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# Factors affecting coaching transfer at a South African State-Owned Entity

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# Factors affecting coaching transfer at a South African State-Owned Entity

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

Wits Business School

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# ABSTRACT

The use of coaching as a human capital tool to improve productivity and performance is on the rise. A consequence of this increased application is the demand for empirical data to understand the process and conditions by which it operates and its efficacy in achieving predetermined goals.

The purpose of the study was to establish organisational factors and coachee attributes that promote or hinder coaching transfer into the workplace. This study used a qualitative research design to collect information in one of the South African State Owned Entity (SOE), where 15 management and human resources members were interviewed.

The findings of the study revealed that there were work environment characteristics and specific coachee attributes that promoted and those that derail the coaching transfer. By identifying the importance of work environment and coachee attributes as pivotal in promoting coaching transfer at the SOE, the research may assist in improving future coaching programmes to alleviate the barriers hindering positive coaching transfer. More importantly, the study developed a conceptual framework to help guide the coaching transfer in the organisation, and other SOEs could adapt this conceptual framework.



**Key words**: Coaching transfer, State Owned-Entity, Work environment factors, Coachee attributes.

# DECLARATION

I, Mantiti Kola, 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 and 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: Mantiti Kola Signature: 

Signed at ……Pretoria ……

On the ……24 …….. day of ……May …… 2021….

# DEDICATION

To my beloved Mother, the late Ntshebale Rebecca Kola, thank you for your endless love, prayers, sacrifices, support and encouragement. Ke a leboga Mosebjadi wa Malope wa Mphela, legohu la ngwana hlahla Morolong!!!

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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|---|---|
| EC | Eastern Cape |
| FS | Free state |
| GP | Gauteng |
| HRD | Human Resource Development |
| KZN | KwaZulu-Natal |
| LP | Limpopo |
| LTSI | Learning Transfer System Inventory |
| MP | Mpumalanga |
| NW | North West |
| SKA | Skills, Knowledge and Attitudes |
| SOE | State Owned Enterprise |
| WC | Western Cape |

# CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Coaching is one of the fastest-growing human development interventions in the workplace (Grover & Furnham, 2016). The essence of coaching is to support people through changes, acquire new skills, abilities, and perspectives to pursue personal fulfilment and organisational success. Effective coaching depends on the skills and capabilities of the coach, the client's commitment to the process, motivation to improve and the clients' development in the context of organisational needs and dynamics (Stout-Rostron, 2014).

In this introductory chapter, the conceptualisation of the study is defined by explaining the purpose of the study, context, and identification of the problem. The chapter also outlines the significance of the study, delimitation, scope of the study, with the chapter closing off by providing the layout of the report.

## 1.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to explore factors that affect coaching transfer at a South African State-Owned Entity (SOE). The study is prompted by the need to understand coachee attributes and contextual or environmental factors that may influence coaching transfer, i.e. the extent to which skills, knowledge and attitudes (SKA) acquired during the coaching programme is applied in practical settings (workplace).

## 1.2 Context of the study

Several authors in the field of human resource development contend that organisations invest significant funds towards their employees' learning and development through formal training programmes (Audet & Couteret, 2012; Vesso & Alas, 2016). Talent management practitioners (human resource, organisational development, learning and development) use coaching to enable personal learning and employees' development to support organisational change (Burke & Hutchins, 2008; Grover & Furnham, 2016).

Coaching is a distinct people management discipline or a form of facilitation based on a close interpersonal relationship between a coach and a coachee. This is a process that leads to learning and the development of potential. The core of coaching is learning and change (Ives, 2008).

Extant literature suggests that coaching is an interpersonal offering and can be delivered in various forms (Cox, Bachkirova, & Clutterbuck, 2014; van Nieuwerburgh & Passmore, 2018). The coaching relationship may be between the coach and the client (also known as the coachee) or a team. Team coaching and peer coaching are two methods of coaching identified from the literature. The team coaching process involves one coach to many participants (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 2006) and peer coaching is where a participant assumes the role of both coach and coachee (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006).

