

Experiences of positive psychology coaching for women's success in workplace

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ABSTRACT

Positive Psychology's main objectives is the study of positive emotion, engagement and meaning (Seligman, 2007). This is to measure, classify and build these three aspects of life (Seligman, 2000). It is in this study that coaching, as a discipline, was merged with positive psychology. The purpose of the study was to investigate the traits of positive psychology that can be coached to drive women to success in the workplace. This, with the aim of understanding how coaches can use positive psychology for more positive results in their coaching practices when coaching women in leadership positions, in the South African workforce. The qualitative methods were employed in this study, where 14 participants (coaches and coachees) were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide.

The findings of the study revealed that positive psychology coaching assists the coachees in their ability to develop positive thinking; it helps to improve confidence and resilience, enhances self-awareness and interpersonal skills, enhances learning and knowledge and also enhances decision making skills. Despite this, there were challenges that were highlighted during the use of positive psychology coaching. There were three core challenges that were revealed by the findings, which were the personal coachee challenges, environmental challenges, as well as the PPC tools and methodology challenges. The findings show there were overall benefits which entailed higher level of self-awareness and control where the coachees were able to tap into their strengths, increased their energy, eliminated negative thoughts and felt empowered in so far as being able to achieve all their desires.

It is evident that positive psychology coaching is a vital tool for women in leadership as it enhances their ability to go for what they want and believe in themselves, thereby reaching their optimum psychological aspects resulting in success in the workplace.

Key word: Coaching, positive psychology, positive psychology coaching

DECLARATION

I, Mapaseka Mokwele, 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.

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On the 31st day of July 2019.

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CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the research was to study the experiences of positive psychology coaching for women's success in the workplace. Positive psychology is the study of positive emotion, engagement and meaning (Seligman, 2007). It aims to measure, classify and build these three aspects of life (Seligman, 2000). It is in studying these three aspects that has led to positive psychology being combined within the discipline of coaching. The proponents of positive psychology, as a discipline, insist on moving the coachee away from an area of discomfort towards a state of meaning and purpose, with Kauffman (2006) explaining this arguing that with coaching, the client's strength is built to engender hope and happiness. This is indicative in the language of psychology, as with coaching, where the focus is on the 'problem', as such, some coaches find it difficult to move away from pathology and pain and direct their coaching to strength, vision and dreams (Kauffman, 2010).

As positive psychology gained momentum, it has become essential to ensure that the complexities of the individual personality are handled in a customised manner, not in a generalist approach of a '*one-size-fits-all*' (Norem & Chang, 2002; Rogers, 2012; Lancer & Eatough, 2018; Lancer, 2018; Nanduri, 2018). Hence, the researcher conducted a study that looked away from a '*one-size-fits-all*' approach to examine the various systems of positive psychology coaching, with particular reference to the role of positive psychology coaching in relation to the success for women within the workplace. The next section focuses on the context of the study.

1.2 Context of the study

Positive psychology provides numerous tools to enhance positive emotions, engagements and meaning at work. As such, these tools have also been used to coach people for success in the workplace (Scoular, 2011). Coaching, according to Kauffman, Boniwell and Silberman (2010), is based on positive psychology as a discipline. The main ethos of this discipline is to move away from focusing on the subject's weaknesses and limitations, but rather to focus on the subject's strengths and identified opportunities. Sheldon and King (2001) argue that positive psychology is an attempt to adopt a more open and appreciative perspective regarding human potential, motives and capacities. As such, positive psychology in coaching has gained momentum and is widely used by many coaches. Rogers (2012) explains that coachees do not go to a coach because they need to be fixed. It is important to note that even when given suggestions by the coach, they are the only ones who can implement the action. It is based on this that a coach needs to find what can work for a coachee. To this end, there is a continuous need to understand the traits associated with positive psychology coaching and individualistic experience of the coachee.

This is important for women in the workplace especially those in leadership role, as South Africa and other nation makes effort to improve women representation in particular in top leaders and 'male dominated industries. Encompassing women in leadership positions is seen to positively add to good business decisions as women leaders are seen as increasing the value of the firm through their performance. Women are said to add feeling to their work and will create an environment that is conducive to success. As Novak (n.d.) stated, it is no surprise that people rate lack of appreciation as number 1 for leaving work and salary is at number 6. Willows and van der Linde (2016) explained that from the analysis of the board composition of women representation in South Africa, in the Johannesburg Stock Exchange Top 40 companies as at 30 June 2013 it showed that women directors were found to be at an average of 18.78 percent of the board of director, with the majority of these women in non-executive positions. Despite this, the research also found that women representation in leadership positions appears to influence

company performance positively when using accounting-based measures of performance.

The underrepresentation of women in leadership was also confirmed by Grant Thornton International Business Report (2017) who revealed that the percentage of women in senior management teams globally, has risen one percent from 24% in 2016 to 25% in 2017. This report further states that the number of organisations with no females at leadership level has increased from 33% in 2016 to 34% in 2017. It is against this backdrop that this research focuses on women in the workplace. The research narrows the study to women in leadership positions in corporate South Africa as it seems that more work still needs to be done to improve the status quo.

1.3 Research Problem

Success in the workplace is characterised by people meeting agreed targets and advancing either into specialist or leadership roles (Silva, 2014). Silva (2014) suggests that what can be learnt from individuals who have achieved success is their level of confidence. These individuals are not afraid to make mistakes and are willing to review and grasp the role of mistakes as a means to achieving success.

Studies conducted by the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM, 2011) revealed that female managers were found to have lower career confidence compared to their male counterparts, with almost half of the women having self-doubt and lower self-confidence. The study further revealed that the low confidence in women resulted in women having lower expectations of advancing to management and successively breaking the glass ceiling and therefore, were less likely to achieve their career goals (ILM, 2011). To exacerbate these challenges facing the women in the workplace, an expectation still exists that women need to conduct themselves in a gender specific manner, epitomised by the notion of the 'ideal worker,' resulting in declining women's confidence as they advance into senior positions (Bierema, 2016).

Ibarra, Ely, and Kolb (2013, p. 62) contextualise this best, when suggesting that “successful individuals become successful by internalising a leadership identity and developing a sense of purpose”. This is not an event but rather a journey, an iterative process that entails one taking purposeful action that is either affirmed or resisted by others resulting in subsequent actions either affirmed or discouraged (Ibarra, Ely & Kolb, 2013). Hence the need for coaching, especially positive psychology coaching as an example of an iterative purposeful action towards success. This is because people can struggle to make the required changes on their own due to several factors such as self-limiting thought and sometimes counterproductive behaviours (Neenan, 2008). As such, working with a professional coach can allow for the coach and the coachee to make concerted effort on coachee’s development with professional guidance and partnership. Positive psychology coaching was used for the investigation as it is “a scientifically-rooted approach to helping clients increase well-being, enhance and apply strengths, improve performance, and achieve valued goals” (Kaufmann et al, 2009, p. 158). It is against this backdrop, that there is a need for coaching of women for success in the workplace.

1.4 Research Questions

The purpose of the study was to investigate the experiences of positive psychology coaching that can be utilised to drive or assist women to succeed in the workplace, with the main aim of understanding how coaches can use positive psychology coaching for more positive results in their coaching practices when coaching women in leadership positions, in the South African workforce.

The over-arching research question is: *What are the experiences of positive psychology coaching for women success in the workplace?*

This was investigated using the following sub-questions:

1. What are the strengths developed by the positive psychology coaching journey for women in the workplace?
2. What are the challenges of positive psychology coaching for women in the workplace?
3. What are the benefits of positive psychology coaching for women in the workplace?

1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of the study is determined by the expected contribution of the study to the body of knowledge and the application of the study to the real-world setting.

1.5.1 *Contribution to body of knowledge*

Grant and Cavanagh (2007) explain that despite clear synergies between positive psychology and coaching, there has been little work done on developing models that integrate these two separate, but highly complementary change methodologies. Despite this, coaching has continued to benefit from the theories, evidence and measurements developed within positive psychology (Sims, 2017). This took place by positive psychology coaches adopting solution-focused (Cavanagh & Grant, 2014) and appreciative inquiry approaches in their practices (Orem, Binkert, & Clancy, 2011).

Passmore and Oades (2014) explain that positive psychology coaching is becoming an increasingly popular coaching method used by coaches. However, what is clear is that there are personality, cultural, environmental and other factors that influence the approach by the coach even within the same broad positive psychology coaching. This is influenced by the complexities of individual personalities and hence a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not ideal to improve human functioning (Norem & Chang, 2002).

It is within this view that this study is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge as it will be done in a South African setting where there are diverse cultures, diverse economies (first and second economies), existing legacies of past discrimination and existing laws to correct imbalances of the past through employment equity. These societal and workplace complexities would be of interest on understanding the success associative traits and experiences.

1.5.2 *Practicality of the study*

Gender balance in management teams with executive function is a critical matrix to evaluate whether women play only an indirect role or a strong and direct role in shaping the strategic direction in their workplace. According to the Business Women's Association, (2015), the women board directorship in South Africa had increased to 21.8% by 2015. Though this shows some progress, roles such as Chairperson of the Board and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), still lagged behind at 9.2% and 2.4% respectively.

The report also showed that only 29.3% of the executive managers were women. This paints a picture that the South African workplace is still highly patriarchal. This means that there is a need for interventions to assist with the development of women in the workplace for success. This is even more critical as South Africa is processing a new legislation with respect to women empowerment and gender equality, which aims to force all organisations, corporate and government departments to have 50% women representation on their decision-making bodies (Hills, 2015). Positive psychology coaching, its traits and experiences, can be used as practical models to effectively prepare women to develop core strengths that are necessary for success in the workplace.

1.6 Delimitations and assumptions of the study

This study is focused on positive psychology coaching as a solution-based tool for coaching, not within a perspective of traditional psychology. As such, this study is not intended to evaluate the use of positive psychology within traditional psychology, as there are many coaching methods and approaches that may be applied. This study only focused on positive psychology coaching.

This is grounded on the view that positive psychology coaching is practical and identifies the individual's weaknesses and limitations which are then used as a platform that enables the individual to focus on their strengths and identified opportunities (Boniwell, Kauffman & Silberman, 2009). The following assumptions are made in the study:

- It is assumed that coach and the coachees can distinguish between the general coaching and the positive psychology coaching despite it not being easy to separate the two approaches, since positive psychology coaching is a new developing domain.
- It is also assumed that positive psychology coaching is an effective and optimum approach to improve women success in the workplace compared to other forms of coaching.

1.7 Structure of the research report

The report comprises six chapters.

- Chapter 1: The significance and the context of the study are explained. The statements of the problem and research aims are outlined, and the delimitations of the study are presented.
- Chapter 2: Literature Review covers the concept of the study which includes positive psychology and coaching. This is followed by the grounding of the study which evaluated the different theories underpinning positive psychology coaching. Flowing from this, is the review of the use of positive psychology in coaching and coaching of women in the workplace.

- Chapter 3: Here the research discusses the research paradigm, design and methodology for data collection of the study. These include the population and the sample of the study and the method for data analysis. This chapter also includes the methodological limitations of the study and the credibility and trustworthiness of the study.
- Chapter 4: The research findings, analysis and interpretation are produced and discussed in detail.
- Chapter 5: Discussion on the findings and comparison with literature is done in this chapter.
- Chapter 6 provides the key summaries of the study, recommendations, concluding remarks, outline of limitations and strengths and formulation of suggestions on further fields of study are provided.

