

The role of systemic team coaching in supporting collective leadership

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ABSTRACT

This research explored the experiences of South African Gauteng-based leaders who have completed systemic team coaching in both the private and the public sector. The research also looked at how systemic team coaching supports collective leadership.

Systemic team coaching is in its infancy and was an attempt to address the coaching needs of leaders who operate in a complex and ever-changing environment in the twenty first century. Systemic team coaching recognises the fact that in the twenty first century, no one leader can single-handedly run an organisation, and therefore for organisations to survive, they need to move from relying on heroic individual leaders to a model that focuses on collective leadership, characterised by collaboration and co-operation.

For this qualitative research, face-to-face semi-structured interviews were found to be an appropriate form of collecting data. Data was collected from sixteen participants composed of eight participants from the private sector and eight participants from the public sector.

Key findings are that most participants found value in systemic team coaching and they felt that the programme supported collective leadership, however most participants highlighted that for the long-term sustainability of systemic team coaching, there is a need to institutionalise the programme and to train leaders and their teams so that they are able to take over and sustain the programme once the systemic team coaches exit the organisation.

KEY WORDS – Collective leadership, systemic team coaching, team coaching.

DECLARATION

I, Lindelwa Xingwana-Jabavu, 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 Business Executive Coaching at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination in this or any other university.

Name: Lindelwa Xingwana-Jabavu

Signature: 

Signed at Pretoria

On the 28 day of September 2020

DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my husband, Mongameli Jabavu, and my children Phaphama, Zinzisa and Thando, my grandchildren, Mivuyo and Msimelelo, my sisters, Nokulunga and Lulama, and their children and grandchildren; that they may embrace growth and continuous learning.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

EQ: Emotional Intelligence

IQ: Intelligence Quotient

VUCA: Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this qualitative research is to explore the experiences of leaders who have gone through systemic team coaching within the South African public and private sector and to examine how systemic team coaching can support collective leadership.

1.2 Context of the study

This study took place within the global modern business environment where, according to Hawkins (2018), leaders need to be able to lead in an environment that is continuously experiencing rapid change and disruption, described as VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous). Clutterbuck (2013) had earlier raised this point and argued that although individual coaching is effective and has been the preferred form of coaching for years, team coaching is emerging as a preferred form of coaching in the twenty first century. Clutterbuck (2013) further argued that team coaching helps the team to have a better understanding of the team's purpose. Hawkins (2014) argued that unlike in the past, no one heroic chief executive officer or leader can be a point of integration for the whole organisation and that the need for collective leadership which incorporates the views of diverse stakeholders is critical.

On the other hand, Brent and Dent (2015) explained that in the 21st century, leaders have to deal with complex and diverse issues such as the expectations of Generation Y and millennials in an environment that has no clear solutions and leaders often find themselves dealing with ambiguities, while they have to ensure that they continuously gain competitive advantage. Einzig (2017a) argued that the role of the executive coach in the 21st century should evolve and should be fit for purpose and should help leaders to navigate their environment in turbulent times. According to Arakawa (2013), millennials, who have now started joining leadership roles, do not want authoritarian leadership and they expect

organisational leaders to direct and not to command, to empower and to embrace an inclusive and collective leadership style rather than an authoritarian style of leadership. Arakawa (2013) further observed that millennials want to make a meaningful contribution and organisations need to consider inclusive leadership styles that will incorporate diverse voices into decision-making. Einzig (2017b) also highlighted that women have also entered leadership roles in organisations and they bring with them qualities of empathy, vulnerability, collaboration, inclusivity and collective leadership which should be encourage as critical qualities for organisations in the 21st century.

Kelly (2018) raised another critical issue that will impact on leadership development in the 21st century, namely, the fourth industrial revolution and the connected world in which modern organisations operate. Kelly (2018) explained that technology will bring about unprecedented, exponential change that will impact on systems of production, management and governance. Kelly (2018) also highlighted that the fourth industrial revolution will result in improved transparency within organisations and will make information freely available to all employees and all critical stakeholders and this in turn, requires a change in how leaders manage teams and how they manage relationships with critical stakeholders and their teams, including virtual teams located in different parts of the world and how leadership development programmes, including executive coaching programmes, cater for these changes.

Bawany (2020) argued that the concept of leadership has to be redefined in a highly digitised and disruptive environment to become more agile and responsive to the VUCA environment. Hyacinth (2020) emphasised the importance of creating high performance and resilient teams that can operate remotely/virtually and collaboratively in a highly digitised world and in the face of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Hyacinth (2020) further highlighted that this change in the business environment will require the reskilling of the workforce and the implementation of best practices, including empowering leaders on how to lead teams and retain top talent.

In addition to the above complexities, Stout-Rostron (2019) highlighted that teams and their leaders must be aware of cultural diversity and its impact especially on diverse teams and on teams that have a global footprint. Owen (2016) emphasised that for global teams to rise to the challenges, they need to balance commitment to local goals while paying attention to the diverse global organisational goals. Schwab (2017) also identified the need for more soft skills, such as team work, communication, networking and distance leadership, especially for organisations that have a global footprint.

Schwab (2017) also recommended a move away from hierarchical structures, towards more decentralised, open and self-regulating organisational structures in the era of the fourth industrial revolution. Hayward (2011) emphasised the importance of collaboration, creativity, collective and devolved leadership amongst the skills that will enable leadership teams to succeed in the 21st century.

Deloitte (2016), in a research on Human Capital trends on the future human resource needs of organisations of 7000 companies in 130 countries, found that 92% of the companies surveyed were concerned that they were not sufficiently equipped to succeed in an ever-changing business environment and that the traditional hierarchical structures led by one leader at the top of the organisation and supported by a management team that operates in functional silos, were no longer effective in an environment that requires collective leadership so as to be able to effectively drive the organisation's strategy and to solve problems in an agile and dynamic approach.

Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) explained the disruption that is experienced in modern times as a moment of death from an ego system that cares about the well-being of self and a moment of rebirth of an ecosystem that cares about the well-being of all. Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) further argued that for leaders to survive this disruption, they should let go of the past and collectively learn from the emerging possibilities in order to co-create a new reality and move away from reactive problem solving approaches.

Lines and Scholes-Rhodes (2013) argued that systemic team coaching attempts to address the needs of modern leaders who are concerned about the challenges created by VUCA while at the same time they want to make a difference to the world's global, social, political, environmental and economic challenges. Heffernan (2011) cautioned leaders who are only concerned about financial benefits and care less about the social and broader impact of their businesses to their stakeholders and the broader environment they operate in, to change their attitude and to pay attention to broader environmental issues.

Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) also highlighted that leaders of the 21st century are no longer content to make profits while not making a difference in the global, social, environmental and economic challenges that the world faces today and that executive coaching should broaden its scope to cater for the changing executive coaching needs of these leaders. Peters and Carr (2013) observed that leaders in the post heroic world want to be part of collaborative and collective leadership relationships within their business environments.

Senge, Hamilton, and Kania (2015) identified the following critical capabilities for leaders to be able to drive change; the ability to operate as a collective and to empower their teams to see the bigger picture, to understand the systemic challenges their organisations are faced with, to be able to do more with continuously diminishing resources, to embrace diversity, collective leadership and to frequently hold up the mirror to see and appreciate the limitations of old mental models and lastly, to shift the team's focus from reactive problem solving to co-creating the future as a collective leadership team.

McChrystal, Collins, Silverman, and Fussell (2015) also highlighted the need for new rules of engagement in a complex modern world. McChrystal et al. (2015) proposed a 'team of teams' concept which is characterised by the formation of small empowered teams with a clearly defined common purpose and a clear understanding of the big picture. McChrystal et al. (2015) further argued that for these teams to be effective, there should be trust amongst the team members

and they should be empowered to think big and have authority to take decisions on their common area of responsibility.

To lead an organisation effectively, Clutterbuck (2013) recommended that the leadership team should collectively undertake to continuously study and understand the systemic challenges of the environment in which they operate and to be aware of the diverse needs of critical internal and external stakeholder groups such as the Board, employees, internal and external customers, regulatory bodies, and communities in which the organisation operates. Raelin (2017) pointed out that in an interconnected world, collective leadership provides for collaboration amongst various stakeholders.

Senge et al. (2015) encouraged leadership teams to either embrace disruptions and to disrupt their own operations through innovation in order to avoid being disrupted by competitors. Senge et al. (2015) also emphasised that the leadership team must be aware of the ever-changing requirements of transforming an organisation into a business of tomorrow while ensuring the effective day-to-day running of the current business. To create organisations that invest in their future, Govindarajan (2016), recommended that business leaders must allocate resources for the competing resources of running the day-to-day business and also allocate separate resources that will continuously explore innovative ideas so as to concurrently create the business of tomorrow.

Hawkins (2018) emphasised the interface between the following disciplines; Organisational Development (OD), Leadership Development and Strategy. Goldsmith and Silvester (2018) highlighted the importance of stakeholder focussed executive coaching as a way of addressing the complex needs of modern businesses and a way of improving collective leadership.

On the other hand, Whittington (2016) argued that an understanding of the systemic challenges of the internal and external environments in which the business operates, is important for both the executive coach and the team that is being coached so as to achieve good results in the coaching programme.

Katzenbach and Smith (2015) held a slightly different view, that individual functional accountability remains important as opposed to collective leadership, to ensure organisational performance and that systemic team coaching is not a one-hat-fits-all solution for leadership challenges of the 21st century.

Lines and Scholes-Rhodes (2013) emphasised that it is important to clarify that the systemic team coaching model consists both of a process of coaching the whole team together as a collective, and apart as individual managers who form part of a team over a period of time. Hawkins and Turner (2020) further explained that both individual systemic coaching and systemic team coaching draw from the environment within which the organisation operates, which is what enriches the systemic team and individual coaching processes.

Thornton (2010) observed that teams have an explicit shared purpose, usually in a broader organisational context, and that teams usually exist before and after the coaching intervention, with communication patterns and that systemic team coaching should strengthen the team's delivery on their shared purpose.

Clutterbuck (2013) described executive team coaching as a learning intervention which is meant to enhance collective capability and performance of the leadership team through facilitated reflection, analysis and motivation for change.

On the other hand, Higgins, Young, Weiner, and Wlodarczyk (2010) found that teams are more effective when team members and not team leaders, coach each other and when they co-create their desired outcomes. Hall (2019) emphasised the importance of fostering compassion and mindfulness within the team so as to create a culture that is conducive to co-learning. Kahn (2011) described the interfaces within the coaching processes in three dimensions, namely, the environment, the coaching relationship and the individual, with the goal of enhancing performance in the organisation.

Clutterbuck (2013) argued that the key mindset is to acknowledge that the management team being coached already has the potential abilities required to

reach their goals, and the role of the executive coach is to help unlock this hidden potential and to highlight the ever-changing expectations of the stakeholders.

1.3 Problem statement

1.3.1 Main problem

Senge et al. (2015) clearly identified a need for a different approach to leadership development, which requires a disruption of traditional executive coaching models in the 21st century where organisational change is constant.

Clutterbuck (2013) argued that traditional hierarchical leadership models and traditional executive coaching programmes that focus on empowering individual leaders are no longer suitable in the VUCA environment that requires collective and collaborative leadership.

The research therefore explored the experiences of South African leaders who have gone through the systemic team coaching programme and how the programme supports collective leadership.

1.3.2 Sub-problems

The first sub-problem is to explore the experiences of Gauteng-based South African public and private sector leaders who have gone through systemic team coaching.

The second sub-problem is to examine how the systemic team coaching programme supports collective leadership.