In some instances, managers may offer coaching, i.e., manager as a coach (Grover & Furnham, 2016). Coaching consolidates knowledge acquisition by working with the individual or team to support and facilitate resulting behaviour change in relation to a specific organisational or professional agenda. Coaching may be used for several purposes, such as skills coaching, performance coaching, developmental coaching, and executive coaching (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006).

According to (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009), coaching outcomes are dependent on the individual and context. Context and environmental factors such as organisational climate, operational factors supporting coaching, workload and the availability of a quality developmental champion and supervisor support may determine the extent of coaching transfer. Contextual factors differ from one organisation to another. Even within the same organisation, one individual‘s supervisor might support coaching while another is not.

Coachee attributes, such as personality, emotional and intellectual intelligence, readiness and motivation, could affect coaching success or coaching outcomes (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006; Grover & Furnham, 2016).

## 1.3 Research problem

Coaching is a popular human resource development tool in South Africa. Talent management practitioners (human resource, organisational development, learning and development) use coaching to support organisational change, personal learning and employees' development initiatives (Burke & Hutchins, 2008; Grover & Furnham, 2016).

There is, however, a challenge where the organisations, like the SOE under study, spend substantial financial resources on coaching without realising the returns on investment. This challenge has resulted in some organisations abandoning this powerful form of learning, and opportunities that can help transform an organisation into a high performing organisation are missed. Therefore, to attain stable and lasting returns on coaching investments in the SOE, it is important to establish the role of contextual or environmental factors and coachees' attributes in promoting the application of the newly acquired skills, knowledge and attributes to the workplace. These attributes help understand the process by which coaching works in the SOE setting to maximise coaching transfer so that coaching works most of the time. This research was conducted to understand work environment factors, and coachee attributes necessary to promote coaching transfer at the SOE.

## 1.4 Research objectives

The aim of this study was to explore the moderators of coaching effectiveness at a South African State-Owned Entity in a bid to maximise coaching transfer. In order to do this, the objective of the study was to:

1. Determine how coaching transfer help coachees apply new-found knowledge, skills and attitudes at the workplace for the benefit of the individual and the SOE.
2. Determine the contextual or environmental factors characteristics that affect coaching transfer in the SOE.

3. Determine coachee‘s attributes that affect coaching transfer in the SOE.

## 1.5 Significance of the study

Most studies on how organisational climate and individual attributes affect coaching transfer were conducted outside South Africa (Cox et al., 2014; Rosha & Lobanova, 2014; Stewart, Palmer, Wilkin, & Kerrin, 2008). Raliphada, Coetzee, and Ukpere (2014) identified organisational factors that affect learning transfer in the South African public service. This study investigates the role of organisational climate and coachee attributes in optimising coaching transfer at a South African SOE, modelled differently from the public service departments.

The findings of this study should be a valuable contribution to understanding the concept of coaching transfer and the factors that affect coaching transfer at the SOE. The development of the conceptual framework for workplace coaching transfer will help guide future coaching transfer programmes.

The findings of the study revealed that there were work environment factors that were barriers and facilitators to coaching transfer. Opportunity to apply new-found knowledge, buy-in, positive feedback, visibility of leadership, supervisory support and performance-driven culture were identified as facilitators. At the same time, there are inherent and emerging barriers such as coaching not being part of the core business that can hinder the coaching transfer process. The knowledge gained could help the SOE create a conducive coaching transfer climate and improve their coaching strategy.

The value of the coaching programme experienced by the study participants is that it is an eye-opener that broadens their faculties in manifold ways. The coaching programme enabled the managers to be good critical thinkers, an ingredient pertinent in the discharge of their managerial duties as they relate with different kinds of clients and colleagues.

The findings of the study revealed several attributes of the managers that made the coaching transfer possible, i.e. the application of coaching acquired learnings.

These attributes are coachees' readiness to learn, relationship with the team – trust and openness, weakness identification and self-awareness capability, transparency and meaningful engagements, leading by example and possessing emotional intelligence.

By sharing insights into their coaching transfer journey, the managers highlighted the coachee personality attributes that optimised the coaching transfer process. The identified characteristics will help shape the selection criteria for participation in future coaching programmes and encourage management to nurture the same attributes in the organisation.