1.8 Definitions of terms

1. PP – Positive psychology
2. PPC – Positive psychology coaching

1.9 Conclusion of the chapter

This chapter contextualised the study, focusing on the problems statement and objectives of the study. It also provided insights on why the study is necessary and the expected value that the study aimed to derive. To ensure that there is also focus, the study also described the scope and the delimitations, so that there are clear guidelines on what is included and not included in the investigation. The last part of the chapter, provided the layout of the overall report.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The main interest in this study is to apply positive psychology as a means of coaching women in the workplace. It is within this realm that the related literature is reviewed in order to acquire in-depth understanding of theories and practices that govern the transition towards positive psychology. Flowing from this is the use of positive psychology theories and practices as tools to coach women in the workplace to succeed. This chapter starts with defining the two core concepts of the study which is Positive Psychology and Coaching. This is followed by presenting theories related to positive psychology, which is the grounding of the study, then analysing characteristics and virtues of positive psychology. Flowing from this is the understanding of how positive psychology is used in coaching with particular emphasis on coaching of women in the workplace.

2. 2. Emergence of Positive Psychology Coaching from Positive Psychology

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) provide a definition of positive psychology as a science of positive subjective experience, where the positive individual traits and their positive institutions are employed to improve the quality of life. This explains how the field of psychology has relied on pathology or what is wrong with patients in order to treat them. Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) noted that for more than a hundred years, psychologists ignored positive attributes that could make the patient assess their world better. The positive attributes could be anything from hope, wisdom, creativity, courage, to perseverance, responsibility and spirituality (Scoular, 2011).

Fredrickson (2001) posits that if moments in people's lives are categorised by experiences of positive emotions, emotions such as joy, interest, love and contentment, then they tend to be free from negative emotions such as sadness, despair, anger and loss of hope. This author goes further and explains that this also demonstrates that the

balance of people's emotions, whether positive or negative, has been shown to predict their judgement of subjective well-being of that person.

At the same time there is coaching which is a partnership of equals between the coach and the coachee that strives to achieve speedy, increased and sustainable effectiveness for the client through focused learning (Rogers, 2012). The author further expands that coaching aims to raise the self-awareness of the coachee and identifies choices. These can be achieved by working to the coachee's agenda with the sole aim of closing the gaps between potential and performance. This is congruent with the views of Scoular (2011) who argues that coaching is about pulling out the capacity people have within them. As such, coaching strives to draw out from within people's own ideas, hopes, dreams and plans and it tends to work so powerfully when people implement changes that they have thought up for themselves.

These definitions are also congruent with that of Fieldman and Lankau (2005) who explained coaching as a relationship between the coach and the coachee with the expressed purpose of improving the work effectiveness of the coachee. Nanduri (2018) explains that this relationship is usually short to medium term. Seligman (2007) has identified coaching as one of the core delivery mechanisms for bringing about personal, organisational and societal change. As a result, research funding has been made available for topics such as peak performance, character strength and resilience, with great interest from the corporate world and corporate donors. These are positive psychology tools that are of great use to coaches. As such there was a continued integration and implementation of positive psychology within coaching.

This has resulted in the emergence of the positive psychology coaching, with the Positive Psychology Coaching originated from Biswas-Diener and Dean (2007) as cited by Green and Palmer (2018). PPC was later defined by Kaufmann et al (2009, p. 158) as "a scientifically-rooted approach to helping clients increase well-being, enhance and apply strengths, improve performance, and achieve valued goals".

Positive psychology coaching (PPC) has been seen to be increasingly popular coaching methods within the realm of coaching methods employed by coaching psychologists (Passmore & Oades, 2014). This author posits that PPC is used and named differently by coaching psychologist with some calling it evidence-based coaching or strengths coaching (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007; Govindji & Linley, 2007).

2.3 Theoretical grounding of the study

Positive psychology coaching utilises the extensive research base that is in existence especially on wellbeing and optimal human functioning that is encountered in the field of positive psychology (Biswas-Diener, 2010, Green & Palmer, 2018). As such the theories in the field of positive psychology ground the study. There are several theories in positive psychology that are generally regarded as the grounding of the study. These include, Well-being Theory, which is also called the PERMA model, Theory of Flow, Strength Theory, Broaden and Build Theory and Self-determination Theory (Nickerson, 2007; Linley, Woolston, & Biswas-Diener, 2009; Passmore & Oades, 2014). However, Passmore and Oades (2014) argue that the underlying theories for positive psychology coaching are Strengths Theory, Broaden and Build Theory, Self-determination Theory and Well-being Theory. These four theories and the Theory of Flow were used for the grounding of this study.

2.3.1 Strength Theory

Linley, Woolston and Biswas-Diener (2009) explain that the strengths approaches have been in existence for several years. However, there is a growing interest on it as it plays a crucial role in coaching.

Strengths theory (ST) is regarded as the part of a family of theories that is part of a unified proposition, as opposed to a single theory. Passmore and Oades (2014) explain that central to this proposition is that the people will perform, feel and function better if they are using their strengths. Olsen (2015) argues that with its focus on happiness and strengths, positive psychology and the strengths movement are applicable at work.

(Cillier, 2011, p.176) expanded further and explained that “An important aspect of management is creating an environment in which all team members know each other’s strengths and blind spots so well that they can work together to ensure that individual and team blind spots do not affect member service”. To this end, employees who are not working to their strength tend to dread going to work, they have negative interactions with co-workers and customers, are less productive, and speak poorly of their employer (Rath, 2007). This is the reason why strengths assessment tools aim to assist people to gain knowledge of their strengths, and then use their own strengths and spot strengths in others. One of the main foci of the strength theory is in making weaknesses irrelevant. Linley, Woolston and Biswas-Diener (2009) explained that Linley’s (2008) framework was used to great effect in a strength coaching with senior leaders at a workplace as shown in Figure 1. This underpins the relevance of strength theory in the coaching for success in a workplace.

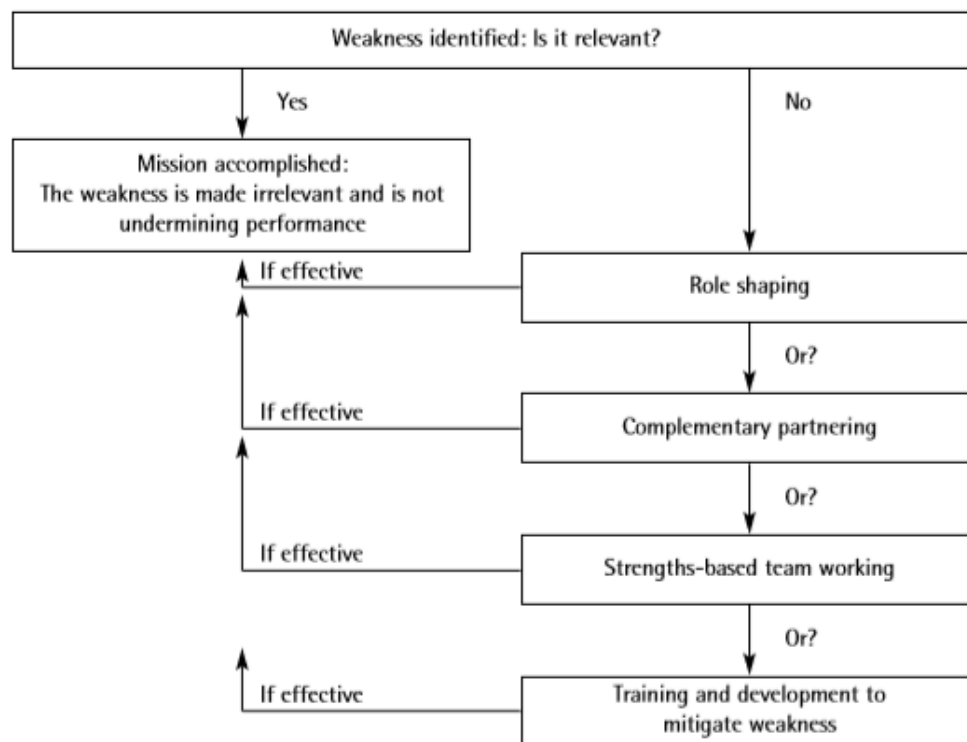


Figure 1. The Making Weaknesses Irrelevant Decision Tree (Linley, Woolston and Biswas-Diener, 2009).

Strength analysis was developed using a strengths survey known as Values in Action (VIA). There are six categories of strengths, which were developed and validated from VIA strength survey which are used as classification system of strengths (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). These are wisdom and knowledge which focus on cognitive strengths of knowledge acquisition and usage, courage which is grounded on emotional strengths that involve the will to accomplish goals in the face of external or internal opposition and humanity which is the interpersonal strengths, to ensure humanity towards others. The other three categories are justice for civic strength to foster health community life, temperance for self-control as well as transcendence for meaning and connection with surrounding universe.

2.3.2 Well-being theory

The theory of well-being is sometimes referred to as PERMA theory (Passmore & Oades, 2014). The authors explained that there are five aspects that are integral in developing well-being. The five components are Positive Emotions, Engagement, (Positive) Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment (Passmore & Oades, 2014).

Hassan and Younas (2015) argued that the main role of positive psychology has two main goals to promote well-being, first of all enhancing positive mind by ignoring negative thoughts and second, identifying the strategies to promote positive health. This is critical to ensure that there is a positive mind and approach to the work, which is grounded on positive health, relationships and accomplishments.

2.3.3 Theory of flow

The Theory of Flow refers to the moment one is comfortable with the task at hand. That moment when one is involved in the task to a point where the steps and processes to follow are clear in the mind. This is where one is comfortable and every action that is to follow comes inevitably from the one before and follows smoothly. Obada (2013) cited Csikszentmihalyi (1977), as the person who suggested that the Theory of Flow is when being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. This author argued that every

action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one. This happens in a synchronised manner and involves a person using their skills in the most optimum manner.

Flow is in everyday life, in different ways at different times. Some might experience flow while working on a presentation at work or for an actor, whilst immersed in their profession, acting. For other people, it may come whilst running or playing sports, focused only on their body and the achievement ahead. Flow can also occur when workers are engaged in tasks where they are able to focus entirely on the project at hand (Cherry, 2018).

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) suggested that there are ten factors that are critical to the experience of flow. It is noted that it is not necessary to experience all factors for flow to occur:

1. Knowing that the task is doable; a balance between skill level and the challenge presented.
2. Clear goals that, while challenging, are still attainable.
3. Immediate feedback.
4. Strong concentration and focused attention with clear rules and boundaries.
5. The activity is intrinsically rewarding, described by Csíkszentmihályi as “autotelic”.
6. Feelings of serenity; a loss of feelings of self-consciousness.
7. Timelessness; a distorted sense of time; feeling so focused on the present that you lose track of time passing.
8. Feelings of personal control over the situation and the outcome.
9. Lack of awareness of physical needs.
10. Complete focus on the activity itself.

Scoula (2011) described the first four conditions of flow, as seen above, as the most important for coaches, going on to call these the ‘preconditions’ of flow. Simply put, these are conditions that need to be in place for flow to occur. These can be made more likely through coaching.

2.3.4 Broaden and Build Theory

Broaden-and-build theory (BBT) was primarily developed to seek answers to the question

'What is the function of positive emotions?' (Fredrickson, 1998, p. 300)

According to Fredrickson (1998), the positive emotions tend to broaden the person's thought action when they are experiencing positive emotions. This author further stipulates that one of the critical routes of acquiring these positive emotions is to have a positive feedback in a balanced manner, with the positive equal or higher than the negative feedback. This is critical in the workplace, where there are different synergies and layers of work, with expectation of constant feedback on performance.

2.3.5 Self-determination Theory

The self-determination theory (SDT) is also known as the needs theory. This theory argues that there are three universal psychological needs: (a) autonomy; (b) relatedness; and (c) competency (Passmore & Oades, 2014). Self-determination is grounded on the ability of people's need to make their own choices. This includes connecting with others and have a feeling of competency as they exercise and grow their capacities. The theory posits that it is critical that these three needs are fulfilled. If so, the person tends to have an increased autonomous motivation. This in turn, leads to greater perseverance when conducting some tasks, especially tasks that are set or imposed on them, such as at work.

These theories underpin the complexing of positive psychological coaching. Despite that they provide clarity that for success, the coachees must be able to ensure that they build their strength, have optimal function of *positive emotions*, be comfortable with the task at hand, with due regards for their well-being and ensuring that they have a self-determination.

