within a context. Through this community of practice, employees are able to build social capital among their peers. Brown and Grant (2010) explain that group coaching involves one or more coaches coaching a group of people, with the aim of improvement. A women's coaching group is specific to women however, it follows the same guiding principles of group coaching highlighted in the previous sentence.

Improving the concept of well-being is a focus of coaching, as the coachees reach a deeper understanding of themselves through the coaching process and coaching relationship (Stelter, 2009). According to Kahn (2011), the benefits of coaching is building positive relationships with the coach that transcends the session. Thus, the positive relationships and behaviours unpacked during coaching leaves an impact on the coachee even after the sessions. Therefore, the after effect of attending coaching has positive side effects for the coachee/s.

Coaching is a means to address various issues such as stereotypes, prejudices and traditional social constructs to allow employees to feel more included in the organisation (Barak, 2016). According to Barak (2016), organisations need to find ways to address exclusion and implement inclusive activities to improve well-being, team coherence and work experience, such as teambuilding exercises, opening dialogue around issues and finding solutions with employees on how to address these issues.

2.3 Group coaching

Aas and Vavik (2015) explain that coaching was first used in the 1970s among athletes to improve performance thereafter was applied to improve performance in work and life.

Women's group coaching is a mechanism for women who assume multiple roles to discuss issues through shared experiences. Stelter (2009) highlights the importance of coaching in providing a safe reflective space in the fast-paced and

diverse modern day living. A women's coaching group assists women in building positive networks, thereby increasing their social capital (Clarke, 2011).

There have been positive outcomes of coaching in the workplace in that it has directly assisted women in career progression through building confidence, self-awareness, balancing work and building strong networks (Clarke, 2011). In coaching, the relationship between the coach and coachee, multiple coachees in a group setting, is important; the coach is required to be congruent to their true self to engage successfully with the group. Bachkirova (2016) makes reference to the coach being an instrument that can be used to benefit others.

The South African government and organisations are promoting programmes exclusive to women as a way to transform the country and gain respect globally as well as to give women the opportunity to excel within the workplace (Mathur-Helm, 2005). These programmes are also put in place to redress past imbalances within the South African context led by the Apartheid era; where segregation and discrimination was encouraged.

According to Stelter (2009, p. 191), coaching helps open up a dialogue with the coachee, where the coach plays a facilitative role. This author refers to the coach and coachee relationship as the "co-creation of meaning". Through this coaching relationship, the coachee gains greater insight and reflects in order to make positive changes both at work and in life. "Participants in the group learn to share experiences, thoughts and reflections in order to stimulate one another", this contributes to the benefits of group coaching (Stelter et al., 2011, p. 133).

According to van Dick and Haslam (2012), there is a huge benefit in forming groups within the organisational context if the groups enhance greater awareness and sense of self for its individuals. This explanation by van Dick and Haslam acknowledges the individuals' sense of self within a group. Aas and Vavik (2015) explain the benefits of the coaching community practice such as the women's coaching group, in improving a sense of social satisfaction and social capital. Similarly, Barak (2016) explains that organisations require more initiatives to promote and address inclusion in order for employees to be content within their

organisation. Hawkins (2017, p. 20), highlight three benefits of group coaching; *resolving conflict, enabling dialogue and promoting positive relationships*.

One of the limitations of group coaching is that it can be uncomfortable when topics arise in the sessions that are not normally discussed openly among women (Brown & Grant, 2010). According to Brown and Grant (2010), the discomfort often yields real change. Therefore, discomfort is not entirely negative if the issues are unpacked successfully and sensitively. There is also a misconception of coaching, in that it is often viewed as a practice to fix someone, therefore people who attend can appear to be weak and needy (Robinson, 2008).

2.3.1 Proposition 1

The benefits and/or limitations of a women's coaching group include resolving conflict, enabling dialogue, greater self-awareness, promoting positive networks, workplace engagement, greater sense of well-being, greater sense of job satisfaction, increased social capital and shared experience among women. The limitations include the misconception of coaching being a practice to fix people as opposed to developing them, and the discomfort with the openness of some conversations.

2.4 Social Capital

Metz and Tharenou (2001) define social capital as informal social networks built to assist in the career advancement of women. Social capital "is the set of resources rooted in relationships" (Subramony, Segers, Chadwick, & Shyamsunder, 2018, p. 27). Social capital involves mutual relationships built on trust, honesty and mutual respect (Vogus, 2018). Group coaching involves dialogue and the creation of meaning, and therefore is a means to promote social capital in the workplace (Stelter, 2009).

According to Brown and Grant (2010), group coaching is aimed at facilitating teams and leadership effectiveness. According to Stelter et al. (2011), when coachees of group coaching hear one another's stories and challenges, they find new ways of dealing with their own challenges, and also offer support to those

who express their experience. Thus, sharing of experiences creates a sense of team within the group.

Social capital, in the women's group coaching context, involves women directly working with other women in a supportive way; where they network, collaborate and build trust (Clarke, 2011). Encouraging social capital within organisations leads to increased performance, as there is greater team cohesion and trust as a result of social capital building initiatives (Subramony et al., 2018). The support created and shared between women in the group coaching are in itself a perk of the women's coaching group and a benefit to the organisation. Coaching is a tool to promote social capital.

Human capital (i.e. qualifications, credentials) often gets women into lower management positions; however, social capital is crucial to women's career advancement. The higher women progress in management, the more support and networks they require to deal with these challenges and stereotypes (Sabharwal, 2015; Metz & Tharenou, 2001). Subramony et al. (2018) mention two dimensions of leaders; the intrapersonal (i.e. human capital, behavioural, meta-cognitive etc.) and the interpersonal (i.e. building relationships with others). Social capital falls within the interpersonal dimension of leadership. Both human capital and social capital assist organisations in achieving a competitive advantage (Subramony et al., 2018).

2.4.1 Proposition 2

The understanding of social capital within the coaching context is that it assists in women's career advancement, leadership effectiveness, team effectiveness, increased cohesiveness, builds trust, facilitates self-awareness, can improve performance, a means of support to women who attend group coaching.

2.5 Well-being

In order to reach an appropriate understanding of well-being, the definitions and perspectives pertaining to well-being are explored under this heading.

An article by Diener and Diener (2009) describes well-being as a subjective reaction to life. Well-being has been referred to as “frequently being in a good mood, relaxed and content” (Stelter et al., 2011, p. 133). With reference to van Dick and Haslam (2012), there are three dimensions of well-being as depicted in Figure 1: The material, relational and subjective dimensions offer an integrated approach as it includes all elements relating to an individual into categories.

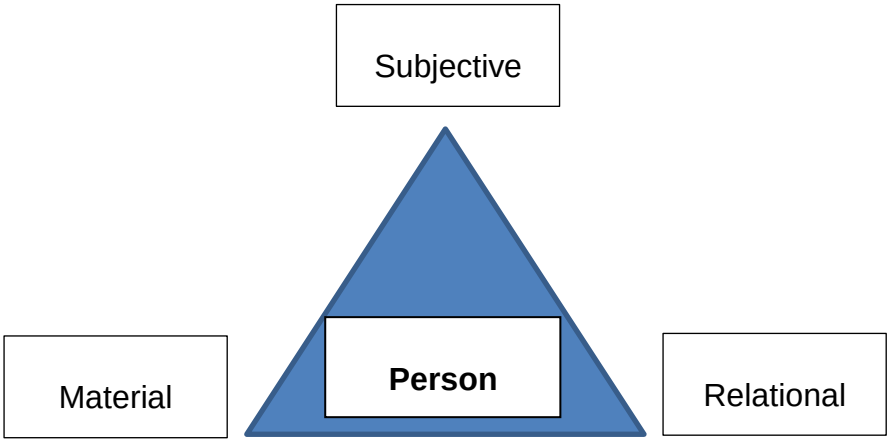

Figure 1: Dimensions of well-being, adapted from van Dick and Haslam (2012, p. 5).