1.4 Research objectives

To explore the experiences of Gauteng based South African private and public sector leaders who have gone through a systemic team coaching programme and to examine how the systemic team coaching programme supports collective leadership.

According to Creswell (2016), research objectives narrow the purpose of the research and they highlight a two-way relationship between the research questions and the research problem.

1. This research explores the experiences of Gauteng-based South African leaders who have gone through a systemic team coaching programme within the public and the private sector.
2. The study also looks into how systemic team coaching supports collective leadership for these public and private sector leaders.

1.5 Significance of the study

This study contributes to the academic debate around improving executive coaching in response to the complex challenges faced by leaders in the 21st century.

The study also adds a South African perspective to how systemic team coaching supports collective leadership. It also benefits organisations as they try to find leadership development programmes that respond to 21st century complex organisational challenges. The study also benefits business leaders who coach their own teams as part of improving performance and leadership development.

Systemic team coaching is in its infancy globally, and therefore there is limited information on the programme, both in South Africa and internationally. This research will therefore contribute towards building the body of knowledge that will assess the effectiveness of systemic team coaching and how it supports collective leadership.

Hawkins (2017b) argued that although executive coaching achieved a lot in the past 30 years, with one of the achievements being to move the emphasis of leadership from intelligence quotient (IQ) to emotional intelligence (EQ), there is a need to now move leaders to 'We Q' or collaborative intelligence so that teams can achieve more than the sum of their parts. Hawkins (2018) further argued that

executive coaching in the 21st century should strive to become a driving force for social change and should step up to create value for a bigger role and a higher purpose, in response to the diverse and ever-changing environments in which organisations operate. This study will help to establish whether systemic team coaching fulfils the requirement to help leaders respond collectively to the ever-changing environmental and stakeholder needs.

Walker-Fraser (2011) argued that organisations spend in excess of two billion dollars a year globally, on external executive coaching programmes which are seen as part of an investment in leadership development and therefore there is a need to assess the value-add of executive coaching programmes and their effectiveness. Grant (2013) observed that organisations use executive coaching in times of organisational change to help leaders to simultaneously manage their work related goals, while they also deal with the turbulence associated with organisational change. Grant (2013) further argued that despite the widespread use of executive coaching, little research explored the effectiveness of executive coaching. This study examined the role of systemic team coaching in supporting collective leadership and whether there is value in institutionalising systemic team coaching to lower levels of organisational teams.

In terms of methodology, this study followed a qualitative method to explore the experiences of South African leaders, both in the public and the private sector and assessed how systemic team coaching supports collective leadership.

Taylor, Bogdan, and DeVault (2015) described qualitative research as concerned with the meaning people attach to things from their own perspective and their own frame of reference. Taylor et al. (2015) further cautioned that qualitative research requires a suspension of own judgement and perspectives and an understanding of people's reality as the people experience it. This qualitative research looked at systemic team coaching from the perspective of Gauteng-based leaders within the public and the private sector.

1.6 Delimitations of the study

The scope of the study was limited to Gauteng-based South African leaders within the public and the private sector who have completed the systemic team coaching programme.

This study therefore did not apply to other provinces of South African and other countries outside of South Africa.

The samples were selected from cross functional teams and varying leadership levels, starting from executive level to middle managers who participated in the systemic team coaching programme within Gauteng based organisations in the private sector and the public sector

This study excluded all other forms of team coaching interventions, including group coaching. The study only focused on systemic team coaching.

1.7 Definition of terms

1.7.1 Collective leadership

Brookes and Grint (2010) defined collective leadership as a concept whereby leaders collaborate in achieving a shared purpose and vision and shared values in a collegial way which promotes improved value for stakeholders. Brookes and Grint (2010) further highlighted that for collective leadership to be successful, individual leaders must derive individual benefit from the collective and must consider the whole as greater than the sum of the parts. Cullen, Palus, Chrobot-Mason, and Appaneal (2012) identified the outcomes of collective leadership as direction, alignment, collaboration, teamwork and commitment within the collective.

1.7.2 Group coaching

Lines and Scholes-Rhodes (2013) defined group coaching as a group of managers who have a shared interest in a project or issue but no collective responsibility for the output. Lines and Scholes-Rhodes (2013) further clarified the role of the executive coach as that of facilitating the discussion and assisting the group to find individual solutions and actions.

1.7.3 Systemic team coaching

Hawkins (2014) defined systemic team coaching as a coaching programme that is presented to the team as an inseparable collective team coaching unit and also has individual systemic coaching sessions for the individual team members who participate in the systemic team coaching programme.

Hawkins (2017b) further emphasised that systemic team coaching draws from a number of coaching approaches, such as, individual coaching, group coaching, team building, team facilitation, strategy, inter-team coaching and organisational development, amongst others, to produce systemic team coaching as a new multidisciplinary approach which is informed by the environment in which the organisation operates.

1.7.4 Team coaching

Clutterbuck (2013) defined team coaching as a learning intervention designed to increase the collective capability of a team through the application of coaching principles of assisted reflection, analysis and motivation for change. Clutterbuck (2013) further explained that team coaching is a relationship over time between the whole team and a coach in which they work jointly to improve the collective team achievement. Wageman, Nunes, Burruss, and Hackman (2008) highlighted that for any form of team coaching to be successful, special attention should go towards the selection of the right team members, a compelling purpose for the team, teamwork and collaboration and an opportunity for growth and learning for the individual team members and for the team as a collective.

1.8 Assumptions

- It was assumed that the views and experiences articulated by the respondents were only those of Gauteng based leaders (within the public sector and the private sector) who have completed the systemic team coaching programme.
- It was assumed that the respondents articulated their views with honesty and integrity.
- It was assumed that the demographic profile of the respondents was appropriate and sufficient for this study.
- It was assumed that the interview questions and language would be appropriate and clear for the interviewees to give accurate answers.

1.9 Conclusion

Chapter 1 dealt with the purpose of this study which aimed to explore the experiences of Gauteng-based South African private and public sector leaders who have gone through systemic team coaching and how systemic team coaching supports collective leadership. This chapter defined the research problem, its objectives and the research questions. The chapter also covered the contribution the research will make and defined who will benefit from the study.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

As the world experiences exponential change and disruption on many fronts, and as the global village experiences VUCA, Senge et al. (2015) argued that traditional executive coaching programmes which focus mainly on the individual development needs of leaders, will prove to be inadequate and executive coaches will have to step up in order to better support leaders to move towards a more inclusive and collective leadership style which takes into account the ever-changing and diverse stakeholder needs. Clutterbuck (2013) argued that team coaches should respond to these challenges by creating a more appropriate coaching programme that supports leaders during these times of exponential change. Raelin (2017) sighted various benefits of collective leadership in a networked economy of the the 21st, which requires collaboration within teams to satisfy the needs of diverse multiple stakeholders. Raelin (2017) further urged that the complex environment organisations operate in requires a different learning model which does not focus on the individual leader but on leadership as a collective. Schwab (2017) emphasised that leadership programmes including executive coaching programmes should address the needs of modern organisations which operate under ever changing conditions.

The following literature related to systemic team coaching, which Hawkins (2014) proposed as a response to the above global organisational leadership challenges, is reviewed. The literature review looked at systemic team coaching and how it supports collective leadership.

2.1.1 Theoretical framework

The literature review looked at the concept of systemic team coaching as developed and launched by Professor Hawkins in 2010. The theoretical framework also looked at collective leadership and the relationship between systemic team coaching and collective leadership. Hawkins (2014) developed the concept in response to the change and disruption under which 21st century

leaders have to operate. Hawkins (2014) argued that because of the complexity of the modern business environment, systemic team coaching, which takes into account the environment in which organisations operate, is an appropriate response from the coaching profession.

At the core of the systemic team coaching concept, Hawkins (2014) argued that there is a need for new levels of collective and shared leadership characterised by teamwork, collaboration, systemic thinking, and a clear commitment and understanding of the collective purpose and objectives as seen by the diverse stakeholders of the organisation. Kuenkel (2018) clarified the importance of collective leadership as a preferred form of leadership that can assist modern leaders to manage organisational and global challenges such as climate change, water scarcity, energy insecurity and growing inequality. Kuenkel (2018) emphasised that addressing these major challenges facing modern organisations and the world today cannot be resolved by leaders who operate in silos. Clutterbuck (2013) argued that although individual coaching is a powerful tool, it is dependant on the team and its environment and for it to be effective, the coaching programme should also address the system and the environment in which the individual operates.

On the other hand, Wageman et al. (2008) emphasised the importance of selecting the right people with the right skills and competencies and creating a compelling purpose for the team as a collective to be effective. Wageman et al. (2008) further emphasised that for teams to be effective and for team coaching to be impactful, the team must be the right size, should afford members opportunities for learning and growth and there should be teamwork and collaboration within the team. In addition to the above conditions, Wageman et al. (2008) said the team should be fit for purpose in its design, and that no amount of team coaching will improve the team if the right conditions do not exist.

Senge et al. (2015) argued that unlike traditional heroic individual leadership, collective leadership embraced the diversity of people and created an environment for individual learning and team learning. Hill, Brandeau, Truelove,

and Kent (2014) argued that for modern organisations that have to continuously innovate and unleash the collective genius of their teams, a new kind of leadership which creates a shared vision, a common purpose and creates a conducive environment for innovation is required, namely collective leadership. Senge et al. (2015) further explained that collective leadership is characterised by a shared vision, a shared purpose and shared goals and is a more appropriate form of leadership in the 21st century.

2.2 Background discussion

According to Patterson (2017), the current disruptive and ever-changing business environment in which organisations operate, places a great challenge on organisational leaders and as a result, only 30% of Chief Executive Officers expressed confidence in their ability to lead modern organisations into a business that consistently creates value for the shareholders. Patterson (2017) indicated that 58% of new senior managers fail within 18 months due to the complexities of the business environment in which they operate and a lack of adequate, fit for purpose executive coaching programmes. Hollingworth (2016) emphasised that, for leaders and their teams to be able to navigate the VUCA environment, they must be able to deal with ambiguity and complexity. On the other hand, Mack, Anshuman, Kramer, and Burgartz (2016) highlighted the importance of strong collaborative networks, innovation ethics and the firms agility to repond speedily to changes in the environment. (Mack et al., 2016) emphasised the need for teams to expand their knowledge and the application of new concepts and frameworks so as to deal with rapid change within their organisations.

2.2.1 The different forms of team coaching interventions

As systemic team coaching is an important aspect of the study and a proposed solution to these global leadership challenges, it is critical that different forms of team coaching and team interventions are differentiated from systemic team coaching and that a brief theoretical background around this subject is discussed.

Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011) argued that there are a number of group coaching interventions, including team coaching, group coaching, and team building.

Grant (2013) further argued that team coaching helps the individual team members to make sense of the context of the organisation and it helps to extend emotional intelligence into social intelligence, while systemic team coaching incorporates the needs of stakeholders into the coaching programme and focuses the team on the achievement of a common purpose which the team is collectively held responsible for.

According to Peters and Carr (2013), systemic team coaching is different from ordinary team coaching in that team coaching is meant to help the team to work well together in achieving individual and team goals. Peters and Carr (2013) also observed that team coaching has been used as an umbrella term that incorporates team facilitation, and team building, amongst other team interventions, and it normally helps to create a safe space for team members where they can ask better questions and where an environment for equal participation is created.

Thornton (2010) differentiated between team coaching and group coaching. Thornton (2010) defined group coaching as a coaching process which is facilitated by a professional coach and is meant to improve the experience, wisdom and energy of the individual members of the group who are not necessarily part of a team.