2.4 Empirical review of the study

2.4.1 Coaching of women in workplace

Hamilton (2003) argued that coaching is characterised as a method for improving a coachee's execution by recognising and outfitting the coachee with skills they need to succeed. Grant (2006) supports this view and explains that coaching is seen as empowering conduct change in a person. This author went further and explained that the major benefit of coaching as creating is its ability to create a solution-focused mind-set. Coaching prepares, inspires and co-operate to energise the best execution (Clark, 2003). This is imperative in the workplace, so that the coachee can succeed, especially for women who have a history of being underrepresented in high level management roles in the workplace.

In post-apartheid South Africa, despite the change in government and the writing of a Constitution, there is still widespread oppression towards women in the country; in fact, it seems to be growing, not only in South Africa, but in the rest of the world as well (Hutson, 2007). There has been an increase in the economic activity of women because of the government's stance on women's emancipation, globally, but more specifically in South Africa. Most women still struggle with work-life balance. These women are making strides in the workplace but remain home-makers.

Working hours have increased remarkably in the last 50 years and sleep hours have declined. There have been many changes in the workplace and in the world in general (Scoular, 2011). This means that in a world where only men worked, and women were left at home to prepare their food and wash their clothes, there have been significant changes. These changes have come with much confusion and anxiety in the workplace, this, as work demands have escalated, and pressure has become remarkably high. It is in the workplace where coaching has grown more popular and become a necessity.

With this legacy, it is important that there are interventions that are put in place in order to assist with the improvement of confidence and execution for women in their roles, especially in the higher echelons in the workplace. Grover and Furnham (2016) argue that coaching can be used as a developmental intervention in the workplace. Coaching have been found to have an impact at both the self-efficacy and performance of individuals in the workplace. Studies by Stajkovic and Luthans (2015) indicates that 28% of the variance in workplace performance can be explained by the levels of self-efficacy. Furthermore, this study revealed that an improvement in well-being and other psychological factors, such as resilience, greatly benefit individuals through improved work performance.

2.4.2 Use of positive psychology in coaching

Positive psychology has been used in coaching in the past decade as it offers solutions that enhance coaching. Coaching is widely used within the workplace as an approach to facilitate goal attainment and to change behaviour (Grant & Spence, 2010). There are different ways or methods used for coaching. However, Seligman (2007) says that positive psychology is the best method. Within its development, the positive psychology coaching reached the second wave, resulting in development of the TEARS HOPE model which is regarded as a mnemonic for positive psychology coaches, whose goal is to embrace difficult emotions in developing second wave PP coaching methods (Table 1) (Sims, 2017).

This model plays a critical role in ensuring that emotions and goal achievement are considered as its purpose is working with emotions of 'unhappiness' (Tears) as well as enabling expectations of good outcomes and goal achievement (Hope).

The approach to the implementation of the model is to teach and learn, as this is critical for the increased awareness and influence on the psychological well-being of the coachees. This is also followed by expressing and enabling sensory and embodied experience and fragments. This encourages openness and curiosity, thus making the

coachee to be mindful of the situation. Beyond the tears, there is HOPE is aimed at ultimately creating authenticity which is associated with self-realisation, striving for excellence and growth.

Table 1: The TEARS HOPE model.

TEARS HOPE	
T: Teach and learn	• Increase self-awareness and understanding of physiology and functions of emotions and their influence on psychological wellbeing.
E: Express and enable sensory and embodied experiences and fragments	• To become coherent narratives through storytelling and expressive writing (Pennebaker, 1993). Encourage openness and curiosity – mindfulness, without trying to change or challenge.
A: Accept and befriend	• Experiential acceptance, self-compassion, tolerance for frustration and discomfort, sadness as a natural response to trauma and loss.
R: Re-appraise and re-frame	• Emotional agility through cognitive-behavioural approaches (Palmer & Gyllenstein, 2008, Edgerton & Palmer, 2005), either 'positively' reframe (e.g. from fear to hope, anxiety to excitement) or modify thoughts (anxiety to concern, depression to sadness)
S: Social Support	• Moderate vulnerability, reduce risks and improve outcomes, Loving Kindness Meditation, communication skills.
H: Hedonic wellbeing/Happiness	• Broaden-and-Build (Fredrickson, 2004) – 3 to 1 ratio approx. (Fredrickson & Losada, 2005), Undoing and overshadowing effects of positivity, upward spirals-secondary emotions, positive activities, person-activity fit, PPIs (Lyubomirsky, 2008).
O: Observe and attend to	• Non-judgmentally attend, mindfulness, emotional discrimination.
P: Physiology and behavioural changes	• Relaxation, biofeedback, Heartmath®, breathing, exercise, diet, lifestyle changes.
E: Eudaimonia	• Authenticity (self-realisation, values), meaningful goals, striving for excellence, growth.

Source: Sims (2017)

2.5 Traits, benefits and challenges of positive psychology coaching

The traits of positive psychology start with the focus on the positive. The power of the technique is built through repeated use. This would typically invite adult coachees to take the intervention away as a homework task and to repeat it for seven days, including writing down the details of the event and emotion. What has been found is that having tried it for a week, just like children, many choose to make it a regular part of their routine. Coachees

report that they find it pleasurable, useful, and stimulating and an effective counter to negative ruminations at the close of the day (Passmore & Oades, 2015).

As with many of the other techniques, 'three good things' is a technique the coach can use themselves, as well as offer to coachees as a homework exercise, helping them to develop a more positive thinking style and enhanced satisfaction with life and work (Passmore & Oades, 2015).

Kashadan and Steger (n.d) posit there is a downside to positive psychology and the idea of the happiness obsession. These authors state that an approach focusing on happiness only is less advantageous than a broader approach which looks at happiness as one of several dimensions within a matrix. This broader matrix would include other dimensions such as 'meaning and purpose in life, mindfulness, achievement, life balance and flexibility, psychological needs for belonging, competence and autonomy, amongst others. King, Hicks, Krull, and Del Gaiso, 2016 add to this view, that the benefits of this broader outlook provides for a wider range of hypotheses such as how the immediate experiences of positive emotions can change one's judgement of meaning of life.

Studies by Archer and Yates (2017) highlights the impact of coaching using positive psychology, as it showed that the people who participated in the programme perceived their career confidence before engaging in the PPC as low, with self-doubt. This change for the better, with the participants demonstrating increased career engagement, self-awareness and a positive and optimistic outlook. This revealed the effectiveness of PPC as it has resulted in change being affected through the development of hope and change in cognitive processes.

2.6 Theoretical rationale and Propositions of the study

The theory and practices that were synthesised in the study, has culminated in the development of the proposition.

2.6.1 Proposition 1

Passmore and Oades (2014) explain that central to the strength theory proposition is that the people will perform, feel and function better if they are using their strengths. As such there are several strengths that are built during the positive psychology coaching journey. Peterson and Seligman (2004) developed a classification system of strengths using a strengths survey known as the Values in Action (VIA). This provides six categories of strengths, which are wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance as well as transcendence.

Proposition 1: Positive psychology coaching journey provide strength which includes wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, civic justice, temperance as well as transcendence for women in the workplace.

2.6.2 Proposition 2

The theory and empirical review highlight that positive psychology coaching is not without challenges. Among the challenges identified in positive psychology coaching is the idea of the happiness obsession (Kashadan and Steger, n.d).

Proposition 2: The positive psychology coaching execution approach as an alternative coaching method have challenges such as happiness obsession only for women success in the workplace

2.6.3 Proposition 3

Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) conceptualise positive psychology coaching as a positive subjective experience that improves the quality of life. As such there are several

benefits that it provides to the coachee. Passmore and Oades (2014) and supported by Hassan and Younas (2015) explained that this done by promoting the well being which includes Positive Emotions, Engagement, (Positive) Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishment. Passmore and Oades (2015) posits that there are several benefits of positive psychology coaching, these benefits includes stimulation and an effective counter to negative ruminations. Olsen (2015) also argues that with its focus on happiness and strengths the coachee can use it positively to ensure several aspects are achieved such as goal setting and building hope for the future. Based on the theory the following proposition was formulated:

Proposition 3: Positive psychology coaching provides improve the coachee well-being and their quality of life in particular strength identification, goal setting, networking and building hope for future for women in the workplace.

2.7 Conclusion of the chapter

In this chapter, the related literature on positive psychology coaching was reviewed. This includes the four theories that are relevant to the study which were Well-being theory, which is also called the PERMA model, Theory of Flow, Strength Theory, Broaden and Build Theory and Self-determination Theory. After the grounding, the focus was on the application of the positive psychology coaching in the workplace. This chapter provided an important aspect of this study, as it brings to bare what is known and how this study should be positioned for effective contribution to the body of knowledge. In the next chapter, the methodology is presented, which is the “how” part of the study. This is the methodology of the study.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the design and the methodology that was used to answer the research question and its sub-questions is presented and justified. The research methodology includes the research approach, the research design, the data collection methods, population and sample of the study, the research instrument and the approach to data analysis. This chapter concludes by explaining the quality strategies that were followed to ensure credibility of the study.

3.2 Research approach and design

There are generally three methods that are employed in social science research, and these are qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods (Creswell, 2013; Blumberg, Cooper & Schindler, 2014). In this study, the qualitative method was selected as it allows the researcher to get in-depth information from the participants that would not be normally obtained from the numeric data that is associated with quantitative methods (Leedy & Ormrod, 2015). This method is ideal when using a constructivist paradigm which is grounded on the view that the reality can be obtained from the interaction with the participants (Scotland, 2012).

As such, the qualitative method offers an opportunity for the participants to share their experiences and do this within their own social context (Cotty, 1998). Based on this, it is assumed that the coach and coachees have the necessary information that can be used to shed some light on the phenomenon of interest. This is an appropriate method to investigate complex issues which are influenced by the environment and behaviours such as the one in this research, which is *'To determine the experiences of positive psychology coaching that can be coached to drive women to success in the workplace'* (Creswell, 2013). As such, the experiential approach of this research focused on how individuals make sense of a particular experience and explored these lived experiences and

perceptions (Nanduri, 2018; Lancer & Eatough, 2018). This is the crux of the study as the coaches and coachees were requested to provide insights on their lived experiences and perceptions.

To this end, the experiential approach which focuses on how individuals make sense of a particular experience and explore these lived experiences and perceptions was used. This is the crux of the study as the coaches and coachees were requested to provide insights on their lived experiences and perceptions.

Plano Clark and Creswell (2015) explained that there are five types of qualitative research designs and these are: basic or generic research design, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, as well as case study. In this study, the basic or generic design was the design of choice as it allows for the empirical data to be effectively collected using the semi-structured interviews. As such, the overall design of this study is a qualitative research using a constructivist paradigm, based on generic qualitative design.

3.3 Data collection methods

Data collection methods explains how the data was collected in the study. In line with the study approach, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the participants (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). These interviews were conducted by engaging with the coaches and coachees using an interview guide which is explained in detail under section 3.6 (Research instrument). These interviews took place between December 2018 and January 2019. The researcher could not manage to record the sessions as the interviewees were not comfortable with this and did not give consent for recording, as such, the empirical data was developed from the notes that were taken by the researcher.

3.4 Population and sample

3.4.1. Population

The population for this study included women coachees who are currently in senior management or executive level who have undergone coaching from different sectors across different professions. The focus was on those who have used positive psychology as a coaching tool for success in the workplace. In addition to the coachees, the target population also included coaches who are utilising positive psychology as their preferred tool for coaching for success in the workplace. Unfortunately, as coaching is associated with confidentiality between the coach and the coachee and the lack of a database which can be utilised to find the register of coaches and coachees, the total population number is not known. This is not necessarily an issue as the intention of exploratory studies, especially for a qualitative method, is not intended for generalisability but rather to obtain rich information from the targeted population.