The material concerns practical welfare and standards of living, such as income, education physical health and access to services. The relational concerns personal and social relations, such as love, support political and social inequalities. The subjective is concerned with values, perceptions and experience. The subjective aspect of well-being is predominantly explored within this research as the focus is on perceptions, feelings and experiences of the women who attend a woman’s coaching group.

van Dick and Haslam (2012) mention that individuals who have a strong relationship with their organisation and a sense of belonging, experience higher levels of well-being. Similarly, Barak (2016) explains that creating a sense of inclusion within an organisation can improve well-being, performance and team coherence in the workplace.

The concept of belonging is one of the basic human needs as established in Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Theory. Belonging, according to Maslow (1943), is

a goal human-beings strive towards. The more this need is addressed for an individual, the greater the individual's experience and sense of well-being.

Kenrick, Griskevicius, Neuberg, and Schaller (2010) further add to Maslow's theory by separating elements within the hierarchical structures, for example, "belonging", and elaborating on factors that could increase or decrease a sense of belonging; such as benefits and costs that result in an emotional trigger. A group or individual may experience a greater sense of belonging if they understand the benefits of being in that particular group. This can be used both within the group coaching and organisation contexts, to improve the employee experience by highlighting the benefits associated with being part of the organisation and coaching group - creating shared experience and a sense of belonging.

Stress and burnout affect well-being. Stress affects an employee negatively with respect to their concept of well-being (van Dick & Haslam, 2012). Burnout is regarded as a "chronic misfit between self and the job" which occurs over a long period of time (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). The approach of job-person fit, as mentioned above, acknowledges the self/person interacting with the environment (i.e. the workplace/role etc.) (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 413).

Brown and Grant (2010) emphasise the purpose of group coaching as being growth and change. Maslach et al. (2001, p. 418) mention "educational interventions to enhance coping mechanisms" against burnout, this is where coaching can be utilised for this purpose. Therefore, group coaching is a possible mechanism to address issues pertaining to stress and burnout in the workplace and to focus on growth and change from the current stressful situation. A strengths-based coaching approach within the coaching context could yield new ways of thinking or interacting in the workplace to better enhance a sense of well-being (Linley & Harrington, 2006).

One of the critiques of well-being is that it is a concept perceived by Western culture and refers to "having everything" which is not universal to all cultures, especially where diversity and historical context created far-reaching consequences of segregation (van Dick & Haslam, 2012). According to Diener

and Diener (2009, p. 653) Western culture encourages a sense of individuality and “feeling good” about yourself, whereas collectivist cultures are motivated by their in-group (i.e. family and friends). Therefore, in collectivist cultures, the well-being of family, friends and the community results in a better sense of self-esteem whereas in Western cultures, the sense of self-esteem lies within the individual; well-being being easier to achieve in Western cultures or in Western approaches.

2.5.1 Proposition 3

Well-being in the workplace is perceived as consisting of three aspects; material (income, education, physical health and access to services), relational (belonging and inclusion) and subjective (general positive attitude towards the work context). A sense of well-being is moderated by one’s culture, e.g. being individualist or collectivist.

2.6 Workplace engagement

According to Schaufeli (2013, p. 1), workplace engagement symbolises *“a desirable condition for employees as well as for the organisation they work for”*. This section elaborates on four theoretical frameworks of work engagement as described by Schaufeli (2013, pp. 15-20); 1) the needs-satisfying approach, 2) the job demands-resources model, 3) the affective shift model and 4) the social exchange theory.

The *needs-satisfying approach,* according to Kahn, as cited in Schaufeli (2013, p. 15) is where employees become engaged when three psychological needs are met; 1) meaningfulness (i.e. return on investments), 2) safety (i.e. no fear at work and influenced by social environment) and 3) availability (i.e. personal resources for the role at hand). This approach assumes employees give and do their best in their roles when the above psychological needs are met.

The *job demands-resources model* explains that work engagement arises from motivating resources such as; 1) job resources and 2) personal resources. Job resources elaborated is performance feedback, job control and social support from colleagues (Schaufeli, 2013, p. 16). Personal resources are defined as the

part of the self that is able to navigate the social environment. According to this model, “resources energize the employee” (Schaufeli, 2013, p. 16). Employees, who have sufficient support from their organisation, accompanied with a positive outlook of the environment and role, are more engaged.

Engagement reflects an authentic state that employees experience in the workplace (Schaufeli, 2013). Burnout is the opposite of engagement as it explains the employee experiencing a “misfit between self and the job” (Maslach et al., 2001, p. 413). Negative high demands will result in additional efforts thereby decreasing performance (i.e. fatigue, irritability). Roles or tasks that improve personal growth increase work engagement.

The *affective shift model* sees both negative and positive affect as essential functions for work engagement. High work engagement is a shift from negative to positive affect (Schaufeli, 2013, p. 19). Negative affect is motivating in that the employee aims to exit this affect, and therefore performs what is needed to shift to the positive affect. The negative and positive affects interact back and forth to produce work engagement.

The *theory of social exchange* signifies that workplace relationships grow into trusting, loyal and mutual commitments as long as all involved adhere to mutuality and repayment rules (Schaufeli, 2013, p. 20). For example, if the organisation rewards the employee well, the employee repays the organisation by engaging well in the workplace. If the organisation does not take proper care of the employee, the employee disengages from their roles.

Perceived organisational support and relationship with the line manager are contributing factors to more engaged behaviour in the workplace (Schaufeli, 2013). The women’s coaching group is a means to provide employees with support to manage their workplace environment better.

2.6.1 Proposition 4

Workplace engagement is promoted using four mechanisms; a) satisfying psychological needs (meaningfulness, safety, availability of personal resources), b) availability of resources to do the job (e.g. colleague support, fair performance

appraisal, job control, personal growth), c) affective shift (promoting positive workplace experiences), and d) social exchange (mutuality and reciprocity between individuals and the organisation, fairness).

2.7 Job satisfaction

Early research by Locke (1969, p. 316) describes job satisfaction as a *"pleasurable emotional state resulting from appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's own values"*. This definition illustrates the subjectivity of job satisfaction, and the importance of job satisfaction relating to the individual's value of gratification in a positive way. Job satisfaction is the assessment of the perceived favourability of one's job (Judge et al., 2017). Human resources (e.g. rewards, social support, employee empowerment, training and development) contribute to positive perceived job satisfaction experienced by the employee, which results in the employee becoming more committed, engaged, better performing and positive towards the overall organisation (Mira, Choong, & Thim, 2018). Both Mira et al. (2018) and Locke (1969) acknowledge job appraisal in order for the employee to reach job satisfaction which improves job performance. With increased job performance comes less absenteeism, stress and staff turnover (Chen, Yang, Shiau, & Wang, 2006). Organisations pay attention to customer relationships whereas the relationship between the organisation and employees is just as important (Chen et al., 2006). Often employees in the university sectors are overlooked as the building blocks in the organisation (De Vito et al., 2018). There are opportunities for organisations to study their employees with regards to establishing their desirable working environment, conditions and rewards in order to aid them in achieving job satisfaction and overall organisation success.



Figure 2: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Source Maslow (1965)

According to Mira et al. (2018), the higher up the individual moves on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs pyramid (Figure 2), the closer the individual will be to reaching job satisfaction as long as the organisation meets their basic needs. Furthermore, the organisation should aim to understand all employees' needs and expectations in order to provide an environment that enables employees to operate optimally.