The participant's reflections revealed that the coaching transfer design of the entity (tools & monitoring) and the prevailing high-performance culture contributed to the acceptance of the coaching transfer initiatives.

Employees' awareness that their pre- and post-performance score will be evaluated post the coaching intervention forced them to achieve the predetermined goals.

The value of the coaching intervention as experienced by the study participants was that it was an eye-opener that broadened their faculties in manifold ways and inculcated a humanistic management style.

The global outbreak of COVID has created significant challenges for leaders at all levels. The impact of COVID-19 on businesses, clients and employees were unprecedented and overwhelming. Leaders started recognising and empathising with the human side of the pandemic. Deloitte's 2020 Leadership in times of COVID 19 draws attention to the crucial role of leadership, committed to the principles of empathy and wellbeing of the employees during COVID-19 and the recovery period (Deloitte, 2020).

The new humanistic management style that was acquired during the coaching transfer process put them in good stead during COVID 19 pandemic. They were

able to capitalise on their acquired coaching skills and attitudes in managing this new remote working context and its attendant risks.

The main findings and insight from the study resulted in the development of the conceptual model. It is recommended that the academic community conduct optimisation and validation studies of the model. Other researchers may also use the findings of this study as a basis for future research by looking at other coaching stakeholders' perspectives, i.e. coaches, coaching relationship and consider external factors affecting coaching transfer. This study would allow for transferability to other similar settings. It is recommended that future studies should be conducted using multiple-case studies to ensure validity (Yin, 2017), in the different SOEs and to evaluate the coaching transfer and its effect on organisational performance.

Coaching transfer, a programme that is implemented in the organisation, needs to have a return on investment. It is suggested that future studies be conducted to develop a conceptual model using individual dimensions. This conceptual model can be used for performance management, using a monitoring and evaluation approach, such as those recommended by Markiewicz and Patrick (2016), focusing on appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

## 1.6 Delimitations of the study

The scope of the study only covers the contextual or environmental factors, i.e., those associated with the organisational atmosphere within the workplace and the coachee attributes, such as personality, emotional and intellectual intelligence, readiness, and motivation that may affect coaching transfer at the SOE. The study did not cover the core competencies, coaching methodology and the coaching relationship aspects of the coach.

The research participants included the SOE's employees at management levels who received coaching, and the human resources practitioners responsible for

the formulation and execution of the coaching strategy. The other internal coaching stakeholders, i.e., supervisors managing those who received coaching, the chief executive officer, the chief financial officer, and other departmental heads, were not interviewed in this study.

## 1.7 Definition of terms

The key terms used in this report are defined here to ensure a shared understanding and consistency.

### 1.7.1 Coaching

This study uses definitions from Anderson and Anderson (2005), Whitmore (2009), Cox et al. (2014) and Berg and Karlsen (2012) to understand the concept of coaching.

**Table 1: Summary of Definitions of Coaching**

| **Author** | **Coaching Definition** |
|---|---|
| Anderson and Anderson (2005) | Coaching is a rich, holistic approach for releasing the potential in people and in organisations. |
| Whitmore (2009) | Defined coaching as unlocking the potential of people to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them. |
| Berg and Karlsen (2012) | Defined coaching as the process of challenging and supporting a person or a team to develop ways of thinking, ways of being and ways of learning. |
| Cox et al. (2014) | Coaching as a human development process combined with structure, focused attention and the use of appropriate strategies, techniques and tools that can result in desirable and sustainable change. |

### 1.7.2 Business Coaching

The World Association of Business Coaching defines business coaching as a process of engaging in regular, structured conversation with a client who is an

individual or team within a business, profit or non–profit organisation, institution, or government and who is a recipient of business coaching (World Association of Business Coaching, 2011). On the other hand, Bozer and Jones (2018) described business coaching as one-to-one learning and development intervention that uses a collaborative, reflective, goal-focused relationship to achieve professional outcomes valued by the company coachee.