3.4.2. Sample and sampling method

As this study was semi-structured interviews, it adhered to the provisions of a non-probability sample size of 5-25 as proposed by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016). The final sample of the study was 14 where seven participants were coaches and the seven were coachees. Noteworthy was that one of the participants responded and shared her experiences as a coachee and later as a coach. Efforts to obtain coaching pairs were not successful, as respondents cited confidentiality and vulnerability of exposure of the potential identities. Obtaining coaching pairs would have been ideal, so as to compare the coachee and coach on the journey, challenges and perceived benefits of positive psychology coaching.

This sample size was within the range of 5 – 25 as proposed by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016) and higher than the minimum of six suggested by Creswell (2013b), as cited by Mason (2010). In addition, it is within the sample size of similar studies, a power analysis decision. In the study by Lancer and Eatough (2018), there was a total of nine

participants. Similarly, in the study by Nanduri (2018), there was a total of seven participants. In essence, the sample size of this study is within the same range as other similar published studies.

These participants were sampled using non-probability methods with a purposive sampling technique (Leedy & Ormrod, 2014). Cross disciplinary coaches from a database from the university were used to identify the participants with some of the coaches referring the researcher to relevant coachees. The purposive sampling was appropriate as it is specific in choosing participants for the purpose of the study with those participants having the necessary characteristics required in the study.

3.5 The research instrument

The research instrument of this study is an interview guide provided in Appendix I. It comprises nine questions. The first question was used to validate the relevance of the participants to confirm if they have participated in coaching using positive psychology. Question 2 and 3 aimed to understand the benefits and challenges of positive psychology coaching. Question 4 and 5 strove to understand what traits were developed by the coaching journey while question 6.7 and 8 investigated the experiences and outcomes of coaching. The last question was unstructured and aimed to understand any other important information or insights that could be provided by the participant on positive psychology coaching. The semi-structured instrument was piloted before use as an instrument to interview participants, adjustments to the instrument were made before implementation and gathering of non-numerical data.

3.6. Data analysis and interpretation

The collected data was analysed using the six-step thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006). This is a methodology they developed for in-depth analysis in social study especially in psychology (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The software that was utilised for this analysis was Atlas Ti 8.0 as it is versatile and appropriate for this type of analysis. In stage one, the researcher re-familiarised herself with the content of the interviews from

the transcripts. In stage two, codes were generated which provided meaning to the text. These initial codes were extracted without filter. In stage three and four, the initial code was consolidated, and duplication removed. These consolidated codes were used to develop the themes or categories of the study. In stage five, these themes were refined, and maps were drawn for association and contradictions. In the last stage, the findings were drawn and are reported in Chapter Four of this study.

3.7. Credibility and trustworthiness

Guba (1994) argued that the validity and reliability of the qualitative research should be measured with credibility instead of internal validity as used in quantitative research. This author also argued that generalisability must be used instead of external validity, dependability instead of reliability and confirmability instead of objectivity.

3.7.1 Credibility

The credibility of the study was ensured by having an adequate and relevant sample and triangulation of the data. Guetterman (2015) explained that for a study to be credible, the sample must be adequate, and it must be relevant. In this study, there was adequacy of the sample size as the sample of 14 was sufficient for the design followed and the data reached saturation. This means that there were no new themes that were obtained on the last interviews. In addition, the purposive sampling ensured that the correct people are selected to participate in the study. This is confirmed in section 3.10, where the demographic profile is presented, showing that the coachees were women who were in senior management positions in the corporate sector.

At an analysis level, the data triangulation between the coaches and the coachee was done to check for congruency and contradictions (Baxter & Jack, 2008). A word cloud was developed to evaluate the relevance of the empirical data. The total word count for all the interviews was 9548 words.

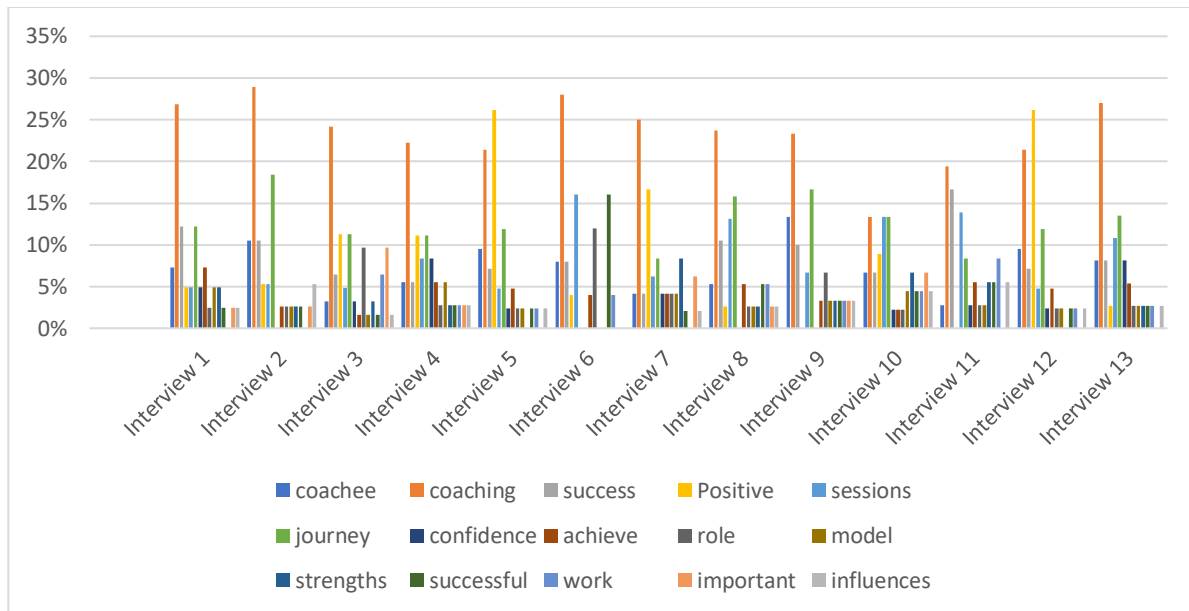


Figure 3: Distribution of key words

The words that were mostly mentioned by both the coaches and coachees was coaching which appeared 130 times, followed by coachee with a total of 63 and positive which was said 60 times. Furthermore, of these words, influence was the least mentioned word which was said 15 times, followed by model and important which appeared 17 times.

3.7.2 Transferability

As already mentioned, and also reported in the limitations of the study, the study is not expected to be generalised to the overall population. However, the steps taken to ensure credibility allowed for it to be transferred to similar settings, namely positive psychology coaching for women in the workplace. This was done by ensure the participants were from both multi-disciplines and multi-sectors.

3.7.3 Dependability

The dependability of the study was ensured by analysing the data in totality instead of analysing parts of the data and was reported objectively, including contradictions. The

narrative provided by the researcher in the write-up was evidence-based where the direct quotations from the participants was provided.

3.7.4 Confirmability

The confirmability of the study was done by data validation. In this approach, five out of the interviews were randomly selected after transcription and sent to the participants asking them to confirm the content and the context of the interview. This ensured that the participants are not quoted out of context and any errors are picked up and rectified.

3.8. Ethical considerations

The research obtained an ethical clearance from the Ethics Committee at University of Witwatersrand (Appendix I). The study ensured that it adhered to ethical standards of the research, ensuring that the participants are informed of the study and their rights, confidentiality as well as handling and storage of the data.

Firstly, all the participants were informed of the objectives and the interest of the study and were requested to participate. They were informed that the participation was voluntary and that they have a right to withdraw anytime if they so wish without being prejudiced or penalized. Secondly, all the respondents were advised that their names and identification would be kept confidential and not included in the report and that the report was for the purpose of the research only. Lastly, they were assured that the data collected will be kept confidentially especially for the recordings where applicable.

3.9. Methodological limitations

There are several methodological limitations that were expected in this study. Firstly, there was a lack of generalisability. This study was not generalised to the population as it used a non-probability sampling method with a small sample size. Although this was the case, this limitation will not affect the validity of the study as the intention was exploratory and not to generalise to the population.

Secondly, perceptual views. It is acknowledged that the views that were presented were perceptual in nature and can be influenced by other environmental factors such as the circumstances in the workplace. As a result, the views provided on the coaching might differ from the participants at a given point in time. Although this is the case, the design of the study was such that it got the views from both sides of the equation (coach and coachee). This allowed for data triangulation to minimise any bias that might occur in the study. Lastly, the pool to select the respondents was small as there was no existing repository the researcher could find with coaches and especially coachees and the study could not achieve its intention of obtaining coaching pairs – coachee and coach for a focused triangulation of the data. As such, the triangulation was only done at overall level not individualised coaching pair.

3.10. Demographic profile of participants

As per the focus of the study, all coachees were females while coaches were female with the exception of one (Table 1).

Table 1. Profile of the participants

Participant	Gender	Role	Mentor/ Mentee	Organisation
PAT1	Female	HR Executive	Coach	BCX
PAT2	Female	HR Director	Coach	Ecolab
PAT3	Female	Psychologist and Coach	Coach & Psychologist	Own Practice
PAT4	Female	Learning Manager and Coach	Coach	Hollard Insurance
PAT5	Female	Executive Coach	Coach and Coachee	Own Practice
PAT6	Female	Psychologist and Coach	Coach and Psychologist	Own Practice
PAT7	Male	Executive Coach	Coach	Own Practice
PAT8	Female	Director	Coachee	Crystal Lake Media

PAT9	Female	Executive Director: Turkey, Middle East & Africa	Coachee	Avon Inc.
PAT10	Female	Provincial Communications Manager: Free State	Coachee	Democratic Alliance
PAT11	Female	Head of Communications	Coachee	Financial Sector Conduct Authority
PAT12	Female	Managing Director	Coachee	Skills Empire
PAT13	Female	Head- Consumer Education Programme	Coachee	First National Bank

All coachees were working within the corporate sector with the exception of one, who was working for a political party. These augers well to effectively investigate the role of coaching within the workplace. Furthermore, all the coachees were in senior management roles, which spans senior managers to executives in different fields, such as human resources, communications and education, from different sectors such as insurance, telecommunications, financial sector and banking, as well as health and beauty.

3.11. Conclusion

In this chapter, the design and methodology were presented. This study employed qualitative research approaches where a total of 14 coachees and coaches were interviewed to investigate their experiences of positive psychology coaching as a tool to succeed in the workplace. The data collected was analysed and the findings are presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 4. FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

4.1. Introduction

The purpose of the study was to investigate the experiences of positive psychology coaching (PPC) that can be used to drive women to succeed in the workplace, with the main aim of understanding how coaches can use positive psychology for positive results in their coaching practices when coaching women in leadership positions, in the South African workforce. In chapter 3, the methodology of the study was explained, which employed a qualitative research approach using a constructivist paradigm.

As already explained within the demographic profile in chapter 3, the 14 interviews were conducted with women senior managers in the corporate sector and the coaches who employ PPC tools in their coaching practices. In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented, and these are discussed in chapter 5.

4.2. Development of the themes of the study

The line-on-line coding of the empirical data resulted in an extraction of 92 codes and these codes are provided in Appendix II. These codes were initially extracted without filters. These codes were then consolidated, resulting in sixteen sub-themes, which resulted in four themes (Table 4.1). The four themes were understanding of positive psychology coaching, strengths developed by positive psychology coaching journey, challenges of positive psychology coaching as well as positive psychology coaching benefits. These themes were used in the findings to answer the research objectives of the study.