Hawkins (2018) further explained the key difference between group coaching and systemic team coaching as the existence of an explicit shared purpose with unifying shared goals for a team that participates in systemic team coaching, as opposed to a group coaching programme that is attended by individuals who are not bound by any shared purpose and are not collectively held accountable for specific shared goals.

Hawkins (2018) further differentiated between systemic team coaching and systems team coaching which focuses on collaboration within the team, team dynamics and is inward focused and its boundaries are within the team, as opposed to systemic team coaching which incorporates the environment and the organisation's stakeholder needs. Goldsmith and Silvester (2018) also emphasised the inclusion of stakeholder views through a 360 degree evaluation right at the beginning of the team coaching programme.

2.3 Research Question 1: What are the experiences of leaders who have completed systemic team coaching?

Hawkins (2017b) defined systemic team coaching as a process of coaching the whole team together and individually, over an agreed period of time. Lines and Scholes-Rhodes (2013) further described the purpose of systemic team coaching as the creation of a common purpose and collective leadership and that it involves engagement with critical stakeholder groups and the transformation of the business as one of the expected outcomes of the systemic team coaching programme.

Peters and Carr (2013) clarified that systemic team coaching goes further by incorporating the stakeholder needs and the organisational system in which the team operates. Hawkins (2018) described this as getting more of the system into the coaching room and getting the stakeholders to occupy a chair in the team coaching session and as coaching the ecosystem and the connections between the partnerships.

Lines and Scholes-Rhodes (2013) explained that systemic team coaching is meant to ensure that the leadership team collectively delivers on a unifying common purpose which is derived from a common mission and vision that they cannot achieve working individually or as parallel teams.

2.3.1 The five disciplines of systemic team coaching

Further to the six lenses of systemic team coaching, Hawkins (2014) developed the following five disciplines framework that forms part of the systemic team coaching programme:

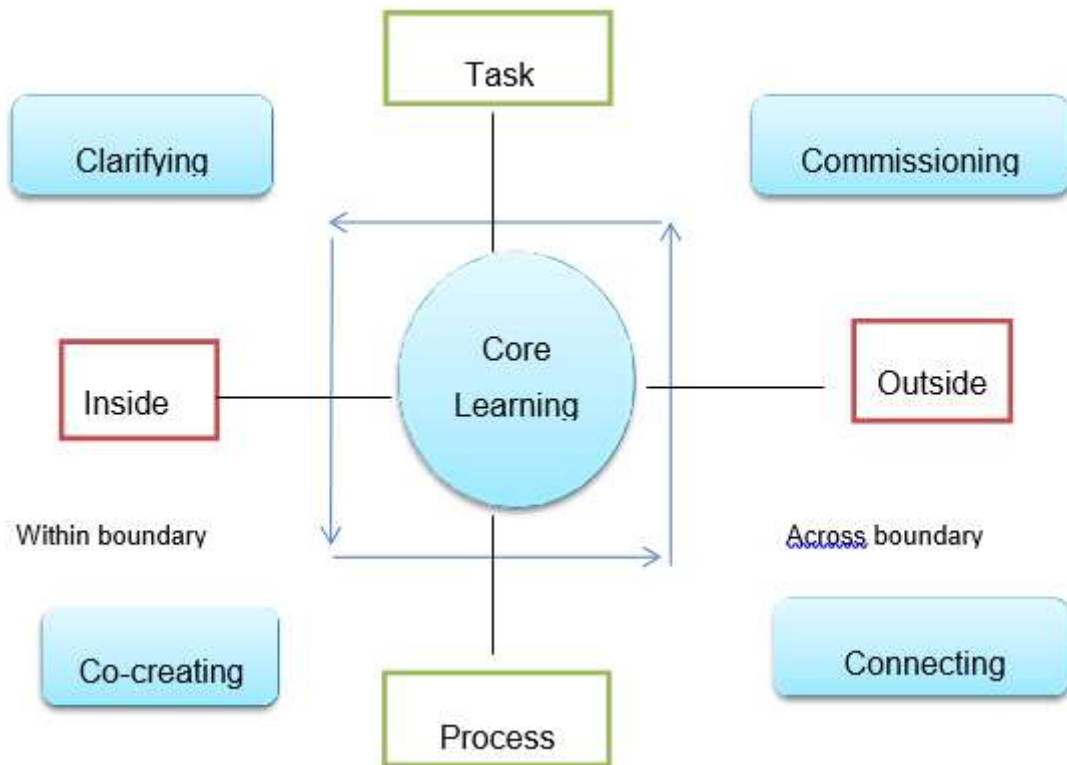


Figure 2.3.2: Five disciplines of systemic team coaching, adapted from Hawkins (2014)

2.3.2 Commissioning

This is the first discipline and it focuses on identifying the unifying purpose for the team and why the team can only achieve the purpose when they work as a collective. Hawkins (2018) also referred to this first discipline as “co-missioning” so as to emphasise the fact that the common purpose can only be achieved if the team works as a collective in formulating the mission and not as individual members. emphasised that leaders and teams must start off with understanding

the why so that they can embrace a sense of purpose. Senge et al. (2015) supported the scanning of the environment so that the executive team coach and the leadership team can have a clear understanding of stakeholder needs right from the beginning of the programme.

2.3.3 Joint-clarification

Hawkins (2014) articulated the second discipline as joint clarification and an understanding of what is needed for the team to co-create value with and for the stakeholders. Hawkins (2017b) argued that this discipline requires the team to create a collective endeavour that is challenging, compelling and rewarding for both the team as a whole and each individual member of the team and must be an endeavour that requires that all team members work together to achieve good results. Clutterbuck (2013) argued that the team must have a strategy on how they will achieve the targets, systems, protocols, processes, roles, responsibilities and values.

2.3.4 Co-creation

Hawkins (2017a) explained the third discipline as co-creation, which focuses on achieving more as a collective unit rather than as individuals through improved team relationships. According to Scharmer and Kaufer (2013), the value of having a team that is able to make meaningful contributions in co-creating a new vision, cannot be underestimated. Sinek (2020) pointed out that leaders who co-create their organisations based on a vision of a continuously changing future world with an infinite mindset are able to learn new ways of doing things and are better able to drive and survive change.

2.3.5 Connecting

According to Hawkins (2014), this fourth discipline requires the team to connect with all critical stakeholders in order to build the types of relationships that will improve both the team's and organisation's performance.

2.3.6 Core-learning

Finally, Hawkins (2014) described the last discipline as core learning which enables the team to learn from all the disciplines and reflect on what they have learnt and what they will do differently in future. Brent and Dent (2015) described core learning as an exciting phase, especially for the younger generation of leaders who prefer to be part of learning organisations. Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) cautioned that leaders should pause and spend time on generative thinking and learn from the experiences of the team, hence the importance of this final discipline. Bahcall (2019) emphasised vigilance and the ability of teams not to neglect projects that could the organisation to a more innovative level through disrupting their own business.

Hawkins (2018) further emphasised that the above five disciplines do not have to be implemented in a linear fashion, and that systemic team coaches should start the process with the discipline that will address the needs of the team at that particular moment. Hawkins (2018) further clarified that core learning is an integral part of all the disciplines and that it happens all the time.

To kick start the systemic team coaching programme, Lines and Scholes-Rhodes (2013) recommended a 360 degree feedback tool that will give the status of the team prior to the systemic team coaching process and will evaluate how the team is experienced by critical stakeholders. Lines and Scholes-Rhodes (2013) referred to the outcome of this 360 degree evaluation as stakeholder expectations which form the basis of the commissioning process.

Clutterbuck (2013) explained that the team should get a better understanding of what both internal and external stakeholders expect and what the team must do to meet the stakeholders' expectations. Clutterbuck (2013) further explained that this results in the team connecting with its mandate and with those it serves. Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) argued that this process takes the organisation to the next phase and should be embraced by the leadership team.

Hawkins (2018) argued that the systemic team coaching process results in increased productivity, improved collective accountability and leadership and better alignment at leadership level, however Wageman et al. (2008) cautioned that good results only come if sixty per cent of the time is spent on preparatory work, including determining whether a team is needed to perform the task and once that determination has been made, ensuring that the right people and the right resources are allocated to the team. In addition to these conditions, Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) argued that leaders who are able to see both the current reality and the emerging future of their business environment are able to better manage their teams.

2.3.7 The six lenses of systemic team coaching

Lines and Scholes-Rhodes (2013) highlighted that there are six lenses of systemic team coaching: individual, interpersonal, team relationships, team tasks, stakeholder interface and a wider organisational context.



FIGURE 2.3.7: The six lenses of systemic team coaching as adapted from Lines and Scholes-Rhodes (2013)

2.3.8 Proposition 1

The experiences of leaders who completed the systemic team coaching programme were positive and benefitted the leadership team as a collective.

2.4 Research Question 2: Systemic team coaching and how it supports collective leadership

Petrie (2011) argued that with the changes in the global business environment, there is a shift from seeing leadership as a person or a role to seeing leadership as a collective process characterised by open flows of information, loosening of centralised control, flexible hierarchies, distributed resources and collective decision making. Petrie (2011) identified new skills which include adaptability, self-awareness, collaboration, networking, systems thinking and change management, as critical leadership skills in the 21st century. Peltier (2011) observed that there were now coaches that came from a consulting and business background in addition to the coaches that came from a psychology background.

Hayward, Freeman, and Tickner (2017) highlighted the need for connected leadership, agility and customer-centric ways of working in the 21st century. Hayward et al. (2017) further articulated the foundation for connected leadership as shared values, devolved decision making, collaboration, authentic leadership, a clear purpose, direction, trust, transparency and clear communication.

Gowing and Langdon (2015) further highlighted the need to have a diverse leadership team and to attract leaders who will look at things with a different lens and to allow for dissenting voices in order to enrich the proposed decisions of the collective leadership team. Motyl (2019) emphasised that leaders should value those who disagree with them and those who are not afraid to speak out. Motyl (2019) further argued that dispersed leadership means that there is less risk of one leader making a poor strategic decision.

Gowing and Langdon (2015) further argued that failure to set up a good leadership team and failure to create a clear, inclusive and compelling purpose for the team will lead to a failure of the collective team. Senge et al. (2015) used Mandela's style of leadership after 1994 as an example of collective leadership that was characterised by a compelling purpose and a clear shared vision.

Grant (2013) explained that teams usually exist before and after the coaching intervention, have an explicit shared purpose which is usually in the broader organisational context and individual learning is usually in the service of the collective achieving its shared purpose. Grant (2013) also observed that most executive coaching programmes are one-on-one and he encourages organisations to move to structured and relevant team coaching programmes which promote more collaboration and shared leadership.

Grant (2013) also cautioned that for team coaching programmes to be effective, teams should be small enough (not more than ten members) for both individual learning and team learning needs to be addressed.

Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011) further argued that generalised team coaching programmes are inappropriate as a means of creating goal-focused change in organisations, especially in the 21st century.

Senge et al. (2015) argued that for leaders to be able to drive change collectively, they are expected to question existing mental models that they have relied on for decades and they must be disruptive, bold and humble enough to be open to new creative solutions. West, Eckert, Steward, and Pasmore (2014) emphasised the importance of collective leadership especially as institutions continue to operate on limited human resources and budget constraints. Thornton (2016) also supported this view and indicated the need for collaboration if teams are to function at more than the sum of their parts.