Employees who reach the top tier of the hierarchy, called self-actualisation, give back to others in the workplace in the form of mentoring or other ways of supporting as they see fit (De Vito et al., 2018). According to Maslow, as cited in De Vito et al. (2018), only the employees who are highly motivated are able to fully succeed from one tier to the next to reach a point of job satisfaction.

Herzberg, as cited in De Vito et al. (2018, p. 21), mentions the two factor theory where he explains the *hygiene factors* such as Maslow's bottom tiers relate to "pay, job, security, working conditions", and the *motivating factors* such as recognition, increased responsibility and feelings of achievement relate to the higher tiers. If the motivating factors outweigh the hygiene factors, *job satisfaction* is achieved.

2.7.1 Proposition 5

The factors contributing to job satisfaction include rewards and recognition, social support, job security, good working conditions, empowerment, training and development, fair job appraisal, enabling employees to meet all their needs (described in Maslow's hierarchy) when they are needed.

2.7 Conclusion of Literature Review

Group coaching is a mechanism to influence the perceptions of employee engagement, job satisfaction, well-being and improved social capital networks. Perceptions of well-being, job satisfaction and employee engagement are strongly related to the individual's subjective experiences, and often linked to values. The women's coaching group is a form of a separate space where women feel safe. Men and women experience and perceive things differently hence the need for a separate space for women (Khuzwayo, 2016).

Stelter (2009); Kahn (2011) and Brown and Grant (2010) all emphasise the positive benefits of business coaching and group coaching in creating a sense of belonging, improved self-awareness, growth and change for the coachees. An advantage of attending group coaching is building social capital; where women build increased networks of support can be of value to women (Clarke, 2011).

Well-being has various definitions, however this study assumes an holistic approach acknowledging all the dimensions of well-being; material, relational and subjective to the individual. All these dimensions are at play in order to facilitate well-being for the individual. The perception of well-being is regulated by the type of culture one follows, either collectivist or individualistic. Stress and burnout have a negative effect on well-being, which can be addressed within woman coaching groups - as a possible mechanism to explore coping mechanisms.

The main aims of group coaching are to facilitate new ways of thinking and the betterment of the individual, which impacts the subjective perception of well-being. With reference to Brown and Grant (2010), group coaching is a means to enhance performance and well-being in the workplace.

Workplace engagement entails desirable conditions of a workplace for both the employee and organisation. Job satisfaction is a positive emotional state

experienced in the workplace, based on the individual's values. Job satisfaction leads to employee engagement if the employee is positively appraised through the provision of human resources.

Table 1: Research questions and research propositions

Research Questions 1-5	Propositions 1-5
1. What are the benefits and/or limitations of women's coaching group?	The benefits and/or limitations of a women's coaching group include resolving conflict, enabling dialogue, greater self-awareness, promoting positive networks, workplace engagement, greater sense of well-being, greater sense of job satisfaction, increased social capital and shared experience among women. The limitations include the misconception of coaching being a practice to fix people as opposed to develop them, and the discomfort with the openness of some conversations.
2. What is the understanding of social capital within the coaching context?	The understanding of social capital within the coaching context is that it assists in women's career advancement, leadership effectiveness, team effectiveness, increased cohesiveness, builds trust, facilitates self-awareness, can improve performance, a means of support to women who attend group coaching.
3. How is well-being perceived in the workplace?	Well-being in the workplace is perceived as consisting of three aspects; material (income, education, physical health and access to services), relational (belonging and inclusion) and subjective (general positive attitude towards the work context). A sense of well-being is moderated by one's culture, e.g. being individualist or collectivist.
4. How is workplace engagement promoted?	Workplace engagement is promoted using four mechanisms; a) satisfying psychological needs (meaningfulness, safety, availability of personal resources), b) availability of resources to do the job (e.g. colleague support, fair performance appraisal, job control, personal growth), c) affective shift (promoting positive workplace experiences), and d) social exchange (mutuality and reciprocity between individuals and the organisation, fairness)
5. What factors contribute to job satisfaction?	The factors contributing to job satisfaction include rewards and recognition, social support, job security, good working conditions, empowerment, training and development, fair

Research Questions 1-5	Propositions 1-5
	job appraisal, enabling employees to meet all their needs (described in Maslow's hierarchy) when they are needed.

Chapter three follows, in which the methodology utilised in this study to answer the research questions, is described and explained.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology followed to address the propositions from the literature review. The research approach, data collection methods, sample, procedure, limitations as well as the validity and reliability are discussed within this chapter.

3.1 Research approach

This research is concerned with the perceptions of a woman's coaching group at a local business school. A fitting approach for exploring perceptions and interacting with people is a qualitative approach. According to Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2015), a qualitative approach is appropriate for exploring the meanings that people attach to things. Qualitative researchers set aside their own perspectives and focus on the people they study to gain understanding.

Taylor et al. (2015) describe the qualitative researcher as a craftsperson and further elaborates that this kind of researcher follows guidelines, however, does not follow rules. Therefore, the qualitative approach follows the engagements with the people being studied as well as the environments/settings which further provide insights to enrich the study.

Participants were asked to give a personal account through a critical incident exercise which allows participants to truly reflect and evaluate their experiences within the coaching context (Brookfield, 2000). Critical reflection is a key factor to learning and understanding actions (Kolb, 2005).

3.2 Research design

A research design aids the researcher to focus on the tools, techniques and guidelines required to carry out the research and manage the interviews (Taylor et al., 2015). This study follows an interview based qualitative approach. The main source of information for this study was through engaging with the women who attended the woman coaching group in face-to-face semi-structured interviews, which were open-ended. The main intention was to gain an

understanding of the experiences and perceptions of the women's coaching group they attended. Qualitative methods place the researcher in close proximity to participants, which was required in this particular study (Ponterotto, 2002).

3.3 Data collection methods

The main source of data for this study was through face-to-face open-ended yet semi-structured interviews with three groups of women; a) women who attend the woman's coaching group, b) women who initially attended, but thereafter discontinued and c) women who had never attended but had heard about it. Body language, comments and interactions within the coaching sessions were observed to add richness to this study.

Semi-structured interview questions give respondents the opportunity to build rapport with the researcher while the researcher is guided by their interview guide in line with the literature review and research questions (Irvine, Drew, & Sainsbury, 2013).

Open-ended questions allow respondents to express themselves, while closed questions limit the respondents' input (Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec, & Vehovar, 2003). The advantage of open-ended questions in an interview is that the respondent speaks freely about a particular issue. Leading questions often suggest a response and were not used in this study, whereas the open-ended questions allowed the respondents to respond spontaneously. The disadvantage of open-ended questions is the time-consuming process required to code patterns and themes from the interviews (Reja et al., 2003).

3.4 Population and sample

This section discusses the population and sample of this study.

3.4.1 *Population*

The population for this study was the women who attended a women's coaching group within a local business school as it was their experiences and perceptions about the coaching group which were explored within this study.

3.4.2 *Sample and sampling method*

Purposive sampling, as a form of non-probability sampling, was used in this study. According to Teddlie and Yu (2007), purposive sampling is the selection of a unit, individual or case based on its fitness for the specific purpose of the research study. The women's coaching group in itself is a unique group and a new occurrence at the business school.

There is debate in the field of research as to how many people comprise the ideal sample size required for a study (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). In qualitative research, a common term used is data saturation. Data saturation refers to the practice of bringing new participants into the study until no new information or value is added to the data set (Marshall et al., 2013).