Table 4.1 Themes and consolidated codes

Understanding of positive psychology coaching	Increase well-being
	Enhance ability, developing and applying strengths
	Personal growth and elimination of negative thoughts
	Reaching optimum psychological aspects
	Ability to stay visionary
	Helps reach full potential
Strengths developed by positive psychology coaching journey	Develop positive thinking
	Improve confidence and resilience
	Enhance self-awareness and interpersonal skills
	Enhance learning and knowledge
	Enhance decision making skills
Challenges of positive psychology coaching	Personal challenges (Lack of self-esteem, naïve behaviour and personality disorder)
	Environmental challenges (poor knowledge by coach and distance between the coach and coachee)
	PPC tools and execution approach (alternative coaching methods, Cultural insensitivity and poor implementation leading to negative results)
Positive psychology coaching benefits	Overall life success
	Build networks and relationships

4.2.1. Understanding of positive psychology coaching

The first theme dealt with the understanding of positive psychology coaching (PPC); both the coaches and coachees had to give their definition and understanding of PPC. This is critical to see if the participants understood and knew what PPC is. Even though the participants gave different meaning of PPC, they were linked and had an association with each other, where the most common aspect was the purpose of this model is to uplift and transform the individual's mind-set to being positive. The explanation was grouped into six sub-themes which were increases well-being, enhances ability, developing and applying strengths, researches optimum psychological aspects, ability to stay visionary and helps reach full potential.

4.2.1.1 Increase well-being

It is important that a person feels comfortable and confident in their own skin in order to succeed. This is one of the basic fundamentals of the PPC model, as it helps increase the well-being of coachees.

PPC is used to increase the coachees' well-being, ^{PAT1}

Among the major reasons to increase the well-being is to boost the confidence of the coachees, so they are comfortable to communicate effectively and manage the relationships, especially those that are critical in their careers.

My understanding of this process was that it was intended to assist me in
boosting my confidence whilst acquiring communication and relationship
management skills. ^{PAT10}

The coachees indicated that the purpose and their understanding of PPC is that it can change the way people see themselves and it boosts confidence. That is however, a critical aspect because if you lack self-belief, it is impossible to transform and become something bigger and better. The way you see yourself is the way you will forever be. Therefore, PPC helps individuals change their mind-sets on how they see themselves and focuses on what they can become and works on that potential.

My understanding of Positive Psychology Coaching is that it is coaching that brings about a shift in how we view ourselves, our world, and the external world at large with its challenges, obstacles, tragedies and opportunities. ^{PAT8}

The aim is to help the coachee unpack and understand self. ^{PAT13}

4.2.1.2 Enhance ability, develop and apply strength

What was evident during the discussion with the coaches is that they believed that the PPC model was to enhance ability and help individuals to apply their strengths. This means that the coachees were trained in a way that they discover their full potential and how to apply this on becoming successful in their social lives in general, in their work-place, spiritual and education aspects. When people focus on things they are good at, they can build their confidence, which immediately catapults them into a space where they can use the renewed energy and confidence to then work on those things they consider their “liabilities. Positive Psychology Coaching finds its basis in positive psychology, which stems from the understanding that we all have strengths and things we are good at and rather than focusing on the negative, it is also important to focus on those things that are considered assets and rather using those to strengthen the person, thereby effecting change.

Moving away from the medical model where people need to be fixed instead to enhancing strengths and enriching positive habits even more. ^{PAT4}

Enhance and help them apply their strengths. ^{PAT1}

In positive psychology coaching the coach’s role is to help the client access and develop his or her inherent strengths while focusing on positive emotions. ^{PAT6}

PPC was as such more grounded on enhancing strengths and focusing on positive emotions. As such there was no evidence that it was a diagnosis process, or a one size fit all mentality.

4.2.1.3. *Personal growth and elimination of negative thoughts*

The coach and coachees agree that the PPC model is about personal growth and elimination of negative thoughts, as this helps the individuals forget about all negativity and focus only on the positive and be optimistic.

For me PP is all about personal growth and elimination of negative thoughts. It influences our thoughts and thus changes our perspective of life. The benefits are positive thoughts, optimism, hope and general satisfaction about life. ^{PAT2}

To help one to identify and maximise one's personal growth. ^{PAT13}

In addition, the PPC model, according to both the coachees' and coaches' understanding, is to help focus on the positive elements of life. The participants explained that this model is very effective in a way that it can redirect the way you see life and overcome the past negative experiences. You become more resilient, you are more inspired and gain self-motivation. Furthermore, PPC has the ability to transform the challenges to opportunities; its central pillars are positive experiences, positive individual traits, and positive institutions. Understanding positive emotions entails the study of contentment with the past, happiness in the present, and hope for the future.

Focusing on the positive elements in one's life, I have personally found that it increases one's energy and it often leads to one choosing happiness which is great for human interactions etc. ^{PAT5}

Positive psychology was born out of the need to scientifically study the positive aspects of life. Special focus and benefits being the following areas: Positive Emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning and Accomplishments. ^{PAT9}

This type of coaching focuses on what works rather than areas where someone experiences hardships/challenges. This works very well in boosting one's confidence. ^{PAT11}

4.2.1.4. *Reaching optimum psychological aspects*

Reaching an optimum psychological aspect was also identified as imperative for PPC. In explaining this aspect, the participant posits that it is about ensuring that there is optimum health and functioning which focuses in positive emotions, behaviour and traits.

It is about allowing clients to reach optimum health and functioning by focusing on the positive aspects of their being. This is because positive emotions and traits have a potential to boost other psychological functions. ^{PAT 3}

4.2.1.5. *Ability to stay visionary*

One other aspect highlighted by the participants in so far as the value addition of PPC is to allow the coachee to see the bigger picture and in the process, ensure that they develop an ability to stay a visionary,

Moving from problem to drama and staying in vision. ^{PAT4}

4.2.1.6. *Helps reach full potential*

The participants further explained that positive psychology coaching aims to help individuals reach their full potential, it has the ability to bring out the greatness in people and equip them into something bigger and better. Positive psychology explores what helps people to shift from good to great, what makes them flourish, and be more successful. Coaching is a powerful delivery mechanism for the tools of positive psychology. To put it simply, PPC helps people to actualise/reach/optimize their full potential.

It helps to bring out the greatness that is in people, which empowers and equips them to be more successful in every or most areas of their lives. ^{PAT7}

This is coaching that is meant to empower, foster a learning environment and foster change and get results. Each of these competencies reflects the coach's bone-deep commitment to helping us achieve our full growth potential. ^{PAT12}

In summary, it is evident that there was common and in-depth understanding of PPC by the coachees and the coaches. Despite this, it was evident that there were times when the participants were referring to both the coaching and the positive psychology-based coaching i.e. PPC. This means that there was no always clear separation between these two, especially from the perspective of the participants. Bringing the theoretical definition of the PPC based on Kaufmann et al (2009, p. 158) as "a scientifically-rooted approach to helping clients increase well-being, enhance and apply strengths, improve

performance, and achieve valued goals”. It is evident that the core aspects of PPC which are increased well-being enhance and applying strength and helps reach potential are congruent with the theory.

What is evident is that positive psychology helps to ensure that there is an increase in the well-being of the coachee, it enhances the ability, develops and improves their ability to apply their strength, it helps with personal growth and the elimination of negative thoughts as well as helping the coachee to reach full potential.

4.2.1.7. Strengths developed by positive psychology coaching journey

The overall findings show that the goals that the coaches were aiming to achieve with their coachees or clients were successfully met because they agree with one another on the outcomes of the journey.

4.2.1.8. Develop positive thinking

It is evident that PPC helped implement positive thinking on most of the coachees, as they amounted to something and grew to be effective and powerful and overcame their obstacles. Furthermore, the participants indicated that they gained the skills of adopting new habits, wanting to try new things and being comfortable with whatever outcome. This is however a critical aspect to success in any leader or person who want to succeed in life, because if you are not willing to try new things and willing to take risks your chances of becoming successful are slim.

Conscientiousness helps individuals to be aware and responsive of their surroundings, in that way they can easily point out the positive and negative factors to help them achieve whatever goals they are determined to achieve.

As a coach, I aim at facilitating positive thinking on the coachee to ensure we focus on results. PAT1

Results based coaching is self-directed and sets the desired milestones in the initial session and as such, as a coach, I guide the 10-12 sessions to ensure milestones are

achieved and assisting the coachee to adopt new habits learnt in the coaching journey.

PAT1

I needed to have good or high levels of thoughtfulness, good impulse control, and goal-directed behaviours. In that it allowed me to think about how my behaviour affects other people. PAT3

4.2.1.9. *Improve confidence and resilience*

A lot of confidence was gained by the student and mentors during the coaching journey. This was a strength developed because a lot of these coachees were lacking confidence in themselves to become successful in their projects, workplace, school, social and spiritual lives.

Agility is the ability to move quickly and easily, which works hand in hand with resilience. This was a skill that was implemented by the students during the coaching journey, which is effective in setting and reaching long-term and short-term goals. In addition to the strengths developed, determination is an aspect that was implemented using the PP coaching journey. Both the coach and coachees agree that these were relevant and were helpful for the student's success in their life journeys. It is important that people are ambitious in their jobs, projects that they are part of, and in their social lives in general.

For me the coaching re-ignited my sense of self-worth and boosted my confidence. It also inspired new ideas and made me believe in my ability to achieve those ideas. PAT11

Resilience – In learning to be more resilient, I am hoping that this could also help my clients activate their own resilience. PAT3

Agility - Being comfortable with ambiguity and change. This is important when working with clients who are transitioning in their lives and need to set a new vision and new goals. PAT3

Learn to set goals and achieve them. Live authentically. PAT4

It is important for a leader to be courageous, to have self-belief and to trust their instincts. This was one of the factors that the participants indicated as part of the outcomes.

Therefore, the chances of setting goals and achieving them are high. If you are brave, you can make decisions and believe in the decision you make to be the right one, you are more content with yourself to lead the organisation the right way and to succeed.

“To lead without fear and anxiety” PAT3

4.2.1.10. Enhance self-awareness and interpersonal skills

As a person you need to know yourself, know your weakness, know your strengths, know your character and feelings. This is one of the major skills that was implanted on the coachees during the coaching journey. Furthermore, people should be truthful and loyal, this is important in the workplace. People love working with ethical people who they can trust.

Interpersonal sensitivity. It allowed me to not only be tactical but also acquire social skills important in working with people/ clients. PAT3

Stand in integrity with their values. PAT4

As a coachee, I got to know WHO I AM, independent of the roles I play, I became aware of my ‘core wounds’ and how they lead to self-limiting and or sabotaging behaviour. PAT5

Self-awareness and acceptance. PAT9

He was able to make me understand my character. This process assisted me in developing patience and know myself when I am losing patience. PAT10

4.2.1.11. Enhance learning and knowledge

The willingness to gain information and knowledge is a critical factor for individuals who want to be successful. As a coachee, you need to be open minded and be curious about things you do not know and want to learn about things that can help you on your career path, life journey, spiritual path or any other life aspect where you are willing to be successful. The willingness to learn from other people and their past experiences is an important success factor. It is critical for any leader to be knowledgeable and have the ability to transfer that knowledge to other people, in order to educate them, train them and empower them as a leader.

Openness/ Inquisitive – In being curious about the world and other people and eager to learn new things and enjoy new experiences. PAT3

As a coach, I aim to impart what I learnt. PAT5

My ability to impart knowledge. PAT13

Learning approach - In understanding my learning approach, I can understand the type of information I need, why I need it and how I can acquire it. PAT3

4.2.1.12. Enhance decision making skills

Decision making is a very important skill that a leader should have; according to the participants, this was one of the strengths that were developed during the coaching journey.

It also helped me with involving everyone in decision-making. I am a decisive person and rarely give people a chance to voice their opinions, this is one character flaw I am working on daily.

PAT10

This theme focused on the strengths that are developed by the positive psychology coaching journey. Enlisted by the coaches and coachees, was its ability to develop positive thinking, it helps to improve confidence and resilience, enhances self-awareness and interpersonal skills, enhances learning and knowledge and also enhances decision making skills.

4.2.2. Challenges of Positive Psychology Coaching

In this theme, the main aim was to understand the challenges of PPC, the results show that the coaches and coachees have a different view on the challenges they faced during the coaching period. The challenges were categorised in three levels; this will give clear understanding of the type of problems the coaches and coachee face during the coaching period.

4.2.2.1. Personal challenges

The personal challenges refer to the interpersonal problems that the participants faced during PPC. These challenges were difficulty on focusing on strengths and lack of self-esteem, naïve behaviour and personality disorder.