Lee (2017) encouraged coaches to emphasise authentic leadership so as to obtain deep and more meaningful results. On the other hand, Clutterbuck (2013) cautioned against the dangers of traditional executive coaching programmes,

especially if the coach places a lot of reliance on one individual leader (who is also the coachee and the sponsor of the executive team coaching programme) and if the coach does not take the time to have a full understanding of the systemic challenges under which the organisation operates and does not listen to the current and future needs of key stakeholders, such as, the board, the customers, employees and other critical stakeholders, the coaching needs of the organisation might not be fully met. On the other hand, Hawkins (2018) argued that the coachee is not the client, and that the coach and the coachee have one joint client, namely, the stakeholders, and that both the coachee and the coach must work shoulder-to-shoulder in a partnership and as a collective to meet the needs of the stakeholders.

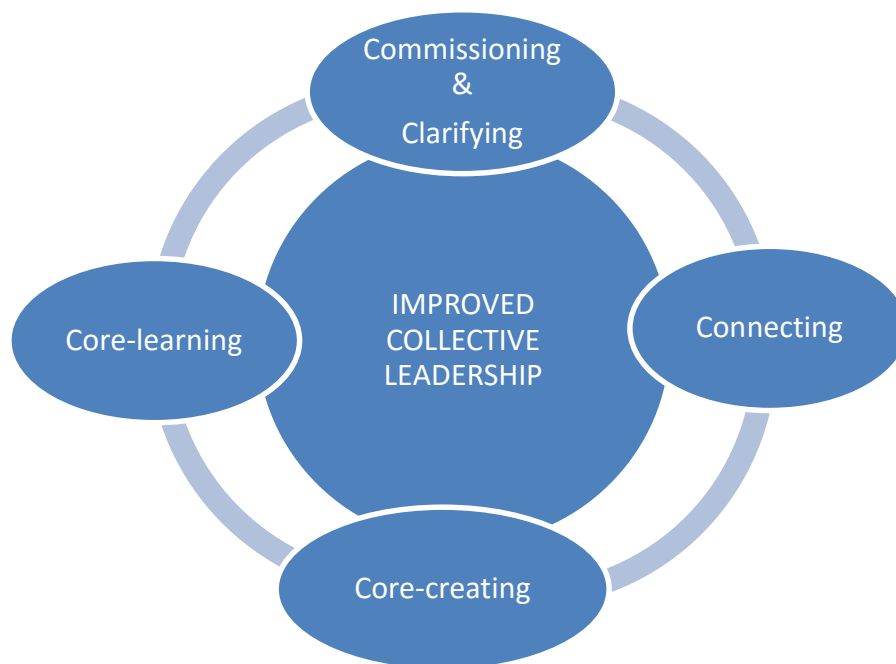


Figure 2.4 Conceptual framework based on the relationship between the key aspects of systemic team coaching and improved collective leadership.

2.4.1 Factors that impact on the success of the systemic team coaching programme

Gowing and Langdon (2015) highlighted certain factors that might impact the success of the systemic team coaching programme. Gowing and Langdon (2015) argued that for the systemic team coaching model to succeed, it requires a high level of courage and a willingness to embrace change by the leadership team.

Hawkins (2018) argued that systemic team coaching requires coaches to look at the coaching programme from a multi-layered approach in order to see the holistic and complex environment in which modern organisations operate. Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) cautioned against following a simple approach when implementing team coaching and rather to see the patterns, shapes and influences and to recognise that everything is interconnected.

Lines and Scholes-Rhodes (2013) highlighted that it is critical to build a partnership with the client so as to build a collective leadership mentality in the whole team. Lines and Scholes-Rhodes (2013) further advised that team coaches should not usurp their team coach role and should always remember that they are coaching the team together with the leader so that the team can co-create optimum collective leadership.

2.4.2 Proposition 2

Systemic team coaching supports collective leadership.

2.5 Conclusion of Literature Review

The literature review focused on systemic team coaching and how it supports collective leadership. The perception is that systemic team coaching is an appropriate form of coaching in modern times where change is constant and where no one leader single-handedly manages the organisational challenges of modern organisations. Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011) argued that

generalised team coaching programmes are inappropriate as a means of managing change in organisations, especially in the 21st century.

Proposition 1: The experiences of leaders who completed systemic team coaching were positive.

Proposition 2: Systemic team coaching supports collective leadership.

Table 2.1: Consistency table: research questions and propositions.

Research Question	State Research Question	Proposition No	State proposition
1	What are the experiences of leaders who have completed the systemic team coaching programme?	1	Leaders who completed the systemic team coaching programme had a positive experience
2	Does systemic team coaching support collective leadership?	2	Systemic team coaching does support collective leadership.

3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter sets out the methodology that was followed to address the research questions raised in Chapter 1. Qualitative research literature was consulted and documented in this chapter, followed by the chosen research design and the instrument that was used. Data collection and analysis was also discussed. The limitations, reliability, viability and ethical considerations of the research process were considered. The demographic profile of the sample has been included in this chapter.

3.1 Research approach

This qualitative research followed the interpretivist paradigm which Creswell and Poth (2013) refer to as constructivism. According to Creswell (2016), qualitative research involves reporting how people report on the world as they see it from their own perspective. Creswell (2016) also indicated that qualitative research is not only interested in how people report on their experiences, but it also looks at how their environment and context shapes what they have to say. Creswell (2016) further explained that qualitative research focuses on a small number of people but goes deep in analysing the detailed information given by the participants. Creswell (2016) believed that if the researcher studies a large number of people, the richness and depth of the learnings will be lost and the complex understanding of a problem might also be lost.

It is important to explain why the researcher opted for the qualitative research approach as opposed to the quantitative research approach. Creswell (2016) explained that the selection of a research approach is based on the nature of the research problem, the researcher's personal experiences and the participants selected for the study. Creswell (2016) further explained that quantitative research is used to quantify the problem by generating numerical data and is used to quantify opinions, attitudes, behaviours and other defined variables. On the other hand, Creswell (2016) explained that qualitative research is exploratory in nature and is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions

and motivations, hence the qualitative method was the preferred approach for this study.

Table 3.1: Summary of comparison between quantitative approach and qualitative approach, as articulated by Creswell (2016)

QUANTITATIVE APPROACH	QUALITATIVE APPROACH
Reliability is key	Authenticity is key
The researcher is detached	The researcher is involved in the research
The aim is to measure objective facts	The researcher aims to measure social reality and cultural meaning
Quantitative research relies on statistical analysis	Qualitative research relies on thematic analysis
The researcher relies on variables	The researcher uses interactive processes to collect data
Quantitative research usually analyses many cases	Qualitative research uses fewer cases.

3.2 Research design

The researcher used a generic qualitative approach using semi-structured interviews. Creswell (2016) described categories of qualitative interview design which fall into the following categories; an informal conversational interview which follows a spontaneous generation of questions in a natural interaction with the participants as opposed to a general interview guide approach which is more structured than the informal interview approach. Creswell (2016) highlighted that although the interview questions are structured, the responses can be open-

ended and this allows the participants to expand in detail on their responses and it also allows the interviewer to ask probing follow-up questions based on the standardised questions.

This qualitative research was exploratory and looked at experiences of Gauteng-based private and public sector leaders who had completed the systemic team coaching programme and also examined how systemic team coaching supported collective leadership.

3.3 Data collection methods

The data was collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews with Gauteng-based leaders who had completed the systemic team coaching programme within the private and the public sector.

This method of data collection was chosen because it allowed the researcher to engage with the interviewees face-to-face, probe areas where insufficient information was given by the interviewee and also to read any body language displayed during the interview.

3.4 Population and sample

3.4.1 Population

The population of this study consisted of members of leadership teams who have completed the systemic team coaching programme within the South African public and private sector Gauteng-based organisations. Team members came from different occupational backgrounds, and worked in different functional units of their organisations. This diverse group of leaders was chosen in order to see both the private sector perspective and the public sector perspective on how the systemic team coaching was experienced.

3.4.2 Sample and sampling method

For the purposes of this study, the researcher used the purposive sampling method, which according to Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim (2016) is used mostly to enhance the understanding of the selected individual's experience.

Out of the total population, a sample composed of 16 members of leadership teams, eight members from the private sector and eight team members from the public sector was selected. All these leaders had completed the systemic team coaching programme and were currently within the employ of Gauteng-based public sector and private sector organisations.

Table 3.2: Breakdown of sample group

Sample group	Purpose
Eight Gauteng-based public sector leaders who have gone through systemic team coaching. The participants were selected from a population of diverse occupational and functional leaders of diverse race groups and mixed gender groupings who had completed the systemic team coaching programme.	To understand their perspective on systemic team coaching and how it supports collective leadership
Eight Gauteng-based private sector leaders who have gone through systemic team coaching The participants came from diverse functional backgrounds, diverse race groups and mixed gender groupings	To understand their perspective and how systemic team coaching supports collective leadership

The above sample was appropriate for the qualitative study under discussion.

3.5 The research instrument

Semi-structured interviews with all the participants were conducted for this study. The choice of this approach was informed by the guidelines developed by Jacob and Furgerson (2012) on writing interview protocols. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) explained that a qualitative interview protocol should (1) ensure that the research guides the questions, (2) use of script at the beginning and at the end of the interview, (3) questions should be open ended, (4) starting with the basics, (5) starting with easy questions and moving to complex ones, (6) when starting a question, use “tell me about”.

3.6 Procedure for data collection

As indicated earlier, semi-structured interviews were used to gather experiences of the leaders who had gone through the systemic team coaching programme. Creswell (2016) argued that because semi-structured interviews are conversational in nature, they make the participant comfortable during the interview process and give the researcher control over the line of questioning and the opportunity to probe for clarity if necessary. Creswell (2016) further cautioned that not all interviewees are articulate, which makes it important for the researcher to build rapport with the interviewee before asking critical questions.

The interviews were conducted face-to-face with the individual participants and were held at their offices to ensure that the interviewees were comfortable. This was done after permission was obtained from the organisations’ Human Resources units and from the participants. The interviews were recorded. In addition to the recorded interviews, the researcher took notes during the interviews so as to capture non-verbal communication and any critical points on the conversation. Creswell (2016) emphasised the importance of good data analysis which relies largely on the ability to collect accurate information.

3.7 Data analysis and interpretation

The researcher performed thematic analysis as this was the most appropriate way to make sense of the participants’ experiences in this study. According to

Braun and Clarke (2014), thematic analysis is a method of identifying, organising and interpreting insights into patterns of meaning across a set of data. They believed that thematic analysis allows a researcher to make sense out of shared collective experiences of the participants. Braun and Clarke (2014) further described a six step approach to thematic analysis. This study followed these six steps which are as follows:

3.7.1 Familiarisation with the data

For this step, Braun and Clarke (2014) recommended that the researcher reads the raw data many times so as to familiarise themselves with the semantic meanings expressed and to note potential points of interest. Creswell (2016) agreed with this view and added that the researcher must really immerse themselves in all the details of the whole database before breaking it into different parts.

3.7.2 Coding the data

According to Braun and Clarke (2014), a code is a brief label or short phrase that captures a key analytical idea in the data and conveys this to the researcher. On the other hand, Creswell (2016) defined coding as a process whereby text or visual data is aggregated into smaller categories of information. Creswell (2016) further explained that coding involves looking for evidence in different databases used in the study and assigning a label to the code.

3.7.3 Searching for themes

Braun and Clarke (2014) described this step as the clustering of different codes together to create potential themes based on what was found in the interview. Creswell (2016) used the analogy of a family of themes, with children (sub-themes) and grandchildren being segments of data.

3.7.4 *Reviewing themes*

According to Braun and Clarke (2014), the purpose of reviewing themes is to check if the participants' themes are a good fit with the coded information, and this can be done by comparing the coded data and making a story of each theme. Creswell (2016) supported this view and added that the researcher can look at individual experiences and the context of those experiences.