### 1.7.3 Internal Coaching Stakeholders

The stakeholders are the people affected by or who have an interest in the coaching programme. Wilson (2011) categorised the internal stakeholders as follows: the influencers (board members, human resources practitioners, organisational development heads and department heads), the approvers (CEOs, finance heads and department heads), the users (might be managers), team leaders and account managers and the shapers (learning and development and human resources heads, and department heads). On the other hand, Burke and Hutchins (2008) classified the stakeholders within an organisation into senior management, managers and supervisors of trainees, peers of trainees, trainees and trainers (internal and external).

### 1.7.4 Coaching Transfer

To optimise training and learning transfer, Baldwin and Ford (1988) developed a transfer model to highlight the role played by three factors that influence the efficacy of the transfer. The model proposed that training design, trainee characteristics, and work environment, directly and indirectly, affect learning transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988). Stewart, O'Riordan, and Palmer (2008) extended the same concept to conceptualise the coaching transfer construct. Stewart, Palmer, et al. (2008) maintained that coaching outcomes might be improved by considering the role of factors within the coaching relationship, i.e. coach and coachee attributes, their interpersonal relationship and organisational support. Coaching transfer is the construct denoting the sustained application of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other qualities acquired during coaching into the

workplace to attain a lasting return on the coaching investment (Stewart, Palmer, et al., 2008).

### 1.7.5 Coaching Outcomes

In evaluating the success or failure of a coaching engagement, most organisations base their success upon whether agreed-to changes and objectives were achieved. According to Theeboom, Beersma, and van Vianen (2014), several different outcome measures have been identified in coaching effectiveness studies, including, but not limited to job satisfaction, job performance, self-awareness, self-efficacy, resilience, hope, autonomy and goal attainment.

## 1.8 Assumptions

Reality is the meaning given to events as experienced by individual persons. Each person experiences and give meaning to events within the context of their biography or experiences (Corbin & Strauss, 2014). In this study, the coachees and human resource practitioners were requested to report their perceptions of the transfer climate within the SOE.

The researcher assumed that all participants had experience with coaching transfer and would be willing to share their knowledge and information pertaining to coaching transfer at the SOE. There was no opportunity for post-confirmation with participants to check if the findings of the study verify their perceptions (Raliphada et al., 2014).

## 1.9 Structure of the report

Chapter one presents the overview, conceptualisation, and significance of the study are discussed.

Chapter two outlines the literature of the study. The literature review chapter starts with coaching as an intervention to improve performance, followed by the

theoretical foundation of the research. Flowing from this is the empirical review, which focuses on the objectives of the study, then concludes by developing the proposition of the study.

Chapter three presents the research paradigm, research approach and the research design. In this chapter, the population and sample, sampling methods and sample size, the procedure for data collection, data analysis and trustworthiness of the study and limitations of the study.

Chapter four presents the findings of the study.

Chapter five is focused on the discussion following the findings from the study, and the results are compared with existing literature.

Chapter six, the final chapter, presents the conclusions and recommendation for future studies.

# CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

## 2.1 Introduction

The literature review represents an account of the existing body of knowledge and past research work in the field of learning and coaching transfer. The learning and coaching transfer theoretical frameworks form the basis to elucidate various factors that may inhibit or aid the implementation of coaching within the workplace. As the study sought to understand workplace transfer of coachee acquired coaching-based development, the first component of the literature review covers the different interventions, then the underlying learning transfer theories. In a bid to comprehend organisational and individual factors that may inhibit or aid the implementation of coaching, the subsequent section outlines the transfer constructs, as espoused in various coaching transfer frameworks. Furthermore, as the study is interested in factors within the workplace (outside of the coachee-coach relationship), an in-depth review of the coachee characteristics and work environment factors are explored.

## 2.2 Coaching as an intervention to improve performance

Organisations invest a substantial proportion of their budgets towards the learning and development of their employees through formal training programmes (Audet & Couteret, 2012; Vesso & Alas, 2016). Talent management practitioners (human resource, organisational development, learning and development) use coaching and mentoring to enable personal learning and employees' development to support organisational change (Burke & Hutchins, 2008; Grover & Furnham, 2016). Training, coaching, and mentorship are the most common forms of learning and development in organisations.