With difficulty on focusing on strengths and lack of self-esteem, were the challenges that the coaches came across during their coaching journey. Most of the coachees had difficulty on focusing on their strengths; this is a challenge because if you keep focusing on the negatives you will not move forward and progress. The more you nurse the things that pull you down, the more you will either be stuck in the same place or be pulled down and end up not progressing to reach your full potential in life. This is associated with the lack of self-esteem, people with low self-esteem have challenges on achieving things because they always look down upon themselves.

The main challenge that I have found has been a coachee finding it difficult to focus on their strengths. ^{PAT1}

Some coachees struggle to look at their own positive traits as their self-esteem is very low. ^{PAT4}

They mostly do not believe some of their positive elements because of how they were socialised, messages that they heard consistently whilst growing up. ^{PAT5}

Another challenge that these participants came across during the coaching model was the naïve behaviour by the coachees. This means that the coachees were in denial of their weakness, not willing to accept their wrongs and thought they knew it all. That is a challenge because a person who never sees their problems will not listen or take anyone else's opinion.

So, in my view the challenges of the PPC is that it is singular in its view, whereas people are both a plus & a minus. ^{PAT5}

I am an extreme optimist so I do not really see the challenges associated with PPC, but I guess it can be overly optimistic and perhaps it can miss some “necessary” negatives/sadness of life. ^{PAT2}

I find it simplistic in how it views human experiences, yet these are every complex. Linked to the point above sometimes it is possible that something bad or “wrong” can lead to good and the other way around. ^{PAT3}

Personality disorder is another challenge that was met by the coaches. According to the coaches, PPC is not designed to accommodate people with mental disorder, people who cannot see things from another person’s point of view.

The challenge is not in the positive elements but it’s evident on some of those clients who carry a “sick roles” mind-set in their personality structure, where a shift isn’t easy due to underlying personality structures. ^{PAT6}

These are often clients who struggle to see things from another person’s perspective due to personality related disorders such as borderline personality disorders clients who tend to struggle with “insight” and “external locus of control” issues. ^{PAT6}

4.2.2.2. *Environmental challenges*

The environment also had an impact and was seen as a challenge by both the coach and coachee. The environment may determine success or failure for PPC, the environmental challenges that these participants came across were poor knowledge by coach and distance between the coach and coachee.

The coachees indicated and agreed that the common challenge they faced was coaches who were not hands on, unknowledgeable coaches and the distance between coach and coachee, which led to failure. The main purpose for a coach is for them to be close and understand the coachees’ weakness and strengths in order to direct them, if the coach is remote, there is no relationship built between the two and that leads to high chances of failure.

He did not have political background which means he worked mostly on assumption and that was the most frustrating part for me. ^{PAT10}

He also was in Durban and I was in Bloemfontein, this means that our sessions were done telephonically. I think it is easier to earn a person's trust when talking face to face with them. ^{PAT10}

I wish that there could have been more follow ups after the sessions to ensure that I stuck to my objectives. ^{PAT12}

4.2.2.3. PPC tools and execution approach

The third level of PPC challenges was the PPC tools, the tools play an important role on the success and failure for the coaching journey. These were restrictive tools, alternative coaching methods, cultural insensitivity and poor implementation.

4.2.2.4. Restrictive tools

The other challenging aspect of PPC, according to the participants, was that it is restrictive regarding its focus. Implementing PPC requires a textbook method which happens to be limiting because not everyone responds to the same strategy. This then portrays failure and poor outcomes from the coachees. Furthermore, because PPC is so restrictive, the coaches end up failing their students. It creates a false reality, it focuses only on the positives, and paints a picture of success and leaves out the negatives and challenges that people might come across. This is however manipulative, because it makes the people feel good and feel the need to be part of a project and be open to taking tasks within the workplace without being open minded or aware of the disadvantages.

PPC can be limiting because of its focus. I have had better outcomes with clients when I have used a more holistic approach. ^{PAT7}

The attempt to minimise negative experiences and only focusing on positive ones is misleading in that it creates a false reality in which only the good thrives. ^{PAT11}

People are made to feel good in order to coerce from them certain outcomes. Happiness might be viewed as a manipulative technique used to take advantage of people especially in the workplace. ^{PAT9}

Some clients want to have a view and explore the causes of their problems or dilemma and in most cases, these are negative and PPC does not allow room for the exploration of these.” PAT3

4.2.2.5. *Alternative coaching methods*

In addition, as a coach, your role is to guide and direct your coachees by helping them choose the right career path, help them develop and uplift their skills, guide them on their thinking ability and to be better people. However, the challenge that these coaches came across was the fact that they had to play the role of a therapist before being a coach. The PPC model is not designed for therapy but for life guidance. This is associated with people with a personality disorder, it is a challenge to work with them especially for coaches as they are not professionally trained for that. Dealing with a person who mentally fails to see things from a different perspective or with a mental disorder is quite a challenge unless you are a trained therapist.

Challenges I have come across are threefold – firstly, I have had to refer clients for therapy instead of insisting on using PPC. I suppose the key there is to know the client needs a different intervention like therapy as opposed to PPC. PAT 7

Clients can easily confuse it with therapy. I have also had an experience where while working with the client on their life purpose, somethings were revealed later and because I wanted the coaching to be a success, I found myself easily going into the therapeutic space. PAT3

The participants believe that the other challenge with PPC was that it is uncompromising and principled, which makes it hard to implement. The model was seen to be also contradictory because it gives life expectations which are all positive and does not teach about the negatives and overcoming challenges that one might come across. This is linked to creating a false reality and manipulative systems applied

The facts that at times it may seem like it is idealistic and “denialist”. PAT3

I find it linear in its application suggesting that focusing on positive aspects leads to positive results. There are times when the removal of the “problem”, could result in the relief of the situation. PAT3

4.2.2.6. Cultural insensitivity

Furthermore, the challenges faced was lack of cultural awareness and failure to empower African culture. As Africans or South Africans, it is important that we know and value our culture before practicing other nations' culture. Knowing or acknowledging that we are different and of different cultures is understanding that we are different and that application of PPC needs to have different strategies for different people for it to be a success.

Secondly, lack of awareness of cultural differences can/do limit the successful application of PPC (CQ = Cultural Intelligence). ^{PAT7}

Being a South African and a woman of African descent the PPC model sometimes can be seen to reinforce existing western socio-economic system and value system. ^{PAT 9}

It is Euro-centric, especially emphasising individualism, capitalism, and western definitions of happiness. ^{PAT9}

The concept has white middle-class bias and ignores the plight of minorities and black SA's. Poverty, inequality, injustice, repression, and other societal problems are ignored. ^{PAT9}

4.2.2.7. Poor implementation leading to negative results

It is critical for a coach to have a proper and clear strategy to deal with different people and problems; it is also important for the coach to have the ability to implement knowledge and skills to his student.

If not unpacked properly, the coachee may fail to detach external factors and their effects on them, instead be left feeling more inadequate and blaming their past. ^{PAT13}

The challenges experienced were three-fold, as they involve the personal challenges, the environmental challenges as well as the PPC tools as the method and its execution approach. Evidence from the participant shows that PPC was sometime intersected with therapy which brings to the fore issues related to the skills of the coaches, as this deviates

the PPC from what is intended or what is should be, which is to pulls capacity within them, and develop positive emotion and help them tap on their strengths.

4.2.3. Outcomes and benefits of coaching

The main reason the coachees took part in the coaching journey was to benefit from it in different ways, whether it was to gain new skills, learn new strategies, be empowered or to enhance their strengths. As these participants were engaging in the PPC and have understood the PPC, it was important for them to share their experiences in relation to the outcomes of the PPC in so far as what were the outcomes that resulted in change and later what they believed were the measurable improvements from these outcomes which are the benefits.

The participants were empowered through this journey; this is important because people who feel empowered have positive attitude on getting work done, on learning new things and they believe in themselves more.

It helps to bring out the greatness that is in people, which empowers and equips them to be more successful in every or most areas of their lives. ^{PAT7}

Bringing out happiness elements, promoting positive relationships, and more optimistic in their approach to obstacles. PPC also focuses on the coachees' positive traits and using those to reach their goals. ^{PAT6}

Lately, a coachee said to me, "I used to be a very angry person and after my sessions with you my life has changed, and I focus on the bright side of my life and I am a happier person". ^{PAT 2}

The benefits are that I am now able to build strong and trusting relations with colleagues. ^{PAT10}

There is evidence that there was positive energy from the participants through their experience on the journey and that it helped them achieve and realise their strengths and that they learnt the elements of success in the work place, like being loyal and truthful

towards the people you work with, to always have a positive attitude and the ability of building and maintaining new relationships and communication skills.

4.3. Conclusion of the chapter

In this chapter, the findings from the data that was collected and analysed in the previous chapter was presented. There were four themes that emerged from the research. The first theme was identified as understanding of positive psychology coaching. This is important to the research as it confirms that the participants understood the questions and relevance of the study. The second theme discussed the strengths developed by positive psychology coaching journey. This theme showed that the goals that the coaches were aiming to achieve with their coachees were successfully met because they agree with each other on the outcomes of the journey.

The third theme was developed to understand the challenges of PPC, the results show that the coaches and coachees had a different view on the challenges they faced during the coaching period. These challenges were categorised in three levels, giving clear understanding of the type of problems the coaches and coachees faced during the coaching period. The fourth theme revealed that the participants were empowered through this journey, leading to them showing a positive attitude on getting work done, on learning new things and believing in themselves more. This led the participants to achieve and realise their strengths, helping them reach success in the workplace.

These themes were aligned to the objectives and the three research sub-questions of the study, and these objectives, outcomes and their congruency or contradictions are discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

In chapter 4, the findings of the research were presented, where four themes were developed. For the internal validity of research, the study propositions are critical to provide information regarding measurements, associations and where applicable the confounding factors that are considered in research. At the same time, for external validity, propositions form the premise for the deduction of inferences.

In this chapter, these research propositions are discussed. In the discussion, the findings are compared and contrasted with the literature which was presented in chapter 2. As already explained in chapter 3, these findings were credible as the design and approach selected which was qualitative research methods was ideal for the research question which sought in-depth information on the experiences of both the coaches and coachees in relation to their journey on positive psychology coaching (PPC). Additionally, as explained within the provisions of Guetterman (2015), the research required an adequate sample as well as a relevant sample. This study confirmed that an adequate number of interviews were conducted, which reached saturation and within the range of this type of study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2016; Creswell, 1998). Also, the profile of the participants confirmed that there was a good balance between the coaches and coachees which are critical in understanding the experiences and their journey in PPC.

5.2. Strengths developed by the positive psychology coaching journey

Proposition 1 of the study states that Positive psychology coaching journey provide strength which includes wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity, justice, temperance as well as transcendence for women in the workplace.

Before soliciting the strengths that were developed by PPC from the coaches and coachees, it was prudent to understand the participants' perspective on PPC. The findings have revealed that PPC is a tool and method that assists the coachees to increase their well-being, to reach their optimum psychological aspects, to help them to reach their full potential, to focus on positive elements, to boost confidence, to enhance their ability to develop and apply strengths and to improve their ability to stay visionary. Despite possible overlaps and interlinkage to coaching in general, it was evident that it was not a diagnostic or labelling process not a process of 'one-size' shoe fit all, which is congruent to the assertion of Passmore and Oades (2014) about the PPC. It was meant to pull the capacity from within the coachees so as to apply their strengths (Scoular, 2011; Passmore & Oades, 2014). What was clear from these findings was that PPC is meant to develop these skills and outcomes simultaneously on the coachee as they are associated with each other and work in conjunction with each other (Fig. 5.1).