For the purposes of this study, the researcher focused on a sample of ten interviews in relation to the women's coaching group. Five interviews were held with women who regularly attended the women's coaching group, two interviews were held with non-attending women of the women's coaching group to gain their perspectives of the group and three interviews were held with women who initially attended the group but thereafter discontinued.

All racial demographics were represented in the group. Titles and roles have been omitted to protect anonymity as the group was small.

Table 2: Profile of respondents

Description of respondent type	Number sampled
Staff who attended the group regularly	5
Staff who no longer attended the group	3
Staff who had never attended (however heard about it)	2
TOTAL number of respondents	**10**

3.5 The research instrument

Semi-structured interviews were used with respondents in line with the research questions (see Appendix A). Semi-structured interviews involve an exchange of dialogue where the interviewer attempts to obtain information from the interviewee in a conversational style (Longhurst, 2003). This author further explains that semi-structured interviews require deep listening, and this was consciously applied in this study.

3.6 Procedure for data collection

Explanatory letters were drafted to respondents explaining the purpose of the study, confidentiality, consent and the academic requirement of this research for this Master degree.

Once the respondents approved the request to be interviewed, interviews were scheduled based on the agreement of venue with the respondent at their convenience. Any special requests for recording of sessions were approved by the respondents as they needed to feel comfortable through the process of data collection.

Observations of language and body language were recorded within the women's coaching group sessions with permission from attendees.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data of this study. “Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). A focus for this study was on verbal and non-verbal cues and communication to add richness to the data analysis. Thematic analysis looks beyond labelling patterns or themes and is concerned with underlying ideas or meanings in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Common themes that emerged from the respondent’s interview transcripts and observations in sessions were recorded and analysed. Themes are the important data linked to the research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The steps described by Braun and Clark in Table 3 were followed in this study.

Table 3: Phases of Thematic Analysis as extracted from Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87).

Step	Description
1. Familiarising yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	On-going analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme
6. Producing the report	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis

3.8 Limitations of the study

One foreseeable weakness was obtaining respondents' time to do the interviews due to the fast-paced environment of the business school which prolonged the data collection and data analysis process. The findings of this study were not intended to generalise to a wider population but may be useful in similar contexts to raise awareness about the benefits of offering coaching to employees.

3.9 Validity and reliability

For this section, it is more valuable in qualitative research to focus on more appropriate concepts other than validity, reliability, generalisability and objectivity which predominantly apply to quantitative studies (Tracy, 2010). This study utilised the more appropriate concepts of: credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability, as described by Tracy (2010).

3.9.1 *Credibility*

According to Tracy (2010), credibility refers to extracting rich meaning and providing a true account of the social, cultural, communal or individual reality. This author also refers to credibility as the "trustworthiness of the research findings" (Tracy, 2010, p. 842). This was done as the intention of the researcher was to put aside any assumptions and to fully engage and record all phenomena of this study. The aim was to depict the interviewees' true experiences of the coaching group with sincerity as far as possible. Golafshani (2003) explains that the effort of the researcher in truly engaging in the research also affects credibility. Golafshani (2003) sees the researcher as an instrument used in research to add to the concept of trustworthiness.

3.9.2 *Transferability*

Transferability refers to the ability of the research findings to be applied to other similar groups (Morse, 2015). The aim of this research is to provide real insights based on the academic literature and linked to the research and interview

questions of women's perspectives of woman group coaching. The qualitative approach and data collection and analysis is in line with the objective and purpose of the study.

3.9.3 *Confirmability*

Confirmability is the use of triangulation and a review trail, according to Morse (2015). This study included in-depth interviews and observations to illustrate links and triangulation in order to sufficiently confirm findings.

3.9.4 *Dependability*

Dependability is equivalent to the concept of reliability used in quantitative research. A tool that can be used to increase the dependability in research is called an "inquiry audit". This tool is used to check that the process and product of the research are well aligned (Golafshani, 2003, p. 601). The researcher constantly reviewed and recorded the processes followed to make sure of alignment to the research approach and findings of this study.

3.10 Demographic profile of respondents

There was no need to record age, race, culture or religion, or gender, as the sample was made up of only female employees connected to the women's coaching group. The respondents were culturally diverse and representative of the democracy of South Africa; no further specification is given because giving specifics for the small group would detrimentally affect confidentiality.

It is vital that anonymity and confidentiality is respected at all times as the group was small and intimate, and the nature of discussions was extremely sensitive – a reflection of the trust that had been established amongst the participants. Disclosing further information, for example, mapping out details linking participant codes to specific verbatim quotes, would certainly jeopardise this trust and facilitate participant identification by other members of the group or even the wider institution.

3.11 Ethics

Prior to collecting data and scheduling interviews, ethics clearance was obtained from the University. Furthermore, only upon approval of the title of the research by the University of the Witwatersrand was further steps followed to collect data or engage in interviews with the participants. All interviews were done discreetly in order for the participants to feel comfortable as well as to adhere to the anonymity and confidentiality, as the participants are also employees of the school.

All information pertaining to interview responses including recordings were saved in a password protected document to ensure security of this sensitive data. Research data and interview responses were never worked on in public spaces to prevent leaking sensitive information and breaching the contract between researcher and participant pertaining to confidentiality and anonymity.

Specific participant profiles or demographics, as promised to the participants, were never mapped out in this research paper as many of the participants revealed highly sensitive information about the institution and their personal experiences which could link back to the participants and breach the agreement contract to pursue this research.

At no point was any discussion about this research, the outcomes, or participants held outside the context of researcher and supervisor.

The following chapter, chapter four, presents the findings and discussions from the themes and data that emerged from the participant interviews. Furthermore, links between the common themes and literature review in chapter two are highlighted.

CHAPTER 4. PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The findings of this qualitative research are presented by referring to the themes that emerged through the interviews and analysis of transcripts with ten participants. The composition of participants comprised five participants who regularly attended the women's coaching group, three participants who initially attended the group thereafter discontinued, and two participants who had not attended at all, but had heard about the group and received the invitations to attend.

The coding and identification of themes was done by analysing the interview transcripts and coding using gerunds (Carmichael & Cunningham, 2017). The grouping of similar concepts together in a systematic way in order to label the common themes, in conjunction with the thematic analysis stages explained by Braun and Clarke (2006), was used to reach the final themes discussed in this chapter.

The findings are listed and discussed, according to the four research question areas of this study, listed below for ease of reference:

1. What are the benefits and/or limitations of women's group coaching?
2. What is the understanding of social capital within the coaching context?
3. How is well-being perceived in the workplace?
4. How is workplace engagement promoted?
5. What factors contribute to job satisfaction?

Common themes can be found in Appendix D. These themes are discussed under the appropriate headings relating to the research questions of this study.

4.2 THE BENEFITS AND/OR LIMITATIONS OF A WOMEN'S COACHING GROUP

4.2.1 Coaching as a Safe Reflective Space

The benefits of coaching, as explained by participants, are linked to elements participants felt they lacked within their organisation, which they found to be experienced in the coaching group, for example, a space to "*reflect"*, "*be authentic"*, free from "*intimidation"*. Therefore, the coaching space created a space to acknowledge unmet needs experienced in the work context.

The participants were not able to speak freely within their work context as the environment is highly pressurised and does not promote dialogue. According to Clarke (2011), coaching is a mechanism to assist women to build their social capital, which can also buffer the employee from the unpleasant work settings.

"We work in a cloud as individuals." This participant felt the organisation operates on a divide and rule premise, where employees work on their own and not as a team towards a bigger purpose for the organisation or individual. Therefore, employees do not have insight to the vision or strategy of the organisation and just work according to their daily outputs.

One of the main purposes of coaching is to open up dialogue where the coach plays a facilitative role (Stelter, 2009). This purpose in itself was an advantage to the participants who attended coaching as they were encouraged to discuss both private and professional issues they had experienced.