3.7.5 *Defining and naming themes*

Braun, Clarke, Hayfield, and Terry (2019) defined this stage as the development of overall analysis through detailed analysis of data in each theme.

3.7.6 *Producing the report*

According to Braun et al. (2019), this final stage comes after the thematic analysis which should only happen after the thematic analysis is saturated. Creswell (2016) described this step as the packaging of data in tabular, text or figure form and also making comparisons and contrasts. According to Creswell (2016), it is critical to always relate back to the research questions in producing the report.

3.8 Limitations of the study

Creswell (2016) argued that it is difficult to automate qualitative data collection and analysis as it is time consuming and expensive, which is why qualitative research is mostly done with fewer participants of between six and 12. In this research, 16 Gauteng-based participants from the public and the private sector were interviewed. This was due to time and resource constraints and the researcher could not include participants from other sectors of the economy. While the eight respondents are from the public sector, most of them are from the same organisation and therefore their responses could skew the results of the study.

The risk of the researcher's subjective data analysis due to preconceived ideas could not be ruled out in qualitative data collection and analysis, and this could impact negatively on the quality of the results.

3.9 Validity and reliability or trustworthiness

Noble and Smith (2015) regarded validity or trustworthiness as truth value which recognises the existence of multiple realities and the possibilities of the bias of the researcher in qualitative research. Noble and Smith (2015) advocated for the use of strategies, such as triangulation, which is a combination of at least two or more theoretical perspectives, methodological approaches or data analysis methods.

Noble and Smith (2015) defined reliability as consistency, trustworthiness and transparency of the research methods used in the study. Noble and Smith (2015) further explained that reliability in qualitative research which is also referred to as trustworthiness is about how sound the research is in relation to the application and the correctness of the research methods used and the integrity of the final conclusions.

Creswell (2016) emphasised that trustworthiness can be enhanced by obtaining detailed field notes through using a good tape recorder. Noble and Smith (2015) also acknowledged the researcher as the key instrument in the research and highlight the risk of the researcher becoming subjective and biased which can lead to a negative impact on the trustworthiness of the data. Noble and Smith (2015) acknowledged the existence of multiple realities which can result in the possibility of bias for the researcher.

The researcher adhered strictly to the research process and relied on the data at hand and nothing else. The data was drawn from a number of public and private sector organisations and from leaders who had completed the systemic team coaching programme and extensive conclusions were based on the data collected from these leaders.

3.9.1 External validity or transferability

Noble and Smith (2015) further differentiated between internal validity and external validity. As such, Noble and Smith (2015) recommended repeated checks of the recorded face-to-face interviews so as to improve the truth value. In this study, recordings were checked repeatedly to see if there were any new emerging themes. Written notes and the transcripts were checked repeatedly.

Noble and Smith (2015) saw transferability or external validity as the level of applicability of the same research in other settings. Noble and Smith (2015) further clarified that the role of the researcher is to facilitate transferability judgement through a clear description

To ensure external validity or transferability, the research methods and the process followed in this study were well documented.

3.9.2 Internal validity or Credibility

Noble and Smith (2015) described credibility as the confidence that can be placed in the truth of the research findings and also whether it is a correct interpretation of the of the participants original views. Credibility was addressed by replicating the same interview questionnaire to all the respondents. Supplementary probing questions arising out of the semi-structured interviews were noted manually and repeated in all interviews to ensure credibility and consistency in the data collection process. Noble and Smith (2015) strongly recommended repeated checks of tape recorded interviews as part of the strategies for ensuring internal validity.

The recorded interviews were checked repeatedly by the researcher.

3.9.3 Reliability or Dependability

Creswell (2016) maintained that dependability or reliability can be enhanced by keeping detailed field notes and by using a good quality tape recorder to record all the interviews. In this study, field notes were taken during the semi-structured

interviews and a professional transcriber was sourced to transcribe all the interviews.

The researcher detailed all the research methods and design followed in a clear and transparent manner.

Table 3.3: Profile of respondents

No	Sample group	Number	Explanation of actual sample make-up
1	Gauteng based leaders who work within the public sector and have gone through systemic team coaching	eight	Different levels of management from both support and core business units
2	Gauteng based leaders who work within the private sector and have gone through the systemic team coaching programme	eight	Different levels of leaders from both the support and core business units

3.10 Ethical considerations

To ensure that ethics was observed in conducting the study, access to the participants was formally requested from their organisations. A letter was sent to the Human Resources Departments of the organisations, which are the custodians of leadership development programmes. The purpose of the letters was to assure the organisations that confidentiality would be maintained throughout the process. Creswell (2016) emphasised the idea of first obtaining permission from the organisation.

In addition to the letters that were sent to the organisations, a letter of consent was sent to each participant, to obtain their acceptance to participate in the interview and to assure them that confidentiality would be observed throughout

the process. Although anonymity of the participants could not be fully guaranteed, extreme due care was exercised to protect the identity of the participants.

The consent letter is **on Appendix B** of this report.

Table 3.4: Consistency table: research questions, propositions, data collection and data analysis

Research Question	Research Question	Proposition	State proposition	Data collection detail	Data analysis method
1.1	What are the experiences of leaders who have completed systemic team coaching?	1.1	The experiences of leaders who have gone through systemic team coaching are positive.	Face-to-face interviews. Interview guide questions 1,2,3,4	Thematic analysis
1.2	How does systemic team coaching support collective leadership?	1.2	Systemic team coaching supports collective leadership	Face-to face interviews. Interview guide questions 5,6,7	Thematic analysis

3.11 Summary

Chapter 3 covered the methodology that was followed in this qualitative study. This includes the research approach, the data collection method, the research instruments used in the study, limitations of the study and ethical considerations.

4 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

The research findings chapter focuses on the presentation and description of the findings of the data collected, with a special focus on the research problem and questions. The chapter looks at a summary of the demographics of the respondents to the interview questions, followed by a summary of results of the two research questions. The results are presented according to the themes of the two research questions that emanated from the research problem.

The following are the two research questions: What are the experiences of Gauteng-based leaders who have completed systemic team coaching within the public and the private sector?

How does systemic team coaching support collective leadership within these South African Gauteng-based private and public sector organisations?

In total, sixteen managers were interviewed, eight from the public sector and eight from the private sector. Interviews were done face-to-face using interviewing questionnaires and were recorded after prior permission from the interviewees. The aim of the interviews was to explore the experiences of the managers who had completed systemic team coaching and how systemic team coaching supports collective leadership. The table below shows the demographics of the participants:

Table 4.1: Coachees demographics and their institutions.

Coachee	Race	Gender	Institution
P1	Black	Male	Public

Coachee	Race	Gender	Institution
P2	Black	Female	Public
P3	Black	Male	Public
P4	Black	Female	Public
P5	White	Female	Public
P6	Indian	Male	Public
P7	Black	Female	Public
P8	Black	Female	Public
P9	Coloured	Male	Private
P10	White	Female	Private
P11	White	Male	Private
P12	White	Female	Private
P13	Coloured	Female	Private
P14	White	Male	Private

Coachee	Race	Gender	Institution
P15	White	Female	Private
P16	Black	Female	Private

Data were collected through a uniform interviewing questionnaire used for the sixteen participants. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data gathered from the semi-structured interviews in response to the research questions. The interview guide is attached as Appendix 1.

4.2 Results pertaining to Proposition 1: The experiences of leaders who completed the systemic team coaching programme were positive.

Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data gathered from the respondents. The data was collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews with the respondents. The following themes and sub-themes emerged per research question during data analysis:

Table 4.2: Analysis of the various stages of systemic team coaching

Themes	Sub-themes
How the various stages of the systemic team coaching programme were experienced by the coachees.	• Commissioning phase • Clarification phase • Co-creating phase • Connecting phase • Core learning phase • How the individual components of the programme were experienced by participants

Other useful areas of the programme	• Tools and techniques utilised in the programme • The role of the team leaders • The role of the systemic team coaches
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At the beginning of the face-to-face interview, the participants were asked how they experienced the systemic coaching programme through the various stages. The participants answered the question differently and each one of them highlighted the parts of the programme that had a significant impact on them as individuals and those parts that had an impact on them as part of a team.

Participant 1 made the following observations: *“What came out of the stakeholder 360 degree evaluation helped us to identify the gap between what the stakeholders need from the team, now and in the future, and what was delivered by the team. The commissioning phase was difficult and tedious, but the final product was co-created and owned by all of us, which made it easy for the team to own and implement the required changes. Secondly, the connecting phase, where we had to connect with both internal and external stakeholders, was an unfamiliar practice to us as a team and we gradually developed a plan on how to connect and align our purpose with critical stakeholders”.*

Connecting with members of the team was highlighted as an important step and participant 1 felt that this phase should have been prioritised so as to make the other phases of the process much easier. Participant 1 also felt that once the team connected, they understood each other much better and they knew how to support each other, hence the feeling that this phase should have come first in the systemic team coaching process.

Participant 2 noted that there was a noticeable interest to work as a collective and to understand each other's portfolio and how it fits into the bigger picture once the team had gone through the 360 degree stakeholder feedback, the

connecting phase, the commissioning phase and the clarifying phase. *“There was improved openness to feedback including constructive criticism from other team members and a noticeable empathy towards each other and for the stakeholders who voiced their frustrations through the 360 degree stakeholder feedback. I also saw an improvement in teamwork, collaboration, and co-operation within the team after the first few phases”* noted participant 2.

Participant 11 articulated the following observations: *“I found that the co-creation phase, ownership of a common team purpose and managing change became easier once we understood and aligned what the stakeholders expected from us as the team. At the end of the programme, we were able to present at EXCO on each other’s portfolios, for example, the Head of Human Capital was able to present the Information and Technology portfolio report and the Head of Strategy was able to present the monthly Finance portfolio report. The participants were also able to contribute at Board meetings on broader strategic issues and to take collective accountability as a leadership team. The only challenge was when old members of the management team left the team or the organisation, there was no continuity in building collective leadership and teamwork, and as a result of these changes, there was gradual regression”*.

Participant 7 indicated that the progress was noticeable and there was a high level of alignment at executive level after the first few phases of the programme, however the culture of collective leadership and shared accountability did not spread to other levels of the organisation and as a result, the silos remained within the organisation.

Participant 6 had mixed feelings about how the systemic team coaching programme was implemented. *“The programme would have been more sustainable if it was implemented more widely within the organisation and if managers were trained on how to coach their teams and if teams were trained in team coaching, peer coaching and self-coaching. That way the organisation and the stakeholders could have received long term value from the programme”*, said participant 6.

Participant 10 also had mixed feelings about the systemic team coaching programme. *“The programme required a huge mindset shift, from expecting all the answers from the leader of the team and the team coach, to co-creating the solutions and holding each other accountable. We moved from seeing the coaches as facilitators to seeing them as partners looking at what the stakeholders required from the team now and in the future. The other huge shift for me was the realisation that the blame game was not going to take us anywhere. At the beginning of the programme we blamed the CEO and the Board for all the organisation’s problems. As the programme progressed and with guidance from the team coaches, we realised that challenges are located in the misalignment between what the stakeholders require and what we offer as a team rather than in individual leaders or parts of the organisation. This realisation gradually reduced the blame game and we learnt a valuable lesson of turning our complaints into opportunities for innovative solutions”.*

Another valuable lesson for participant 10 was that core learning and reflection happened all the time, resulting in continuous goal clarification for the leadership team. This is useful in an ever-changing business environment. Reflection also allowed for diverse views to emerge and to inform innovative solutions. *“Reflection is a valuable practice that I have introduced and kept with my team even after the programme. It encourages continuous learning for my team, but it requires a safe space and also allowing dissenting voices to emerge as they enrich the decisions taken by the team”*, said participant 10.