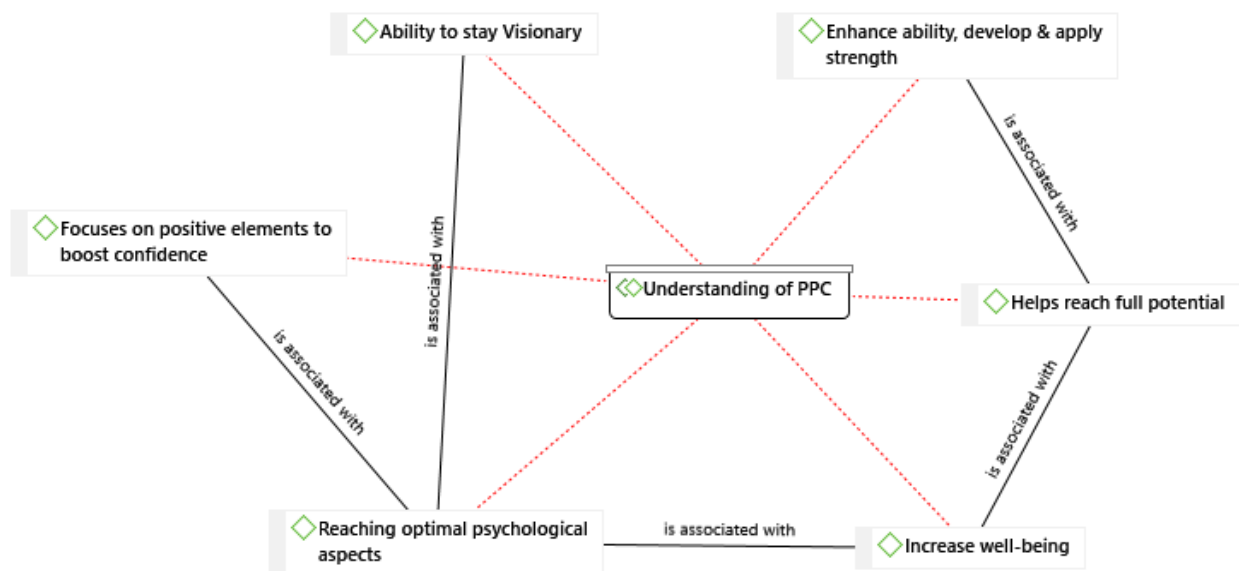


Figure 5.1 Understanding of positive psychology coaching map

This understanding is congruent with that of Grant and Spence (2010), who explained that coaching is widely used within the workplace as an approach to facilitate goal attainment and to change behaviour. More specifically, the participants' understanding of PPC is congruent to the theories on which PPC is grounded. These theories include the Well-being Theory, which is also called the PERMA model.

This shows agreement between the participants as they were collaborating with the literature by Hassan and Younas (2015) who argued that the main role of positive psychology has two main goals to promote well-being, first of all enhancing a positive mind by ignoring negative thoughts and second, identifying the strategies to promote positive health. The participants' understanding also agrees with the strength theory as it came out strongly that PPC helps to enhance the ability to develop and apply one's strengths. Passmore and Oades (2014) explain that central to this proposition is that the people will perform, feel and function better if they are using their strengths. Olsen (2015) argues that with its focus on happiness and strengths, positive psychology and the strengths movement are applicable at work.

As it was imperative that there was high understanding of PPC, it was easy to engage the coaches and coachees on the strength developed by PPC. The participants indicated that the main strengths that they developed in their journey were: self-awareness and interpersonal skills, improvement of confidence and resilience, the enhancement of learning and knowledge, the development of positive thinking and the enhancement of their decision-making skills.

These strengths were within four of the six categories of strengths from VIA strength. These were enhanced knowledge, the courage which is grounded on emotional strengths that involve the will to accomplish goals in the face of external or internal opposition which is critical in the workplace as temperance for self-control from self-awareness (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Not enough came from the participants which highlights the focus of the coaches on civic strength to foster health community life as well as transcendence for meaning and connection with surrounding universe. This meant that there was overall focus inwards, rather than using PPC for bigger picture beyond the person and the workplace, thus missing these critical aspects that are important for success in the workplace.

Based on these results, the proposition is partially confirmed that positive psychology coaching journey provide strength which includes wisdom and knowledge, courage, humanity and temperance but no experience of civic justice and transcendence for women in the workplace.

5.3. Challenges of positive psychology coaching

Proposition 2 of the study states that the positive psychology coaching execution approach as an alternative coaching method have challenges such as happiness obsession only for women success in the workplace. What was evident from the findings is that although the proposition was focused on the 'potential flaws' of the PPC as tool and method, the challenges were broad and were also more personal and environmental focused. As such there were three core challenges that were revealed by the findings, which were the personal coachee challenges, environmental challenges, as well as the PPC tools and methodology challenges (Figure 5.2).

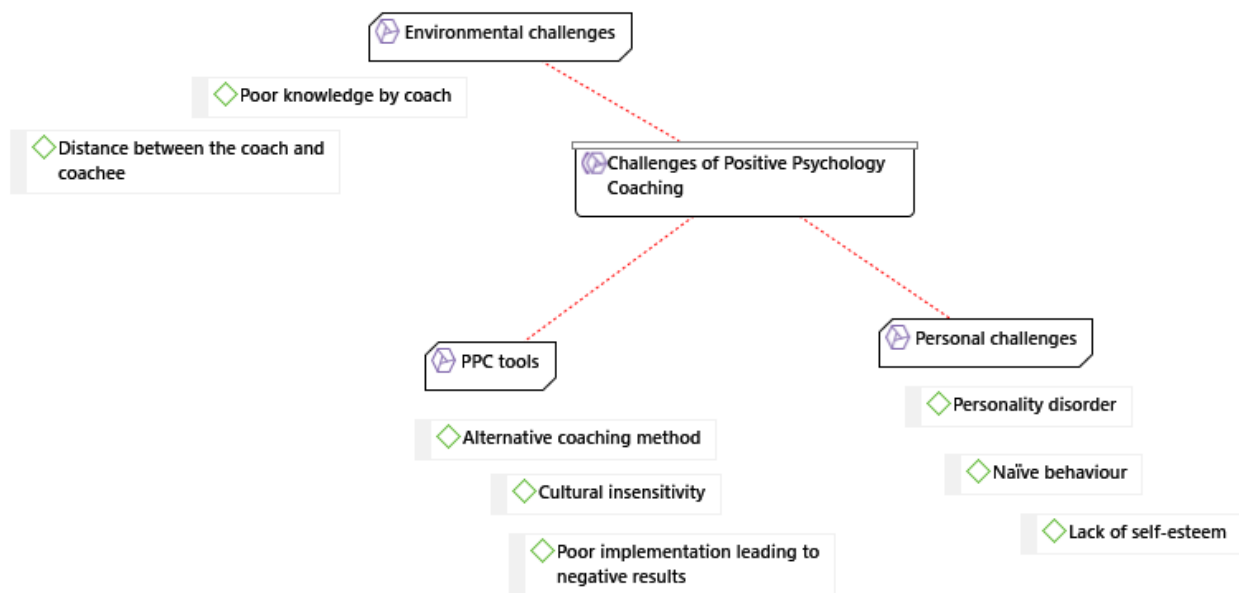


Figure 5.2 Challenges of positive psychology coaching

As a tool and method, there is a criticism of PPC is that it can be poorly implemented leading to negative results especially if there are challenges with coach's skills as highlighted in the study, where coaches were sometimes deviating to therapy. A possible plausible explanation is that the coaching psychologists still bring their primary skill to the fore which is therapy. What is also plausible is that PPC is new developing area, and as previously explained by Grant and Cavanagh, (2007) as well as Govindji and Linley, 2007 it is interchangeably used by coaching psychologist with evidence-based coaching or strengths coaching. Also highlighted is the cultural insensitive, which is a big challenge that can derail its success in a diverse country like South Africa with multiple language, culture, customs and beliefs. It is then important for the PPC to deliver within working structure and ensure that the personalities of the coaches do not influence the path. Because this brings complexities of individual personalities and hence a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not ideal to improve human functioning (Norem & Chang, 2002).

Critically though from the findings, it is evident that tools and methods were not the only key challenges, the personal issues of the coachee as well as the environmental issues were highlighted. The major one being the distance between the coach and coachees as there are few coaches and not always accessible to allow for more close interaction and effectively developing rapport and cues that help with the journey. This lack of hands on, sometime unknowledgeable coaches and the distance between coach and coachee, has been highlighted to have led to failure. Noticeable in these findings, is that the main challenge, which was highlighted by Kashadan and Steger (n.d). Based on the findings and discussion, it is evident that proposition 2 does not hold, and rather an alternative proposition can then be presented as follows:

Proposition 2: Positive psychology coaching success for women in the workplace can be negatively influence by the approach to usage of tools and methods by the coach, personal issues of coach and coachees as well as the environmental challenges.

5.4. Benefits of positive psychology coaching

Proposition 3 states that positive psychology coaching provides improve the coachee well-being and their quality of life in particular strength identification, goal setting, networking and building hope for future for women in the workplace.

The participants indicated that they benefited a lot from their coaching journey, some even discovered they had skills they did not know they had. The participants believed that some of the benefits that they got out of the whole journey was that they had an increase in the overall life success by having a better quality of life, sustainable relationships, financial stability as well as emotional and physical well-being. This outcome was congruent to those highlighted by Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) as a positive subjective experience that improve the quality of life. This is also supported by Fredrickson (2001) who posits that if moments in people's lives are categorised by experiences of positive emotions, emotions such as joy, interest, love and contentment, then they tend to be free from negative emotions. King, Hicks, Krull, and Del Gaiso (2016) also add to this view, that the benefits of this broader outlook provides for a wider range of hypotheses such as how the immediate experiences of positive emotions can change one's judgement of meaning of life. The aligns to the theory of well-being is sometimes referred to as PERMA theory, there is developing well-being with positive emotions, engagement, (Positive) relationships, meaning and accomplishment (Passmore & Oades, 2014). Furthermore, the findings revealed that the participants indicated that their communications skills were improved, they were able to network and build relationships.

There was a higher level of self-awareness and control where they were able to tap into their strengths, increase their energy, eliminate negative thoughts and felt empowered in so far as being able to achieve all their desires. In essence the positive emotions Broaden-and-build theory (BBT) as conceptualise by Fredrickson (1998), have managed to broaden the person's thoughts for these women in the workplace. This confirm proposition three that positive psychology coaching provides improve the coachee well-being and their quality of life in particular strength identification, goal setting, networking and building hope for future for women in the workplace.

5.5. Conclusion of the chapter

This chapter highlighted the strengths developed by the positive psychology coaching journey. The findings showed that PPC is a tool and method that assists the coachees to increase their well-being, reach their optimum psychological aspects, help them reach their full potential, focus on positive elements, boost confidence, enhance their ability to develop and apply strengths and improves their ability to stay visionary.

This chapter also looked at the challenges of PPC. These were identified as three core challenges which were: personal coachee challenges, environmental challenges as well as the PPC tools and methodology challenges.

The benefits of positive psychology coaching looked at in this chapter revealed an increase in the overall life success by having a better quality of life, sustainable relationships, financial stability as well as emotional and physical wellbeing. The participants also indicated that their communications skills were improved, and this was evident in that they were able to network and build relationships. The participants also noted a higher level of self-awareness and control where they were able to tap into their strengths, increase their energy, eliminate negative thoughts and feel empowered to be able to achieve all their desires.

The chapter also looked at the experiences of positive psychology coaching and their role for women in the workplace. Here the coaches explained that the reason why they were using PPC is that it provides them with tools and methodologies that are crucial to improve the overall well-being of the coachees, setting them on the path to success in the workplace.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Introduction

Chapter six brings forth the theoretical reflection of the research findings. In addition, in this chapter, the overall conclusions of the study are discussed, as well as recommendations for a future study in the field of positive psychology coaching and how it can be used for success for women in the workplace.