Coaching can take place in several forms. A coach may choose to work one-to one with an individual manager/coachee or conduct workshops and seminars with larger groups of managers/coachees. The latter approach is a one-to-many coaching processes, also defined as team coaching. However, there is also peer

coaching, where each participant acts as both coach and coachee (Berg & Karlsen, 2012). In some instances, coaching may be offered by managers, i.e. manager as a coach (Grover & Furnham, 2016). Coaching may be used for multiple purposes: skills coaching, performance coaching, developmental coaching, and executive coaching (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006).

## 2.3 Theoretical Foundation of the study

The study of coaching transfer is grounded on multiple theories that underpin the broad nature of the study, namely, Gestalt theory, coaching on the axis, and theory of transfer of learning (Figure 1).

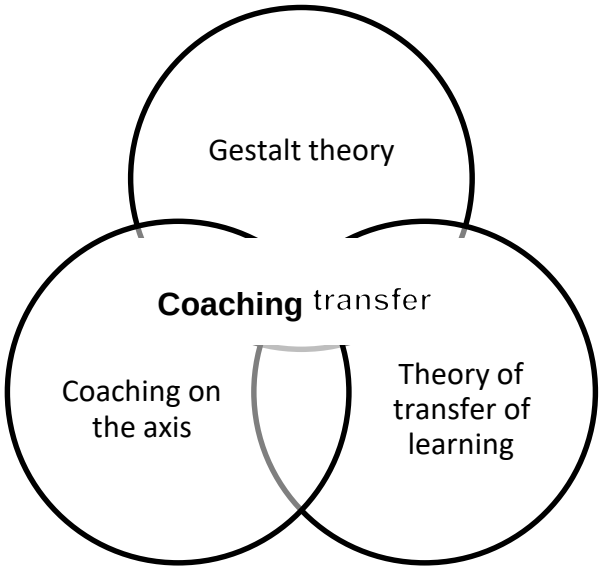



**Figure 1: Foundational Theory of the study**

### 2.3.1 Gestalt Theory

Most coaches have relied on the Gestalt method as a primary underpinning theory and practice for business coaching to facilitate change and development. The cornerstone of the Gestalt method is its emphasis on the importance of self-awareness in attaining effective behaviour and a meaningful life (Bluckert, 2014). This approach aims for an individual to discover, explore, and experience their shape, pattern, and wholeness. The present centred awareness enables a person to be what they are already, rather than striving to be what they are not.

**Table 2: A framework for Gestalt coaching practice's defining features**

| Defining features | Guiding theoretical perspectives |
|---|---|
| A. A focus on the need-fulfilment process *how we satisfy (or not) needs, achieve closure around issues, assimilate learning and achieve desired goals* | The Cycle of Experience<br><br>Interruptions to contact |
| B. focus on how to use self | Presence and the intentional use of self as an instrument of change |
| C. A focus on the coaching relationship | Authentic dialogue |

Source: Bluckert (2014)

The following set of core assumptions and beliefs underpin the Gestalt coaching approach (Bluckert, 2006):

- The primary purpose of the coach is to help coachees be in tune with their functioning and reality.
- The self-awareness of the coachee leads to greater understanding, which invariably generates better decision making and action.
- The heightened awareness breeds high levels of personal responsibility and accountability.
- A person's emerging and dominant thoughts determine our field of perceptions.
- Individuals tend to perceive holistically to gain resolution of issues.
- It is important to understand one's perceptions and experiences when interacting with reality.
- Learning is preceded by an examination of the present time realities.

Every coach may benefit from Gestalt-based coaching practice as coaching and mentoring are based on raising awareness as the starting point for learning and change. Coaches leaning on the Gestalt need to adopt a positive, optimistic, supportive stance towards their coachees.