Participant 2 said *“The programme came at a time when we were going through a lot of changes in the organisation and as the executive team, we were able to drive the change and to survive the storm because we operated as a collective. Both the team sessions and the individual sessions were very valuable during these turbulent times. Towards the end of the programme I noticed a huge improvement in shared accountability and a shared purpose for the team. I would recommend this programme for leadership teams, especially those that are managing rapid change”.*

4.2.1 How the individual systemic coaching component of the programme was experienced by the participants

The systemic team coaching programme was composed of a systemic team coaching component and an individual systemic coaching component. Most of the participants experienced the individual systemic coaching component of the programme as a valuable part of the programme. Most of them indicated that having gone through the first few phases of the systemic team coaching programme, namely, commissioning, clarifying, co-creating and connecting, contributed greatly in making the individual component of the programme more meaningful.

The same coaches that facilitated the systemic team coaching programme also facilitated the individual component of the programme. Most participants indicated that it was beneficial that the coaches had acquired a good understanding of the business and the stakeholder needs. Participant 2 had this to say *“I saw the individual coaching programme as a continuation of the systemic team coaching programme, however what I valued most is that the individual systemic coaching component focused on my personal developmental needs within the context of the team and our current and future stakeholder environment”*.

Participant 10 commented that *“I feel that my previous individual executive coaching programmes happened in a vacuum as they were not informed by the broader environment and did not take into account my role as part of a team. When I went back to my team I did not get the necessary support as the rest of the team members were either coached by different individual coaches or were not on any coaching programme at all. With the systemic team coaching programme, I am able to go back and implement what I have learnt from the individual systemic coaching programme within my team”*.

4.2.2 The role of the team leaders

The team leaders whose teams went through the systemic team coaching programme commented that the programme assisted them in removing the burden of single-handedly leading the team. One of the team leaders who participated in the systemic team coaching programme had this to say, *“The systemic team coaching programme introduced collective leadership and ownership of deliverables by the whole team. For the first time the team acknowledged that I as a leader, cannot have all the answers to the complex challenges in an ever-changing environment we operate in and the team realised a lot of value from the diversity of the team. For me, this also meant that diversity of the team should also be taken into account right from the recruitment and selection process when setting up a team. The individual component of the systemic team coaching programme gave me the opportunity to deal with the leadership development areas that could not be addressed in the presence of the whole team. I had to learn to let go and to allow collective decisions to emerge from the team as a collective. It would have been very beneficial to train me in systemic team coaching so as to empower me to continue coaching my team”*.

Participant 1 had this to say, *“The participation of the team leader in the systemic team coaching was very beneficial and it showed the team that the team leader was committed to the programme. It also made it easy for some of the team interventions to be implemented in the team meetings that the team leaders had with the team on a regular basis”*.

Participant 10 had this to say: *“The team leader saw the programme as part of the organisation’s overall strategy not just as part of programmes that are driven by the Human Resources Department. The CEO and the leadership team made sure that the lessons learnt from the programme were incorporated into the organisation’s strategy”*.

4.2.3 The role of the systemic team coaches

Participant 7 made the following comment: *“The fact that the team coaches saw their role as partners working shoulder-to-shoulder with the team in addressing the needs of the stakeholders was a very different approach to the coaching programmes I attended in the past. The systemic team coaches continuously emphasised that the team is not their client, and that their client, in partnership with us as a team, were the stakeholders”.*

Participant 6 made the following observation *“I noticed that the team coaches operated as a team and they displayed the dynamics that teams go through and they were able to resolve their team challenges in front of us as a team. In the beginning this was uncomfortable, however we learned that this was part of the learning for the team on how to deal with diverse views in a team”.*

4.2.4 Institutionalisation of systemic team coaching

The participants who belonged to organisations that do not have a well-established coaching programme with an internal and external coaching capacity regretted that their organisations were not able to institutionalise the programme and therefore the programme was not sustained after the programme was completed.

Overall, most of the participants felt that they derived a lot of value from the systemic programme. Most of them highlighted that continuity was not well thought through, especially in those organisations where there was no institutionalised coaching programme.

4.2.5 Tools and techniques utilised in the systemic team coaching programme

All the participants highlighted a number of powerful tools and techniques that were used as part of the systemic team coaching programme. These included the following techniques:

Time out exercise: **Participant 11** recalled that “time out” in the middle of a session gave the team an opportunity to reflect on a particular negative or positive behaviour that was observed during the session and was an opportunity to give feedback so as to constructively highlight what needs to shift in the behaviour of the team or an individual member.

A slightly different version of time out was referred to as “Moment of Truth”, which the systemic team coaches used to hold a mirror to the team to challenge negative behaviour or to acknowledge and encourage positive behaviour. The team coaches also used the exercise to highlight parallel processes that are playing out in the coaching session but are also a symptom of what happens in the broader organisational environment.

The empty chairs exercise: **Participant 2** recalls that the systemic team coaches introduced the empty chairs exercise into the coaching room and from time to time individual team members were asked to occupy the empty chairs and articulate the views of stakeholders who were impacted by a decision that was being discussed at the time. This was a constant reminder that the voice of the stakeholder needed to be considered in all decisions that were going to impact them. *“This included stakeholders such as the environment and future generations, and these were stakeholders we never considered in the past”*, commented participant 2.

Tango dance: Participant 5 recalls that this fun experience was a lesson in leadership and followership and shows that leaders can lead but can also be followers and this was a realisation that leadership is a collective effort that benefits from the strengths of all the team members.

Working with ambiguity: Participant 6 experienced this exercise as powerful and said it enabled the team to hold the uncomfortable space of ambiguity and to work with uncertainty. It also taught the team to acknowledge that although they might see two opposing views, there might be a third and better alternative that can emerge out of two opposing views.

The team charter: Participant 2 mentioned that the team members usually went back to the team charter long after the systemic team coaching programme was completed as a way of reminding themselves of the commitment they made when they co-created the team charter at the beginning of the systemic team coaching programme. Commitment to the team charter was also regularly enforced in meetings through the use of the Green cards for positive behaviours and Red cards for negative behaviours that needed to change within the team.

Belbin team roles: Most team members highlighted that the Belbin team roles helped them as a team to understand how each team member operated and how to ensure that the strengths of each team member were fully utilised. The Belbin team roles are:

Shaper: has high energy and a great need for achievement

Co-ordinator: readily delegates, mature, trusting and confident

Plant: innovators, inventors and highly creative

Resource investigator: natural negotiators and explore new opportunities

Monitor evaluator: serious minded but slow deciders who prefer to think things over.

Implementer: well organised, enjoy routine, favour hard work and tackle problems systematically

Team worker: most supportive member of a team

Completer or Finisher: great capacity for follow through and attention to detail, and seldom start what they cannot finish

Specialist: pride themselves on acquiring technical skills and specialist knowledge

4.2.6 Summary of Proposition 1

Most of the participants experienced systemic team coaching positively and they felt that it improved their understanding of stakeholder needs and broadened their understanding of what was required to align their value proposition to the stakeholders' current and future needs. Most of them however, recommended that the programme should be institutionalised to ensure long term results.

4.3 Results pertaining to Proposition 2: Systemic team coaching supports collective leadership.

The following is an analysis of the responses from the respondents on how systemic team coaching supported collective leadership in their teams. The analysis looked at the themes and sub-themes that emerged from data as indicated below.

Table 4.3: Analysis of how systemic team coaching supports collective leadership

Theme	Sub-theme
How systemic team coaching supported collective leadership	• Changing nature and complexity of business environment. • Complex stakeholder needs • The need for collective accountability, collaboration and co-operation.

Participant 8 reflected on the following *“I realised that the challenges we face as a team require cross functional teams and a high level of collaboration and collective leadership. This was a huge shift for me and I realised that the*

environment we operate in was too complex to be managed by one individual leader”.

Participant 6 noted that *“Each one of us as executives had to understand the whole business and work beyond the traditional functional boundaries and be able to articulate the comprehensive organisation’s vision and mission to diverse stakeholders. The way we were operating in the past, without a comprehensive understanding of the current and future challenges of the whole business was not working. To survive as a team we had to grow a lot and to work better as a collective with one vision”* said participant 6.

Participant 3 said: *“The Aha moment for the team was the emphasis on the collaboration and co-operation based on the consciousness of all the stakeholders. In the past, the team was internally focused and we did not fully consider current and future needs of our stakeholders. We focused on short-term results, profits and shareholder value. The realisation that future generations will face far more complex challenges that are mostly created by the current generation, was also an eye opener for the team and we vowed to collectively identify the areas that require our collective intervention to address these challenges. These included environmental challenges, diminishing resources, over-population and increasing unemployment and poverty levels. To address these huge challenges, we identified the need to break boundaries that were a barrier to us and being more effective as a collective leadership team. We agreed to measure our success as a team differently, we looked at value created from the perspective of all our diverse stakeholders including future generations and the environment as a stakeholder. What also became very clear was that working as a collective was not a ‘nice to have’, it was a must if we were to survive in times of continuous exponential change”.*

Participant 4 highlighted the realisation that with the leadership team being expected to do more with fewer resources, the number of people the organisation has to partner with increased and it became important for the team to work as a collective through these partnerships. *Collective leadership, co-operation and*

collaboration with both internal and external stakeholders became important. Managing these relationships became critically important, and as the leadership team we had to learn the skill of connecting with the critical stakeholders very quickly for us to succeed in our mandate, participant 4 noted.

Participant 7 highlighted that as soon as they acted as a collective, the quality of their decisions improved and execution became more efficient as there was buy-in from the whole leadership team.

Participant 15 was fascinated by the fact that with the regular reflective process, the team as a collective stopped focusing on yesterday's problems and started visualising challenges of today and tomorrow as articulated by the diverse stakeholders. *"Gradually we started questioning the way we were doing things after listening to the needs of our stakeholders. This we did as a collective, continuously doing things differently and learning new and relevant solutions". The systemic team coaches consistently asked us "Who does your work serve, now and in the future?"*

4.3.1 Summary of Proposition 2

Overall, most of the participants felt that systemic team coaching contributed towards collective leadership, resulting in improved collaboration, and improved co-operation, however when old members left the team and new members joined, the new members were not taken through the programme and as a result, the benefits were gradually lost.

4.4 Summary of the results

This chapter covered the demographic profile of the participants and the results of the core themes that came out during data analysis.

A total of 16 respondents were interviewed for the study. They each shared how they experienced systemic team coaching through a semi-structured interview which covered the two research questions. The respondents were Gauteng-

based leaders who completed the systemic team coaching programme and were from public and private sector organisations.

The results were presented per theme, answering each of the two research questions. The key findings were that there was a lot of value in systemic team coaching and that it does support collective leadership, however most participants highlighted the need for the institutionalisation of the programme to ensure the sustainability of its benefits to organisations and teams. There is also a need for leaders and their teams to be trained so that they are able to take over the programme once the systemic team coaches exit the organisation.