A literature review was done to understand what work had previously been completed in order to ground the study. There are several theories in positive psychology that are generally regarded as the grounding of the study. These include, Well-being theory, which is also called the PERMA model, Theory of Flow, Strength Theory, Broaden and Build Theory and Self-determination Theory. More importantly, it was evident from the theory that positive psychology plays an important part in coaching and solutions. The empirical review presented the importance of coaching for success in the workplace, and also evaluated the positive psychology coaching as the methodology for coaching women in the workplace. The data obtained from the interviews was analysed using a six-step thematic analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), resulting in four themes, which were understanding of positive psychology coaching, strengths developed by the positive psychology coaching journey, challenges of positive psychology coaching, as well as positive psychology coaching benefits.

6.2 Experiences of positive psychology coaching and their role for women in the workplace

Kaufmann et al (2009, p. 158) explains positive psychology coaching as “a scientifically-rooted approach to helping clients increase well-being, enhance and apply strengths, improve performance, and achieve valued goals” (p. 158). The strength it provides is very important for women in the workplace, at applying strength, improve performance and achieving goals is central to their success. Overall, the experiences of positive psychology

coaching were evaluated by understanding if the coaches and coachees have similar understanding as the authorities of PPC. It was evident that there were similar understandings. The coaches explained that they were using PPC as it provides them with tools and methodologies that are crucial to improve the overall well-being of the coachees, setting them up for success in the workplace.

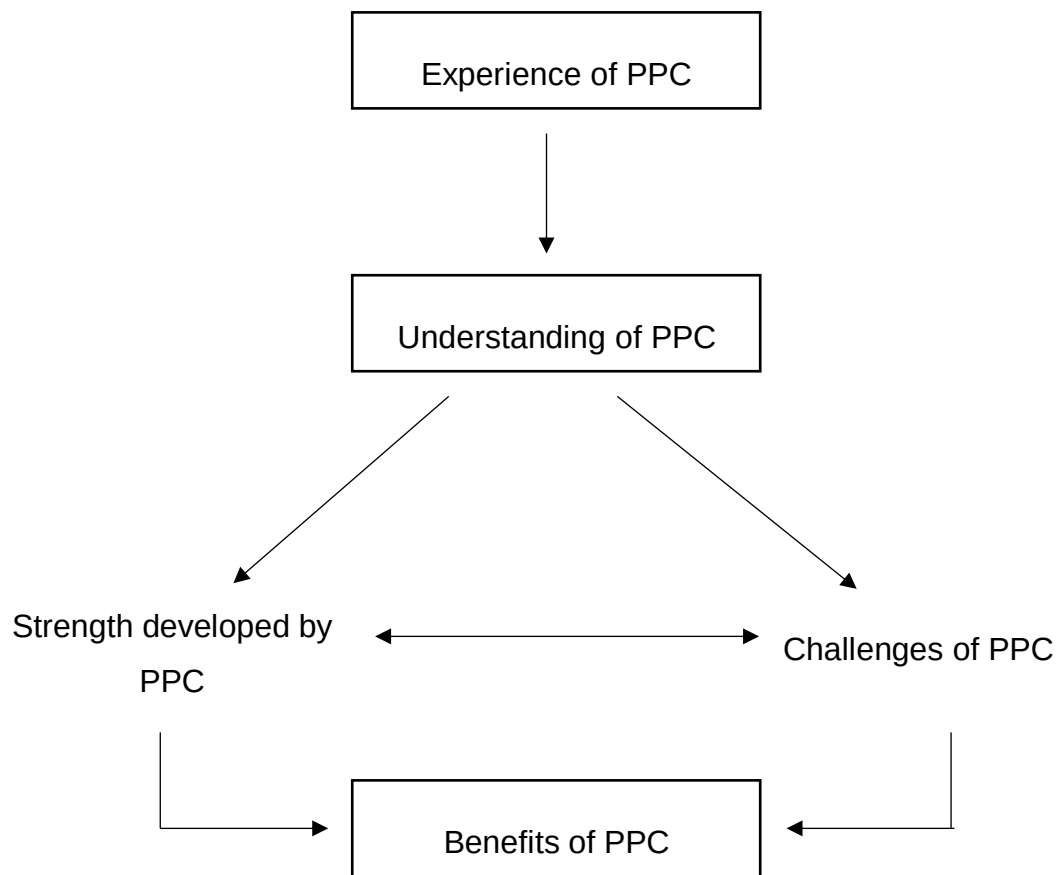


Figure 6.1 Conceptual model for the positive psychology coaching journey

6.3 Theoretical reflection of the findings

The overarching question of the study was to investigate what are the strengths developed by the positive psychology coaching journey?

The findings reported that positive psychology coaching assists the coachees to increase their well-being and reach their optimum psychological aspects. It also helps them to reach their full potential, focus on positive elements, boost confidence, help with well-being, enhance their ability to develop and apply strengths and improves their ability to stay visionary. The research therefore proved that there are strengths developed by PPC. These outcomes are congruent with the theories presented, especially the Well-being theory, which is also called the PERMA model, Theory of Flow, Strength Theory, Broaden and Build Theory and Self-determination Theory. What is evident is that that coaching can be used as a developmental intervention in the workplace. Coaching has been found to have an impact at both the self-efficacy and performance of individuals in the workplace (Grover & Furnham, 2016). As seen in other studies, it is expected that positive psychology coaching would improve the well-being and other psychological factors, such as resilience, greatly benefit individual and result in improved work performance and success for women (Stajkovic & Luthans, 2015).

For the success of the positive psychology coaching, interventions are required to ensure that the challenges of positive psychology coaching are not barriers to success, especially the three core challenges that were exposed by this research. These challenges were identified as: personal coachee challenges, environmental challenges, as well as the PPC tools and methodology challenges. The personal challenges referred to by the participants were poor knowledge of positive psychology coaching by the coach and also the distance between the coach and coachee, making the sessions less accessible. The research noted challenges relating to the PPC tools. These were cultural insensitivity, alternative coaching methods and a poor implementation of PPC, leading to negative results.

The research exposed the benefits of PPC as per the participants. The participants discovered positive traits about themselves that even they were not aware of. They also found that they were able to network better.

6.4. Limitations of the study

The research brought out a number of limitations that played a role in this study. In addition to the methodological limitations that affected this study that were mentioned in chapter 3. A major limitation was finding the coaches and coachees to be part of the study. It was made more difficult by the fact that the participants were apprehensive at the beginning, stating that this was 'too close for comfort'. This led to the research interviews not being recorded, with notes used to capture the empirical data. This was also coupled by the fact that the participants were finding it difficult to secure a time out of their schedules to secure a meeting.

6.5. Recommendations

A study that finds coachees before embarking on a positive psychology coaching journey and tracks their progress with their coaches over time is recommend. This study would address most of the limitations witnessed in this study. This should ideally address tools that will be used by the coaches before each session, whilst also looking at the benefits and/or challenges that are witnessed with each session. At the end, the study would research the understanding of positive psychology coaching from before the coaching sessions take place and compare this to results after the coaching sessions.

6.6. Conclusion

Positive psychology is rapidly growing with methods being identified for helping individuals (coaches) to move from flagging to flourishing through positive interventions which culminates from constructive engagements and actions. The research confirms that positive psychology coaching can be used as a coaching tool in assisting women to reach

their success in the workplace. It is evident that though there may be challenges to reaching success, it is possible to be coached to see the positive thus improving positive emotions, setting goal, network as have hope and strength to achieve it.

It is important to note that happiness cannot be used as the absolute measure of positivity. This is because negative experiences can be a good indicator of what the desired outcomes should be.

Positive psychology coaching is a vital tool for women in leadership as it enhances their ability to go for what they want and believe in themselves, thereby reaching their optimum psychological potential.

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Appendix I Consistency matrix: Traits and experiences of positive psychology coaching for women success in workplace

Sub-objectives	Sub-questions	Literature Review	Data collection method	Source of data	Analysis Method
Sub-objective 1 To understand the benefits and challenges of positive psychology coaching.	What are the benefits and challenges of positive psychology coaching?	Nickerson, 2007; Linley, Woolston & Biswas-Diene, 2009; Passmore & Oades, 2014, Rogers, 2012	Interview (semi-structured)	Coach and Coachees (Primary data) Interview guide: Question 2, 3	Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 6 - step) Using Atlas Ti 8.0
Sub-objective 2 To investigate the traits developed by the coaching journey.	What are the traits developed by the coaching journey?	Passmore & Oades, 2014. Nanduri, 2018, Lancer & Eatough, 2018) Grant & Spence, 2010. Csikszentmihalyi, 1977	Interview (semi-structured)	Coach and Coachees (Primary data) Interview guide: Question 4, 5	Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 6 - step) Using Atlas Ti 8.0
Sub-objective 3 To evaluate the experiences and outcomes of coaching	What are experiences and outcomes of coaching?	Passmore & Oades, 2014 Nanduri, 2018, Lancer & Eatough, 2018)	Interview (semi-structured)	Coach and Coachees (Primary data) Interview guide: Question 6, 7, 8 and possibly 9	Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 6 - step) Using Atlas Ti 8.0

Appendix II Instrument for the semi-structured interviews

1. Have you participated in coaching sessions using PPC tools and how would you describe these sessions?

2. In your opinion what is your understanding of PPC and its benefits?

3. What do you think are the challenges associated with PPC?

4. What are the traits that you developed during the coaching journey? (Coachee)
What traits do you aim to impart to a coachee during a coaching journey?
(Coach)

5. What in your opinion are the determinants of a coaching model for women in the workplace?

6. Why do you think that a coaching journey influences success?

7. What are tangible outcomes – Coachee?

What tangible outcomes were reported to you by coachee? (Coach)

8. Was the coaching journey successful in keeping you grounded in your traditional role as a woman, while enabling you to achieve success in the workplace?

9. Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences relating to PPC?

Appendix III Codes from the empirical data

1	Ability to build relationship	47	Ability to interact
2	Ability to set goals	48	Improved self-esteem
3	Ability to stay Visionary	49	Improvement of self-esteem
4	Achievement of goals	50	Increase well-being
5	Achievement of goals	51	Increases energy
6	Adopt new habits	52	Interpersonal sensitivity
7	Agility	53	Lack of cultural differences awareness
8	Alternative coaching method	54	Lack of self-esteem
9	Attentive listener	55	Learning approach
10	Background as a determinant	56	Life reflection
11	Be truthful	57	Manipulative systems applied
12	Being hands on	58	Mastering destiny
13	Being truthful to oneself	59	More research needed
14	Being intentional	60	Naïve behaviour
15	Boost confidence	61	Open doors to everyone
16	Boosted confidence	62	Optimism and contentment as outcomes
17	Changes the way people see themselves	63	Outcomes
18	Closure	64	Overall life success
19	Coaching model for women	65	Owning life journey
20	Communication skills	66	Personal growth
21	Confidence boosted	67	Personal growth and elimination of negative thoughts
22	Conscientiousness	68	Personal reflection

23	Contradictory	69	Personality disorder
24	Create false reality	70	Poor dilemma outlining
25	Curiosity about gaining knowledge	71	Poor implementation leading to negative results
26	Decision making skills	72	Poor knowledge by coach
27	Determination	73	Positive attitude
28	Develop strong coaching culture	74	Positive outlooks
29	Develop well-grounded individuals	75	Positive thinking
30	Developing of essential strengths	76	PPC tools
31	Difficulty on focusing on strength	77	PPC use
32	Distance between coach and coachee	78	Reach full potential
33	Elimination of negative thoughts	79	Reaching optimum psychological aspects
34	Empathetic	80	Remaining true to oneself
35	Empowering	81	Resilience
36	Empowers	82	Restrictive
37	Enhance ability and apply strength	83	Self-acceptance
38	Failure to empower African culture	84	Self-awareness
39	Focuses on positive elements	85	Self-efficacy
40	Give balance to women	86	Self-preservation
41	Growth	87	Simplistic about human experience

42	Guidelines to achieving goals	88	To be courageous
43	Guides you to your journey objective	89	Transformative outcome
44	Helps reach full potential	90	Uncompromising
45	Implements neuroscience habits	91	Understanding of PPC
46	Improve confidence	92	Wellbeing