Gestalt coaching is premised on fundamental principles espoused in Gestalt theory and/or psychology (Simon, 2009). It thus becomes important first to understand the origins of Gestalt theory and/or psychology. The word '**Gestalt'** is derived from the German language for "*pattern*" or "*shape*" or "*configuration*" (Rock & Palmer, 1990). Gestalt theory can be traced from Germany in the 20th century (Nevis, 2013). According to Nevis (2013), the main founders of Gestalt theory are Max Wertheimer (1880–1943), Kurt Koffka (1886–1941), and Wolfgang Köhler (1887–1967) . Gestalt theory is premised on a notion that human perceptions are optimised by focussing on objects as a structural whole, as opposed to objects as diminutive parts. As Rock and Palmer (1990) put it, Gestalt theory challenges the theory that *complex perceptions could be understood by identifying the elementary parts of experience* but rather propels the ideology that humans first identify a whole before breaking the object into elementary parts. Simply put, the founders of Gestalt theory concluded that humans simplify how they perceive complex objects by grouping patterns into a whole.

Nevis (2013) best illustrates the gestalt theory through the figure below. The figure is first perceived as a whole, namely, a triangle or the letter "S" before the elementary components. Figure 3 is based on the five principles of Gestalt theory, namely:

- Proximity – illustrates how the human mind perceives objects or elements that are next to each other. Thus, the human mind is likely to group objects into a whole based on their proximity to each other.
- Similarity – illustrates how the human mind recognises objects based on their likeness. Thus, the human mind is likely to group object as a whole based on their similarity.

- Continuity – illustrates that a human mind recognises objects based on continuity, especially from a visual perspective. Thus, the mind is likely to group objects into a whole based on their continuity from the base.
- Closure – illustrates that the human mind recognises objects based on their completeness, or at a point that they come together (joint). Thus the mind is likely to group objects into a whole that a tied together to the end.
- Connectedness –illustrates that the human mind recognises objects based on how and where they are connected.

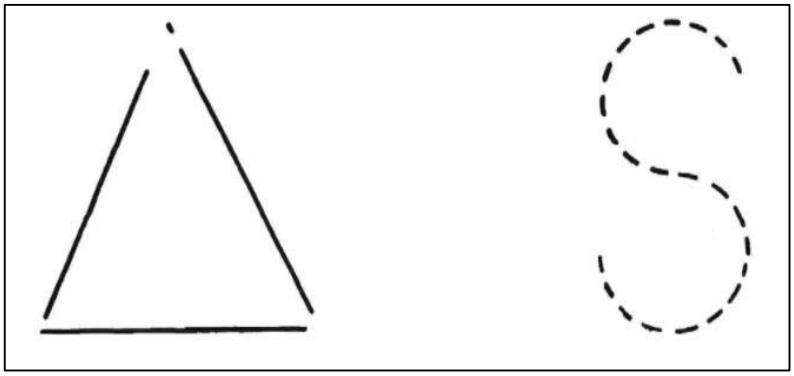


**Figure 2: View of Gestalt theory**

Accordingly, the founders of the Gestalt theory cemented the theory of how humans interact with their environments in different situations. As asserted by Nevis, the Gestalt cycle of experience integrates the behavioural aspects of sensation, awareness, energy mobilisation, contact and resolution into a complete human experience.

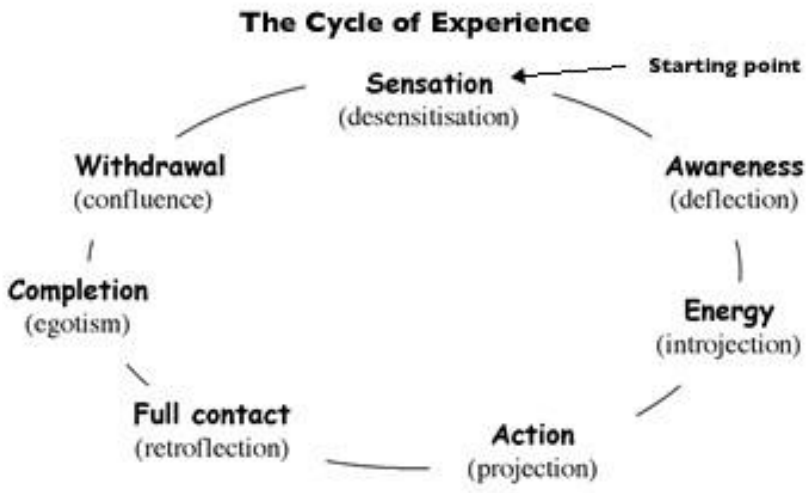



**Figure 3: The cycle of experience**

Source: Stevenson (2019)