Table 4.4: Consistency matrix: research question, proposition and findings from own study

Research Question	State research Question	Proposition	State proposition	Findings from own study
1	What are the experiences of leaders who have completed the systemic team coaching programme?	1	The experiences of leaders who completed systemic team coaching were positive.	• The sequencing of the five stages of systemic team coaching should not be adhered to rigidly, the programme should be informed by the situational needs of the team. • Connecting is one of the most important stages, and once the team has connected, it becomes easier to implement the other four stages. • Stages such as clarification and core learning which involve reflection, should happen throughout the five

				stages of the systemic team coaching • Transfer of systemic team coaching to the team should be intentional and should start early in the coaching process • The systemic team programme should be incorporated into how the teams conduct all aspects of their work including meetings, decision making and planning sessions. • Stronger partnerships with critical stakeholders were created resulting in better alignment between the stakeholder expectations and what was delivered by the team. • Better synergies of cross functional teams and a more wholistic understanding of the business by team members.
2	Does systemic team coaching support collective leadership?	2	Systemic team coaching supports collective leadership.	Although systemic team coaching supports collective leadership, for the positive results to be sustainable there is a need to institutionalise the programme and to train team leaders to take forward systemic

				team coaching once the team coaching exit the organisation. New team members should be taken through the systemic team programme so that they can understand how the leadership team as a collective operates
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5 DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss and to explain the results of the research findings within the context of the literature review. The chapter also highlights the areas of convergence as well as the areas where the research findings differ from the literature reviewed. The chapter briefly looks at the demographic profile of the sample, followed by the discussion of the results for each research question and ends with the conclusion of the chapter.

5.2 Demographic profile of the respondents

There were sixteen coachees interviewed. In terms of gender, there were six males and ten females. Of the sixteen coachees, there were eight interviewees from the public sector and eight interviewees from the private sector. The majority of the eight interviewees from the public sector came from state owned entities. For this study, demographics have little impact, however the demographic profile of the interviewees is highlighted to show the profile of the respondents.

5.3 Discussion pertaining to Proposition 1

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of South African leaders who have completed the systemic team coaching programme within the public sector and the private sector and to assess how systemic team coaching supports collective leadership. The research question to be answered is: What are the experiences of South Africa leaders who have gone through systemic team coaching and how does the systemic team coaching programme support collective leadership?

Research Question 1 explored the experiences of South Africa leaders who have completed the systemic team coaching programme within the public and the private sector. Proposition 1 is that the experiences of South African leaders who completed systemic team coaching was positive.

The discussion below looks at the following question as identified during data analysis, namely, how the five stages of systemic team coaching were experienced by the coachees, as developed by Hawkins (2014). The discussion also looks at the role of the team leader and the role of the systemic team coaches.

5.3.1 How the systemic team coaching programme was experienced by the coachees

The systemic team coaching programme addresses a challenge that is articulated by McChrystal et al. (2015), namely, that organisations cannot continue to operate in traditional ways when the environment they operate in is constantly changing and requires different ways of responding to the change so as to remain relevant. McChrystal et al. (2015) encouraged organisations to review the hierarchical organisational structures characterised by large teams which are not agile and struggle to respond when there is a need for urgent decision making and to adopt small empowered teams that are able to respond speedily to business challenges.

5.3.2 Sequencing of the five stages of systemic team coaching

Participants pointed out that having to follow the five stages sequentially was restrictive and suggested that the model only be used as a framework, instead of as a model that needed to be followed religiously. This would allow for the flexibility to move between the various stages, as and when required.

Where there was a need for the team to connect, most participants felt that the other stages would have been much easier if the programme had started with the connecting phase. According to most participants, as soon as the teams connected at a deep level, the other four stages of the systemic team coaching programme became easier. Although Hawkins (2018) did not emphasise the central role played by the connecting phase in the model, most participants felt that it was the most critical stage out of the five stages of the systemic team coaching model.

Equally important to most participants was the need to connect with stakeholders and understanding their needs. Participants highlighted that keeping the connection with the stakeholders was what kept the team relevant and focused on a common purpose. Senge et al. (2015) encouraged modern organisations to remain connected with their stakeholders and to remain agile and customer-centric for them to remain relevant. Hayward (2015) also emphasised the need for connected leadership in modern organisations. The connecting stage was done in different ways, including regular exercises, such as the empty chair exercise which was used in role plays with some of the team members occupying the empty chairs to represent the voice of the stakeholder in the team's conversations.

Hawkins (2018) defined clarification as the second stage of the systemic team coaching programme, followed by the co-creation stage, and the research showed that in a fast changing business environment, clarification and co-creation were continuous and they formed part of the teams' efforts to improve their value offering to the stakeholders. Continuous clarification ensured that the teams always had a common understanding of the purpose and the vision of the team.

According to Lines and Scholes-Rhodes (2013), the primary relationships with stakeholders are a critical asset to the business and inform how business leaders co-create and continuously clarify the ever-changing needs of stakeholders. Participants felt that the clarification and the co-creation stages were critical, especially when new members joined the team and some old members exited the team. Participants also pointed out that when these changes happened, effectively a new team was formed and a new commissioning, clarification and co-creation process was necessary. Clutterbuck (2013) emphasised that clarifying team goals and the different roles right at the beginning of the coaching programme and continuously whenever the need arises, minimises the risk of having conflict later in the process.

The team also highlighted that reflection and core learning happened all the time and most participants reported that they incorporated reflection and core learning into their daily work. This was done through exercises such as time out and reflecting on what was playing out in a meeting or in an engagement with stakeholders, as an example.

Most participants also recommended that systemic team coaching be incorporated into how teams operate instead of sitting outside as a separate intervention, as currently implemented in all the participants' organisations. That way the benefits would be institutionalised and would result in long-term transformation of the wider business environment. This would also result in better ways of being, rather than better ways of doing, for leaders. Participants also felt that this would ensure that systemic team coaching is not seen as one extra responsibility that leaders must implement.

Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) described the current era in which modern organisations operate, as an era of disruption which is characterised by climate change, resource depletion, financial collapse and a growing gap between the rich and the poor. The team and the systemic team coaches should partner and create value for stakeholders, hence the importance of including the stakeholders' voice in all the team's conversations.

Equally, core learning and co-creation, which are characterised by reflection and incorporation of the lessons learnt, into the business processes happened throughout all five stages of the coaching programme. Participants also highlighted that they found the incorporation of lessons learnt through core learning and core creation kept the team's purpose relevant to stakeholders, especially during times of rapid change.

Participants felt that while the systemic team coaching model is useful, there should be no boundaries between the various stages of the model, and that systemic team coaches should hold the model in the background, and not attempt to adhere to the framework in the order articulated in the five stages, but should

rather be conscious of the various stages and principles of systemic team coaching and apply them as and when required. Participants felt that systemic team coaching should be a lived experience for the teams, rather than an additional transactional set of stages that teams should go through.

Participants also highlighted that systemic team coaching should not end, instead the prime responsibility should move from the external systemic team coaches to team leaders and teams within the organisations. Team leaders should be capacitated to coach their teams so that teams are able to coach each other for the systemic team coaching to be sustainable and to bear long term results.

Participants also recommended that planning for the handover from the systemic team coaches to the team leader should be part of the systemic team coaching programme and development plans for the team leader and the team should be included right at the beginning of the programme. Although the handover is part of the systemic team coaching model, it is not emphasised in the systemic team coaching framework, and in most cases, systemic team coaches and the teams do not pay attention to this critical stage which would go a long way to ensuring sustainability of the programme within organisations.

Participants also highlighted that core learning happened continuously, especially in those teams that incorporated systemic team coaching into the way they do things. This included the incorporation of reflective and generative thinking into meetings, stopping behaviours that were not beneficial to the team and stakeholders and enhancing behaviours that were beneficial to stakeholders and the team.

5.3.3 The role of the team leader

At the beginning of the coaching programme, most participants noted that the team looked up to the team leader for all the answers, however they soon learnt that the team leader did not have all the answers and that solutions are co-created by the team as a collective. The team leader also gradually learnt that no one leader can run a complex organisation in modern times and allowed team

members to make meaningful contributions in co-creating the purpose and a value proposition in service of the stakeholders. Participants acknowledged that it is critical for the team to make this shift for them to move from an individual heroic style of leadership to a collective and collaborative form of leadership. Hayward (2011) also emphasised the need for this shift to happen in a complex twenty first century environment where the emphasis should be on leadership rather than on the individual leader. Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) also held a similar view, namely, that the nature of modern challenges, including climate change, poverty, unemployment and limited resources, amongst others, require a collaborative style of leadership.

Participants highlighted that where the team leader showed commitment to systemic team coaching and together with the team, incorporated the principles of systemic team coaching into the team, the value of the programme was visible in areas such as the quality of collective decisions that were taken in team meetings, high levels of collaboration and co-operation with critical internal and external stakeholders. Participants also recommended that to measure the improvement brought about by systemic team coaching, specific key performance areas should be included in performance agreements of the team and the team leaders.

Some participants highlighted the importance of doing a post implementation evaluation, using a tool such as the 360 degree evaluation, to assess whether there had been an improvement in the alignment of the team's purpose to satisfy the needs of stakeholders. **Hawkins (2018)** also supported the idea of a post implementation evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the systemic team coaching programme.

5.3.4 The role of the systemic team coach

As indicated earlier, systemic team coaching is a very specialised form of team coaching and it is fairly new. As a result, there are very few qualified and accredited systemic team coaches. Although solutions emerge from the

coaching process, the experience, competence, qualifications and the skills of the systemic team coach are important in ensuring that the desired results are achieved.

The following courses are offered in systemic team coaching: a three day certificate course in systemic team coaching and an International Coaching Federation (ICF) accredited one year diploma in systemic team coaching. Systemic team coaching forces the systemic team coaches to unlearn some of the traditional coaching methods that are predominantly used in team coaching and in individual coaching. Systemic team coaching is a combination of consulting, individual coaching, team coaching, leadership development, strategy development, conflict resolution and team facilitation.

Clutterbuck (2013) confirmed that although team coaching is at its infancy, it is in a stage of rapid growth because of its relevance to modern organisational challenges and the type of support required by leaders and their teams in the twenty first century. He cautioned however, against automatically using coaches trained in a dyadic format as systemic team coaches, because systemic team coaching is more demanding and it requires coaches who have the relevant qualifications and skills.

All the systemic team coaches who trained the participants held a post graduate qualification in organisational development and the ICF diploma in systemic team coaching. In addition to these qualifications, the systemic team coaches were experienced managers and leaders in their own right who still run their own businesses. This kept them in touch with the realities and challenges of running businesses in modern times. Being a systemic team coach demands that the systemic team coach should be resourceful, agile and be able to see the stakeholder needs from different perspectives.

Clutterbuck (2013) encouraged coaches to develop self-coaching and peer-coaching skills for the team as part of the systemic team coaching programme, so that these skills can be used to deal with underlying challenges within the

team and for teams to listen through and beyond the individual so as to understand the organisational, environmental and systemic needs that surface through the conflict. Most participants reflected that although conflict within the team was uncomfortable, in most cases it brought a major shift, transformation and key learnings for the team. Most participants confirmed that the systemic team coaches were able to assist the team to effectively manage conflict within the team and to emerge out of it with the relevant lessons.

Most participants highlighted that the systemic team coaches encouraged open communication including receiving both negative and positive feedback. Clutterbuck (2013) supported open communication as a tool that can be used throughout the team coaching programme, and beyond.

Participants also noted that experienced systemic team coaches allowed themselves to be vulnerable and conceded when they were not sufficiently informed on a subject. This gave the coachees permission to also be vulnerable and to allow others to lead in the co-creation of solutions in areas where the other team members demonstrated better skill and experience.

Contrary to some of the traditional views held by most coaches, namely, that the team is the client to the coaches, Hawkins (2014) advocated that the systemic team coach is a partner to the team, and together with the team, finds solutions to the needs of the stakeholders. Both the systemic team coaches and the team seek to satisfy the needs of the stakeholders. Most participants confirmed that the systemic team coaches continuously reminded the team about this partnership and about the fact that the client is the stakeholder, including non-human stakeholders, such as the environment.