Within the coaching group, *"Regardless of title and status, everyone showed up as being on the same level"* explained one participant. The coaching group generated a safe space where no professional titles or hierarchical structures were considered, it was based purely on each individual being present and ready to engage. The literature review illustrates this, where Barak (2016) emphasises the categories that withhold employees from being part of their organisation. Status is one of these where employees feel more important based on the perception that bigger titles mean more value from the organisation for the

employee. Therefore, participants particularly in lower job titles (such as support roles) felt the coaching group to be most beneficial in alleviating the importance of employee linked to title thereby promoting a sense of equality within the group, regardless of title within the business school environment.

The coaching space was shown by participants to be one of allowing for pause and reflection in a highly pressurised environment. According to Stelter (2009), coaching provides a safe reflective space in the fast-paced world supporting the notion experienced by participants. The contradictory notion experienced by participants who did not attend the coaching group, felt that coaching is a mechanism used "to fix" women and therefore undermining women. Robinson (2008, p. 502) highlights this critique by saying that if the coaching is focused on "fixing" women it is not beneficial to the group; it should be a positive space to tackle issues.

The participants felt that the organisation does not allow for their freedom of expression, hence they capitalised on the coaching space to express their opinions and emotions freely, even when vulnerable. They explained that they appreciated that a *"space existed for them away from work just to talk freely"*. Illustrating a high emotional intelligence level and regulating one's emotion is a key element in displaying successful leadership, as emphasised by Goleman (2004), therefore allowing for expression of feelings is a positive exercise organisations should promote.

Furthermore, Aas and Vavik (2015) explain that creating a community of practice in the workplace, such as a women's coaching group, improves the individual's sense of self and increases social satisfaction. Barak (2016) sees initiatives like the women's coaching group as a means for an organisation to promote inclusion in order for employees to feel content about their organisation.

4.2.2 Coach-Coachee Relationship

Participants felt that the group diversity was beneficial to members who attended as the coach was able to navigate around difficult conversations and hold the space.

Wasylyshyn (2003) explains three characteristics for a successful coaching relationship:

1. The ability to form a strong connection with the executive;

2. Professionalism; and

3. The use of a clear and sound methodology.

The participants felt that the coach displayed these characteristics (however limited regarding point three), even when faced with extreme vulnerability in the group. The coach was able to appreciate the arguments and add value by summarising, reflecting and allowing others to share alternative or similar viewpoints making the discussions richer, following a fluid method depending on the requirements within the group. The coach allowed the group to steer the discussions, and redirected conversations if necessary when they digressed; the methods may have been followed discreetly; however, the participants felt they were leading the conversations and that they had the answers as opposed to being flooded with a sound methodological approach on the part of the coach to the group.

Kilburg (1996) explains that a coach must show behaviour that is empathetic, courteous, tactful and respectful. Through these behaviours modelled by the coach in the women's coaching groups, the participants felt that there was a shared experience and the feeling of being "alone" was no longer an issue; as a sense of "togetherness" emerged by hearing one another's stories. The coach encouraged and provided real life practices for members to try out in their departments, for example, practices relating to showing gratitude, meditation and lists of priorities, etc. Participants explained that these practices added value in relation to their well-being in the workplace and deepened their self-reflection. The guidance and practices introduced by the coach led to positive self-perceptions as one participant explained the way she felt post sessions, *"wanting to be and do better".*

All but one participant felt that there was a misalignment between herself and the coach due to racial prejudice from past experiences that emerged from the

participant's perspective which she acknowledged and discussed during the interview.

4.2.3 Perceptions of Coaching

Some of the participants of this study who did not attend or discontinued attending the women's coaching group explained that they perceived coaching as a mechanism for "fixing people" which did not appeal to them. These participants were also not exposed to coaching or had experienced coaching before, therefore had limited knowledge of what coaching entails.

"I did not attend the sessions as I did not want to appear weak to my colleagues." This extract from a participant illustrates the misconceptions about coaching and the stigma often attached to seeking improvement (Robinson, 2008).

These participants explained that coaching is also seen as a type of counselling, and many people may be reluctant to attend due to these "stereotypes"; illustrating weakness and vulnerability in the workplace.

"The coaching space must be solution focused and not a space to just vent". This participant said her perception of coaching was that her colleagues would gather to complain about work without finding solutions. However, her experience was different when she attended. She left the session with actual solutions to possible issues she was grappling with as an employee juggling motherhood and family simultaneously.

Linley and Harrington (2006) and Robinson (2008) explain that coaching must focus on strengths not shortfalls and be a positive space in order for it to be beneficial and productive for those who attend. Strengths and highlights must be applauded within the group to encourage more positive behaviour and sharing of positive experiences.

The experience of the participants who attended the women's coaching group were generally positive which allowed for dialogue, productive arguments, real life solutions and a reflective space to pause and evaluate how to be and work smarter. How did the one negative person affect this dynamic?

“The coaching space made me feel like I am not alone. I experienced a sense of togetherness”. One participant said she often attended the sessions to feel part of the organisation as she did not feel that while performing her daily tasks. Employee empowerment and social support are factors that promote employee engagement, therefore, according to the experience by this participant, the group coaching experience enhanced the participants’ perception of workplace engagement (Schaufeli, 2013).

4.3 Social Capital and Support in the Workplace

According to Coleman (1990), social capital involves social interaction where value is created. Dinda (2018, p. 277), refers to social capital as a bundle of “active connections” built around trust, mutual understanding and shared values, which is evident in the interview extracts below.

“A sense of I’m not alone”.

“What I go through is not unique.”

“A sense of shared experiences within the group.”

“Sense of togetherness”.

All the verbatim quotes above from participants support feelings of shared experience, togetherness and a sense of fellowship among the participants who attended the coaching group, therefore improved social capital among the attendees.

Leana and Van Buren (1999) discuss three ways in which social capital can be built and maintained in organisations:

(1) Stability in Employment Relationships - organisations must build structures to enhance the relationships between employees and between employees and the organisation.

(2) Organisational reciprocity norms – to promote the organisational norms through socialisation (such as workshops). Organisations sometimes incentivise employees who promote the goals, norms, vision of the organisation.

(3) Bureaucracy and specified roles - more emphasis must be placed on the required outcomes from roles rather than making issues about individual employees - the goal and strategy of the organisation must be taught to employees and clearly articulated.

Another way to enhance relationships between organisation and employee is to invest in employees to promote a learning culture (Leana & Van Buren, 1999). Participants felt they connected more to the organisation when it invested in their growth and development.

Participants felt they connected with women from other departments they had never met before. A positive consequence from the coaching group were the networks built between previously unfamiliar staff; they supported one another even outside of the coaching group, in some cases calling one another “friends”.

The women’s coaching group is a good example of building employment relationships, pertaining to point number one (stability in employment relationships), as the participants who attended built sound relationships and began to look forward to coming to work and interacting thereby creating a positive experience within the organisation.

Regarding point number two above (organisational reciprocity norms), the organisation does not have a performance driven system where monetary incentives are encouraged. However, there are other possible ways to incentivise employees. An example raised by a participant was that, *“Our line manager gives us a half day off a month*”, to compensate for the highly pressurised environment. The participant emphasised great appreciation for this time-off incentive.

Regarding point number three (bureaucracy); within this study, participants often did not understand the bigger strategy and where they fit into it. *“We don’t know where we are heading as a department.”* This extract highlights the uncertainty within the organisation as experienced by the participant.

Hence, when addressed by management there were often misinterpretations of what was actually required and even the manner is misinterpreted as there is uncertainty.