Systemic team coaches also played a critical role in observing and highlighting what they saw playing out within the team and in the broader environment. This included observations on the culture of the organisation, parallel processes that played out in the team but could be a symptom of what plays out in the organisation.

To ensure that the few systemic team coaches that are currently available reach more coachees, participants recommended the use of technology, such as webinars and virtual systemic team coaching programmes. This will require that systemic team coaches learn the skills of making sure that these virtual forms of coaching are effective and yield positive results. However, participants also highlighted that these technologies were not yet as effective as face-to-face team coaching.

Participants also noted that systemic team coaching and its benefits could be sustained if the systemic team coaches gradually weaned the team and capacitated the team leader and the team to take over the programme once the systemic team coaches exit the organisation. Most participants also supported McChrystal et al. (2015) that organisations should migrate to effective and less hierarchical smaller teams that are able to do peer coaching within the various teams.

5.4 Discussion pertaining to Proposition 2

Research question 2 sought to establish how systemic team coaching supports collective leadership. Proposition 2 is that systemic team coaching does support collective leadership.

During the research, it became clear that the systemic team coaching programme had a positive impact on the team and that it resulted in improved collective leadership. Most participants agreed that the process of jointly co-creating the team's purpose was instrumental in creating buy-in, joint accountability, co-operation and collective leadership for the team. Most participants said they noticed that the team members were not just focused on their functional areas but were able to engage stakeholders on a broader range of organisational issues. This was a huge positive shift and an area of continuous growth for the participants. Katzenbach and Smith (2015) emphasised that a team is more than the sum of its parts, and this happens when there is a common purpose and collaboration among team members.

Hayward et al. (2017) described a need for a customer-centric way of working in a complex and globally connected world in which modern organisations operate. Understanding the stakeholders' needs helped the team to see the complexity of the environment in which they operate and that they were not just managing the business of today but also had to concurrently craft the business of tomorrow as a collective. Most participants also realised that they were expected to do all this with limited resources.

Senge et al. (2015) emphasised the need for teams and their leaders to operate as a collective for them to survive in this complex environment characterised by diminishing resources, disruption and continuous change, amongst other challenges. Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) described this as a shift from a global era of death to an era of rebirth, from an era of focusing on self to an era of focusing on the eco-system.

Most participants said that once the stakeholder needs were identified, most individual team members soon realised that they could not meet stakeholder needs if they continued to operate in their silos and as individuals, but needed to raise their collective capacity, to unite behind a common purpose, to build strong stakeholder relationships and to perform consistently beyond the sum of their parts.

According to Deloitte (2016), the high turnover of Chief Executive Officers in the twenty first century can be attributed to the inability to cope with the constant change and the lack of a shift from leader to a model of leadership that acknowledges the need for collaboration, collective accountability and co-operation. According to Senge et al. (2015), Nelson Mandela was the embodiment of collective leadership and in the short five years he led South Africa, he was able to lead a country that was going through major changes.

The comments of the participants confirmed that systemic team coaching supports collective leadership, however most participants observed that

the benefits of the programme were not sustained in their organisations after the systemic team coaches exited.

5.5 Conclusion

The study set out to respond to the following research questions: What were the experiences of leaders who participated in systemic team coaching and how did systemic team coaching support collective leadership?

Most participants articulated a positive experience of the five stages of systemic team coaching, although they had recommendations on the application of the framework. The recommendations ranged from situational sequencing of the five stages, with priority given to the most relevant stage for the team at the time. Some participants recommended that the model should be held in the background and used just as a framework to guide the systemic team coaching programme, rather than presenting it as a model that must be followed religiously in the proposed sequence.

Although the participants experienced a lot of value in the programme, they felt that the sustainability of the benefits could be improved if the team and the team leaders were capacitated to institutionalise the programme after the team coaches exited the organisation. Participants acknowledged that preparation for the gradual weaning of the systemic team coaches and the handover of the programme to the team leader and the team requires proper planning and post implementation monitoring and evaluation. A follow-up 360 degree evaluation could be used to assess whether the desired results were achieved in a sustainable manner.

6 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarised the key findings and the main contributions of the study regarding the experiences of Gauteng-based private sector and public sector leaders who completed the systemic team coaching programme. The study also examined the role of systemic team coaching in supporting collective leadership and made recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

6.2 Conclusions regarding research question 1

6.2.1 Lessons learnt from the research on how systemic team coaching was experienced by the coachees

Systemic team coaching is a fairly new form of team coaching and it was developed by the coaching profession in response to the complex business leadership challenges of the twenty first century. It came as a result of the realisation by the coaching profession, that what brought coaching success in the past thirty years, will not sustain the success and there is an urgent need to disrupt coaching so as to remain relevant and to support organisations to move from IQ and EQ to We Q, which is where leaders of the twenty first century should perform to survive the complex and ever-changing environment in which they operate.

At the core of the systemic team coaching model is the inclusion of stakeholder views in the development of product and service offerings by organisations. The five stages of systemic team coaching are a good framework for the implementation of systemic team coaching, namely, commissioning, clarification, connecting, co-creation and core learning. Some coachees felt strongly that it would have been very useful to start with the connecting stage, which would have enabled the team to get to know each others' strengths and weaknesses and would have been able to establish what support each member of the team requires for the team to operate as a strong collective.

The study also established that some stages, such as the clarification stage and the core learning stage were critical, and it would help to clarify, reflect and refine the team purpose continuously, especially in times of change.

6.2.2 The role of the systemic team coaches

The role of the systemic team coaches contradicts traditional coaching theory, which predominantly sees the coachee as the client, and requires that the systemic team coaches partner with the team in finding solutions to the challenges that stakeholders pose to the organisation. Systemic team coaches are required to bring a wealth of experience, including consulting skills, strategy development skills, a good understanding of the environment in which the organisation operates and experience in both team coaching and individual coaching.

6.3 Conclusions regarding research question 2

Systemic team coaching was found to be effective in supporting collective leadership, however the study could not produce sustainable results due to various reasons including the fact that the programme was not institutionalised once the systemic team coaches exited most organisations.

Table 6.1: Consistency table: research questions, conclusions and contribution to knowledge

Research Question	Research Question or Objective	Literature based proposition	Conclusion based on own research	Key differences between initial proposition and findings
1	What are the experiences of Gauteng-	Systemic team coaching, as developed in five	Although there was a lot of value in systemic team coaching, the	Connecting was seen by the participants

Research Question	Research Question or Objective	Literature based proposition	Conclusion based on own research	Key differences between initial proposition and findings
	based leaders who have completed the systemic team coaching programme?	stages namely, commissioning, clarification, co-creation, connecting and core learning was an appropriate team coaching intervention in addressing leadership challenges of modern organisations	sequencing of the five stages should be informed by the need of the team and should not be implemented rigidly in compliance to the five stages defined in the systemic team coaching framework.	as the most critical stage out of the five stages. Once the teams connected, the other four stages were much easier. Clarification and co-creation stages could be repeated as many times as possible during times of change. Reflection and core learning benefited the teams more if integrated into regular meetings and interactions of the team.

Research Question	Research Question or Objective	Literature based proposition	Conclusion based on own research	Key differences between initial proposition and findings
2	How does systemic team coaching support collective leadership?	Systemic team coaching supports collective leadership	In the short term, systemic team coaching supports collective leadership, however for the programme to be sustainable, institutionalisation of the programme including training of leaders and their teams on systemic team coaching would result in long term value for the team, individual members of the team, the organisation and the stakeholders.	The transitional arrangement and the handover to the team leaders and the team when the systemic team coaches leave the organisation should be clearly defined and closely monitored.

6.4 Recommendations

There was a recommendation that institutionalisation of systemic team coaching should be prioritised and should include all levels of leadership, including

oversight structures, such as the board and executive management so as to ensure organisational alignment and to improve the chances of sustainable positive results of the programme. This would require training of all these leaders in systemic team coaching so that they have the skills to implement and sustain the programme.

In the study, there was a strong recommendation that the five stages of systemic team coaching do not have to be implemented in the sequence suggested in the model. The recommendation by most coachees is that implementation of the various stages of systemic team coaching should be informed by the need of the team and the stakeholders at any given stage of the coaching programme, for an example, if the team needed the connecting stage before the commissioning stage, the team should prioritise that stage of the process.

The research was limited to Gauteng-based public and private sector organisations and it is therefore recommended that a study that looks at a broader sample that includes other provinces within South Africa and other countries should be considered. It is also recommended that the study should extend to other sectors of the economy since this study was limited to the private sector and the public sector.

6.5 Suggestions for further research

As indicated earlier, the population and sample were all Gauteng based and were selected only from the private sector and the public sector and it will be interesting to extend the sample to other parts of South Africa, other parts of the world and other sectors of the economy to see if a broader sample will yield different results.

With the advent of virtual teams across the world and the increase in virtual coaching, it will be interesting to see if systemic team coaching for virtual teams and the use of technological instruments such as webinars would produce equally positive results.

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APPENDIX A: RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

Research Question 1

What are the experiences of the leaders who completed systemic team coaching?

Questions

1. Having completed the systemic team coaching programme, how did you experience it at the various stages?
2. What value and at what point in the programme did you and your team derive value from the systemic team coaching programme?
3. How did you experience the programme at an individual level and as a team?
4. What are the specific areas that really were useful to you and the team and why?

Research Question 2

How does systemic team coaching support collective leadership?

Questions

5. What was the state of collective leadership before the systemic team coaching programme was introduced?
6. How did the programme support collective leadership?
7. Describe your overall experience of the systemic team programme?

If you had the authority and opportunity to choose a team coaching programme for your team, what would you include and is there anything you would exclude from the current programme?

Discussion guide

Background demographics of the participants

Name of participant	
Date, venue and time of interview	
Industry	
Job level of the participants	
Role of participant in the organisation	
Any previous exposure to both individual coaching and team coaching	

APPENDIX B: CONSENT FORM

MMBEC -Masters of Management in Business and Executive Coaching

CONSENT FORM

Dear Respondent

My name is Lindelwa Jabavu. I am conducting research for the purpose of completing my MMBEC at Wits Business School.

I am conducting research on the role of systemic team coaching in supporting collective leadership for the executive team.

As a manager who went through this programme, I would like to conduct one interview of approximately one hour with you. I also would like to request that you allow me to tape record the interview so that I can accurately record what is said in the interview.

Please understand that your participation is voluntary. You may also stop participating in the research at any time and there will be no penalties against you.

Any study records that identify you will be kept confidential to the extent possible by law. The records from your participation may be reviewed by people responsible for making sure that the research is done properly, including my academic supervisors. All of these people are required to keep your identity confidential. I will refer to you by a code number or pseudonym in the research and any further publication.

This study will be helpful in understanding your experience of the role of systemic team coaching and can help determine whether this coaching programme should be rolled out to lower management levels in the organisations that have already implemented it.

All study records will be destroyed after the completion and marking of my research.

If you would like to receive feedback on the study, I can send you the results of the study as soon as it is completed after March 2020.

This research has been approved by the Wits Business School. If you have any complaints about ethical aspects of the research or feel that you have been harmed in anyway by participating in this study, please contact the Research Office Manager at the Wits Business School. If you have concerns or questions about the research, you may call my academic research supervisor, Ms Jabulile Galawe on +27 11 717 3980

CONSENT

I hereby agree to participate in the research on the role of systemic team coaching and how it supports collective leadership. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I can stop participating at any point should I not want to continue and that this decision will not be held against me. I also agree to the tape recording of my interview.

I understand that my participation will remain confidential.

.....
Signature of participant

.....
Date