All participants in this study have emphasised the increased social capital from the coaching group in creating a positive experience at work. Some of their quotes below highlight the impact of social capital as a result of the coaching group.

"I feel re-energised on days where I often feel depleted".

"To call on experts on work matters from various departments when needed".

"To pause more often to speak to one another post group coaching sessions".

Clarke (2011) explains social capital in a positive light, where women build a support system in order to increase their networks to access when faced with challenges or triumphs. According to van Dick and Haslam (2012), the groups formed in organisations are greatly beneficial if they enhance greater awareness and sense of self. Social capital builds a resource base for individuals which yield benefits (Dinda, 2018).

The benefits that emerged from this study under social capital relate to increased support, access to information within the organisation, a sense of belonging and shared experiences.

4.3.1 Patriarchy in the workplace

Eight out of ten participants felt that because the majority of senior management were male, they lacked emotional decision-making. *"We are trained to be like a man"*, this participant explained that the expression of emotions was not encouraged in the workplace because male headed management display limited sensitivity in their decision making.

"I am equal to a man if not more competent". This participant felt she was equipped both by her practical and academic experience to perform in similar roles to the male leadership at the organisation and explained that the patriarchal environment does not promote females to senior positions. This links with the discussion around the gender gap explored within the research problem in chapter one, and the reference to perceived social constructs, prejudice and stereotypes within the literature review in chapter two.

According to Shackleton et al. (2006, higher education institutions follow a patriarchal structure although the perception is that such institutions should promote new ways of thinking and challenge traditional views. Refer to Appendix C to illustrate the lack of female seniority within the University sector.

The historical view of women being the nurturer and primary care giver seems to still proceed within the context of this study (Clarke, 2011). There is a great benefit for organisations to invest in inclusion programmes, such as coaching and empowerment programmes, especially for women who are marginalised, in order to improve culture, well-being and productivity (Barak, 2016).

4.3.2 Work environment and Leadership style

A clear understanding from all participants is that the work environment is highly pressurised and fragmented, and the leadership lacks emotional intelligence.

"The institution is in need of a humanised environment." This expression was raised by a participant while discussing the organisational culture of the institution.

The entire participant base felt that the work environment could be improved by introducing a performance management tool. The following quotes and discussion in this paragraph illustrate the work environment as experienced by participants. One participant asked, *"Why work hard when we are painted with the same brush as the non-performers".* Another participant explained that, *"It is time the institution holds people accountable".* These quotes further illustrate a sense of frustration by those who are perceived to be performing as opposed to non-performing employees.

Many participants felt that senior management needed emotional intelligence training, as there is an experienced disconnect between management, employees and the wider organisation.

"The institution desperately needs conscious leaders". This quote illustrates the misalignment between employee and employer.

Goleman (2004) explains that in order for successful leadership, managers and leaders need to be well connected to their people and regulate their own emotions and reactions.

One participant explained that, *"Management lacks the ability to manage complex diverse groups, hence the tensions within the work environment".*

Another participant explained that, *"Management needs to send constant messages to staff to show that they are valued by the institution and leadership.*

Leaders need to establish what is required to build an improved culture".

Through discussions with all participants, the topic of leadership emerged as this impacted on the work environment and employee experience on a daily basis. All of the participants described a type of mindful or servant leadership style required at the institution in order to improve the work environment, where the holistic person/employee is taken into consideration.

On the point of a highly pressurised environment, one participant explained, *"I feel depleted daily. I do not know where I get the energy from for the next day".* This misalignment of the work and the employee well-being alludes to stress and possible burnout (Schaufeli, Taris, & Van Rhenen, 2008).

Another participant explained, *"I sacrifice my family, my interests and myself as I have no time for anything else but work. I forget that I have a life other than work".* This illustrates a clear imbalance between work and life outside of work.

Another participant said that the institution's management fail to see that, *"We bring our full selves to work, and there are many more parts to us. They are just not interested to know about the other parts, only work!"* The participant explained that the organisation requires more of a conscious type of leadership.

Robinson, Perryman, and Hayday (2004) define employee engagement as a positive attitude held by the employee towards the organisation and its values. According to Crabb (2011), the process of encouraging employee engagement has a dual function. The organisation must value the employee and foster engagement in order for the employee to work with colleagues for the benefit of

the organisation. Therefore, in this study the institution is required to prioritise employee engagement mechanisms to improve the positive attitude by the employees towards the institution.

Many organisations are investing in improving the quality of their leaders in order to improve the success of the organisation (Burke, 2017). According to Burke (2017), 60-75% of employees report the worst part of their jobs to be their managers/supervisors.

4.4 WELL-BEING PERCEIVED IN THE WORKPLACE

4.4.1 Well-being and the Holistic Person

The coaching group improved the perception of well-being for participants in that they experienced a sense of belonging within the group which often lasted even after the sessions they attended, supported in the literature by Clarke (2011); De Vito et al. (2018); Maslow (1965).

"The group established a sense of "we" and a feeling of solidarity", explained a participant. Many participants explained the feeling of shared experiences and a sense of "we" during interviews in talking about the group coaching. These explanations lean towards a collectivist approach of well-being, in the context of this study, as members relate to their sense of well-being in relation to the well-being of their peers (Diener & Diener, 2009).

"The organisation should inculcate a culture of well-being which it currently lacks."

"The institution needs to acknowledge that we bring our full selves to work."

"Having a team running on empty is not productive".

The above verbatim quotes are all related to cultural deficits experienced within their organisation.

The above extracts from diverse participants imply that a culture of well-being and the view of the employee in his/her totality are neglected within this organisation. Negative high demands can result in burnout and non-performance,

as the employee may experience a misfit with their organisation (Maslach et al., 2001). The group coaching is a means to impact on the perception of employee well-being as it is a type of intervention to possibly experiment with coping mechanisms for the workplace (Brown & Grant, 2010).

The above extracts further allude to employees experiencing disconnect with their organisation which can lead to negative perceptions of their well-being within the work context (van Dick & Haslam, 2012).

An organisation that is unable to appreciate the authenticity of employees risks the employee becoming disengaged, which impacts employee performance and organisation productivity (Schaufeli, 2013). Establishing a sense of inclusion between all employees and the organisation can improve well-being, performance and team approach in the workplace (Barak, 2016).

Furthermore, in support of the above literature, a participant boldly explained, *"Being real in the workplace allows others to be real".* This illustrates a deep sense of wanting to reciprocate authenticity in the workplace. The mutuality described here leans towards the theory of social exchange which views loyalty, trust and mutual commitments as factors that promote the perception of engagement in the workplace. Engagement reflects an authentic state that employees experience.

4.4.2 Experiences of Racial or Gender bias or discrimination

One participant voiced that she witnessed inappropriate sexual remarks towards junior colleagues by a male employee in a senior position within this institution, which "disgusted" her. This illustrates elements of bullying and the lack of support relating to concepts of the glass ceiling and glass cliff mentioned within the literature review of this research (Berry & Franks, 2010; Sabharwal, 2015). She also explained that this was a common occurrence that she was exposed to higher up the hierarchical structure within the institution. Such experiences created a sense of fear and discomfort for her.

An assumption by another participant was that women of the same race should support one another even more than other races. She was let down by her own

race by a peer within the work context and explained: *“I was “othered” by my very own”*, while emphasising a deep sense of disappointment and ostracism.

Participants in general explained a deep sense of subtle racial experiences within the work context and discussed this profusely, as quoted below:

“African people are paid less than White people in the same positions”.

This perception alludes to racial inequalities based on an organisational rewards system. The 1997 White Paper 3 aimed to redress the historical racial and gender issues specifically within higher education (Shackleton et al., 2006). Currently, higher education still requires transformation, based on the remarks above.

“Foreigners are exploited, even when highly educated, and paid much less than locals within the academic institution”. We should all be treated as though we are at the foot of the cross”.

The above quote makes reference to a religious connotation to emphasise the need for equality in the workplace. Employees within an organisation thrive in environments that promote inclusion and allow the diversity to be celebrated (Barak, 2016).

One participant explained that White people within the institution fear raising issues with African people due their *“strong links with Unions and misunderstandings purely based on race and not the issue raised”,* even if they wish to raise a valid work issue.

Another participant raised the issue of all senior leaders at the institution being males. *“How can we trust that our leadership make the right decisions for our best interests when there is no diversity, all male perspectives”?*

There are government policies in place regulating democracy within higher education; however, a gap between policy and practice is the experience. According to Shackleton et al. (2006), unless there is a sanction and reward system in place, change is slow within higher education institutions. If employees experience a lack in loyalty or trust from the organisation with regards to the

theory of social exchange, they disengage from their jobs and the organisation (Schaufeli, 2013).

4.5 WORKPLACE ENGAGEMENT

All of the participants felt a strong sense of disengagement with their work and the organisation. Many are exploring job opportunities outside of the organisation as they experience a misfit.

"Everything is not about work. We bring our social selves to work too". This clearly illustrates the feeling of disregard from the organisation experienced by the participant. From the assumption of the needs-satisfying approach, there are needs unmet within the organisation, therefore the employee is not engaged in her workplace. This statement also implies a lack of support.

Organisational support is seen as a contributing factor to more engaged behaviour in the workplace (Schaufeli, 2013). Increased social interaction in the workplace leads to increased performance (Subramony et al., 2018). Therefore, there is a need for organisations to understand what makes employees more engaged in the workplace.

Employees thrive in organisations that allow them to be their authentic selves; therefore, when participants explain that they experience a misfit, this implies that the organisation is restricting parts of their self-identity from expression (Schaufeli, 2013). This potentially gives rise to the feeling of stress and burnout in the workplace (Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli, 2013). This is evident when a participant explained that she feels *"completely depleted each day with not much more to give the next day"*.

With regards to the participant who explained she felt completely depleted, there are clear unmet resources according to the job demands-resources model. The job demands-resources model explains that "resources energize the employee" (Schaufeli, 2013, p. 16). Therefore, the participant lacks support from the organisation in the form of performance feedback, job control or support, which forms part of the job resources part of the job demands-resources model. The

participant could have difficulty navigating her social environment at work that gives rise to a negative perception of the work environment according to the personal resources part of the job demands-resources model (Schaufeli, 2013).

4.6 FACTORS OF JOB SATISFACTION

A participant explained that she has continued working at the institution despite the challenges she experienced, because the institution encourages staff development which was a huge *"incentive"* for her to take advantage of. This explanation draws on the subjectivity of the concept of job satisfaction in relation to growth and development being part of the participant's value system (Judge et al., 2017).

The mention of *incentive* draws on two views according to the literature under job satisfaction. The first view, with regards to the partial definition of job satisfaction by Locke (1969), "facilitating the achievement of one's own values"; if staff development and personal progression forms part of one's values, the incentive of studying further can be appealing to the employee which brings about job satisfaction in the workplace.

The second view regards the upper tiers of Maslow's Hierarchy which alludes to feelings of achievement which are motivating for the employee. If the motivating factors (recognition, achievement, etc.) outweigh the hygiene factors (job security, working conditions, etc.) job satisfaction can be achieved by the employee (De Vito et al., 2018). Staff development is a human resource practice, so therefore increased provision of caring human resource practices can increase job satisfaction in the workplace (Mira et al., 2018).

One participant explained that a positive work environment could be enhanced by the women's coaching group, in that women leave these sessions *"feeling more empowered with solutions to challenges faced in the workplace"*. This explanation shows a positive assessment of one's job which contributes to positive perceived job satisfaction in the form of increased human resources (i.e. employee empowerment and social capital) (Mira et al., 2018).

In support of the literature by Mira et al. (2018) and Judge et al. (2017), one participant found that the *"lack of a career path and recognition by the organisation"* left her with no option but to explore jobs outside of the organisation. The employee therefore does not engage fully in the workplace because she feels she is not invested in by the organisation, which is well explained by the theory of social exchange in relation to employee engagement. The lack of job appraisal and a clear career path can lead to a negative perception of job satisfaction (Locke, 1969; Mira et al., 2018; Schaufeli, 2013). This can lead to increased absenteeism, stress and staff turnover, as is evident with this particular participant (De Vito et al., 2018).

4.7 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the perception of coaching, particularly by participants with limited exposure to coaching, is ambiguous and misinformed. The perception of coaching by participants who attended coaching was altered upon experiencing group coaching first-hand. The first impression was that coaching is a possible mechanism to vent, however the experience revealed group coaching to be solution focused, a space to reflect and a place where a sense of solidarity is experienced by women who attended.

The group coaching in this study enhanced the perceived social capital for participants which influenced their perception of their workplace engagement and job satisfaction in a positive way. Post coaching session's participants felt re-energised and better equipped to perform their tasks within the broader organisation.

The perception of well-being is subjective. Within this study, factors contributing to the perception of well-being were a sense of belonging, the relationship between the individual and the organisation, and the acknowledgment of the individual as a multifaceted being.

Staff growth and development, promoting social capital and inclusion in the workplace are important human resource factors which enhance the perception

of well-being, job satisfaction and promote employee engagement in the workplace.

Within in this study, participants expressed a great need within a patriarchal organisation to acknowledge the authenticity of individuals and the need to encourage the expression of emotion in the workplace.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

5.1 Conclusion Summary

This chapter discusses the conclusions in sequence of the following research questions of this study listed below from number one to five:

1. What are the benefits and/or limitations of women's coaching group?
2. What is the understanding of social capital within the coaching context?
3. How is well-being perceived in the workplace?
4. How is workplace engagement promoted?
5. What factors contribute to job satisfaction?

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceived effect of group coaching on well-being, social capital, workplace engagement and job satisfaction. The benefits and limitations experienced by women who attended a coaching group were also explored.

The key findings that emerged related to the positive effects of the coaching group on enhancing a sense of well-being, increased social capital and perceived experience within the workplace in relation to a positive perception of employee engagement and job satisfaction. The misconceptions about coaching were also explored, illustrating a need to educate people and organisations about the functions of coaching as some participants assumed that coaching was for weak employees.

Another key finding related to the desire of women to build networks within the workplace which the coaching group managed to facilitate. Linked to social capital, employee engagement and job satisfaction, perceptions among employees were increased with an increase in social networks built as a result of the coaching group. Further factors that increase perceptions of employee engagement and job satisfaction were linked to increased opportunities for employees to study further in the organisation and positive relationships with the organisation where recognition is given for good performance. One key finding of

employee engagement was linked to workplace engagement when their basic need of feeling a sense of belonging and authenticity was reciprocated within the organisation.

The second half of this chapter discusses recommendations for future research.

5.2 Conclusion for Research Question 1

The outcomes of this study discuss both benefits and limitations of group coaching. From the literature and participants' experiences of the coaching group, similarities are seen in that participants viewed the coaching space as reflective which brought about increased self-awareness. The coaching space allowed for increased dialogue and the building of relationships among female employees while employees were able to share their experiences and find common ground.

The coaching space in this study seemed to have filled the unmet needs of the participants by the organisation. Participants did not feel a sense of equality, fairness, freedom of expression in the workplace and experienced patriarchy and tight hierarchical structures of the organisations, all of which were the opposite from their accounts of the coaching group.

The coaching space provided participants with solutions to common challenges and a sense of belonging to the organisation through the networks built within the group.

5.3 Conclusion for Research Question 2

After engaging with the literature review and the participants' experience of social capital, the fittest definition to refer to, for this study, is the one by Subramony et al. (2018, p. 27); social capital "is the set of resources rooted in relationships". Many participants as per the discussion chapter, explained that they developed friendships and networks they were able to consult even on matters outside of work. Therefore, social capital created a sense of support for the women who attended and participated in the coaching group.

Participants experienced the organisation and leadership as being fragmented and largely patriarchal, as discussed in the previous chapter. Due to the lack of support, team cohesion and fair decision-making experienced from within the organisation, social capital built among the participants created an increased sense of control in their roles at work and an extended network of support that the organisation did not prioritise for the employees. Therefore, an increase in social capital allowed for participants to better engage within their roles despite the leadership and organisational challenges experienced.

5.4 Conclusion for Research Question 3

Well-being is perceived subjectively and collectively within the context of this study. Participants want to be acknowledged as holistic beings by their organisation, not just employees within the work context. The coaching group provided this holistic acknowledgment of individuals who attended, as it allowed for equal dialogue despite status, titles or hierarchical structures.

Participants expressed their sense of well-being in relation to others, such as coaching group members or colleagues. Well-being was linked to participants being able to be and feel authentic within the coaching group as they experienced a lack of authenticity by the organisation. The coaching space re-energised participants to better perform their workplace roles after the coaching sessions.

5.5 Conclusion for Research Question 4

Perceived organisation support and social interaction are factors of workplace engagement. Positive interactions and perceptions of the work environment allow the participant to better engage in their job. The positive, solution-focused coaching group allowed participants to feel positive about their outlook within the organisation. The ability to share experiences within the coaching group allowed participants to find common ground and ways of working through the organisation challenges in order to proceed with their workplace roles.

The lack of organisation support in the form of resources and acknowledgment impacted participants' negatively in that they disengaged with the organisation and their roles at times.

5.6 Conclusion for Research Question 5

Human resource, perceptions of the favourability of one's job and job appraisal are influencers of job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is subjective, based on the individual's values which impact job satisfaction positively if these values are met.

From this study, the job satisfaction human resource factors raised, related to staff development and progression as well as positive social interaction in the workplace. The perception of promoting growth and development in the workplace as well as career advancement paths are factors that impacted job satisfaction in a positive way. In an instance where the organisation did not display a clear career path for an employee, she disengaged with the organisation and decided to apply for jobs outside of the organisation.

Empowerment programmes, such as the women's coaching group, elicited a positive mood by those who attended, which increased the experience of job satisfaction in the workplace. The main reason, as explained by participants, was the fact that members of the group felt a sense of belonging and shared experiences.

5.7 Recommendations for Future Research

This study was based on a qualitative research methodology by thematic analysis. The interviews were conducted face-to-face in a conversational style. The sample was diverse women who attended a women's coaching group in the business school context, and those who did not attend in order to explore and compare the various perceptions and experiences.

Many of the participants voiced that they enjoyed the interview style conducted by the researcher, as it was conducted following humanistic coaching practices; such as displaying unconditional positive regard, empathy and being non-judgemental while moving along the interview guideline.

The findings of this study indicate a greater need for organisations to invest in their employees, by firstly investigating their needs individually and collectively in order to customise workplace interventions. The coaching group is one mechanism that worked well among the women of this study; however, there are many more mechanisms to explore that may bring about inclusivity in the workplace which can improve job satisfaction, workplace engagement and productivity of the organisation.

Future research could possibly explore leadership inventions that incorporate emotional intelligence training for senior management within the business school or university context, to see what kind of leadership business schools thrive in. There is a clear misalignment between the types of leadership displayed in this study versus the expectations of leadership expressed by employees. The leadership displayed in this study is more autocratic than mindful leadership.

Group coaching experience could possibly be enhanced through collaboration with the organisation and employees on their needs in order to improve techniques, assessments and interaction in the coaching sessions. There is room to research a model of coaching where integration between business school leadership and employees collaborate to give rise to an improved organisation culture.

This research explored inclusion benefits for the organisation and well-being initiatives in the form of social capital, group coaching and organisation support. There is an opportunity for further researchers to specifically explore inclusion and well-being practices fit for the business school context.

Future research could possibly explore the effect of job appraisal on job satisfaction experienced by the employee in the business school context. A possible coaching process in between, prior to, and after interventions, can establish the change in ideas, dialogue and thinking as a result of job appraisal exercises implemented in the workplace.

Business schools should invest in research to find mechanisms that enhance organisational support for employees. It is important, as can be seen by this

study, to understand what makes an employee work optimally for the betterment of the employee and the overall organisation.

APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

The Graduate School of Business Administration
2 St David's Place, Parktown,
Johannesburg, 2193,
South Africa
PO Box 98, WITS, 2050
Website: www.wbs.ac.za

Dear Respondent

Master of Management – Business Executive Coaching Consent Form

Dear Respondent

I am currently in my research year of my Master in Management of Business Executive Coaching.

Topic

I am conducting research on the perceptions of a women's group coaching within the business school. I will require an hour and a half of your time to interview you in a conversation face-to-face style.

I require your consent to participate in this study.

Confidentiality and Anonymity

My main aim is to keep your feedback and participation anonymous and confidential. I will save your interview records in a password encrypted folder that only I can access. Your participation is voluntary.

Risks

I do not foresee any risk by you participating in this research. Please feel free to let me know if at any stage you experience any discomfort by being part of this study.

Benefits

You will be part of this study that aims to gain a deeper understanding of women group coaching in the workplace, and the benefits or limitations thereof.

I _____ hereby understand the objectives, risks and benefits of participating in this study.

I feel comfortable to give my consent to participate in interviews to assist this study.

Signature of respondent _____ Date: _____

Signature of researcher _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - Women who attended the coaching group

1. What roles to you play within your workplace environment?
2. What is your experience of being at work? Please elaborate.
3. What is your perspective about women requiring a separate space to discuss their issues?
4. What is your experience and understanding of group coaching?
5. How would you define a positive work environment? Please explain.
6. What specific factors contribute to a positive work environment for you?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - Women who no longer attended the coaching

1. What was your expectation of the women's coaching group?
2. What made you attend the group?
3. Describe your experience within the women's coaching group?
4. Is there a reason you stopped attending the group? Elaborate.
5. What benefits did you gain from the group, if any?
6. What practices can improve your work environment?
7. What additional comments would you like to add?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - women who have never attended the coaching group

1. What is your understanding of group coaching in the workplace?
2. Have you ever experienced coaching in your private capacity or at work? Please explain.
3. Is there a reason you did not attend the women's coaching group offered within your organisation? Please elaborate.
4. Do you have any suggestions on things that can promote a sense of well-being for you in the workplace?
5. What recommendations do you have about the women's coaching group?
6. Is there anything you would like to add?

APPENDIX C - Illustration of Gender Representation in Higher Education



Figure 3: Govender, P. Sunday Times. 11 Nov 2018.

This depiction is used to illustrate the gender representation at senior levels of the university structures in South Africa.

APPENDIX D -Common Themes

Themes	Attended	Stopped attending	Never attended
Coaching as a reflective space	✓		
Support & Social Capital	✓	✓	
Perceptions of coaching		✓	✓
Coach-coachee relationship	✓		
Separate space for women	✓		✓
Well-being & the Holistic person	✓	✓	✓
Racial and sexual experiences	✓		
Patriarchy	✓	✓	
Work environment	✓	✓	

Table 4: Common Themes

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