### 2.3.2 Coaching on the Axis Approach

Systemic coaching suggests three predictors of effective coaching: individual behaviour, current work situation, and the organisational context (Kaltenecker & Myllerup, 2011). This approach places high value on the coaching relationship and its systemic interface with the business environment (de Haan, Culpin, & Curd, 2011). Informed by systemic coaching, Kahn (2011) developed a coaching on the axis model using a tree as a metaphor to depict the interface between the three business coaching elements: the environment (branches and leaves), the individual being coached (the root system) and the coaching relationship itself (the tree trunk). Kahn (2011) added environmental factors, such as, company vision, mission, culture, performance scorecard and ethics code that one could consider as determinants for favourable coaching outcomes.

The coaching on the axis is presented in Figure 4.

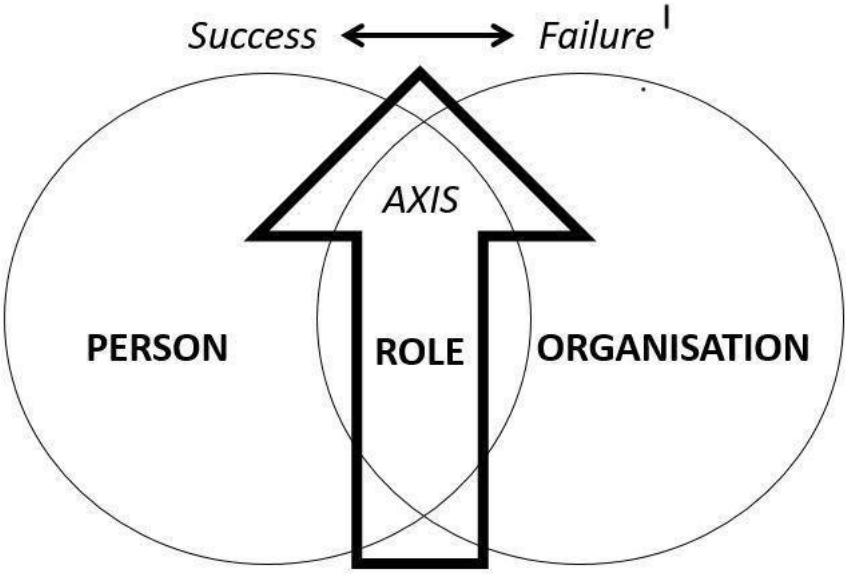



**Figure 4: Coaching on the axis**

Source: Kahn (2011)

### 2.3.3 Theory of Learning Transfer

Learning and transfer are critical components of Human Resource Development (HRD). The key criterion for evaluating training effectiveness is the transfer of training (Yamnill & McLean, 2005). Broad and Newstrom (1992) define the transfer of training in the workplace as the effective and continued application by trainees/coachees to their jobs of the knowledge and skills gained in training. Transfer of training is a core issue to linking individual change to the requirements of the organisational system**.** For this study, transfer of training is the degree to which trainees/coachees apply the knowledge, skills, behaviours, and attitudes gained in training.

Baldwin and Ford (1988) developed a transfer of training model that comprised three types of influences on the efficacy of transfer:

1. Aspects of the course (appropriateness of the content),
2. Characteristics of the trainee/coachee (ability, personality and motivation) and

3. Features of the work environment (support and opportunity to use training).

According to Baldwin and Ford (1988) model, all these training inputs are suggested to have both direct and indirect effects on transfer. This conceptual framework is the bedrock of most transfer framework studies. It has attracted many empirical studies to investigate how individual characteristics, job attitudes and work environment affect the transfer of training process (Facteau, Dobbins, Russell, Ladd, & Kudisch, 1995; Saks, 2002).

## 2.4 Empirical review of the study

### 2.4.1 Coaching to coaching transfer

Coaching is a distinct people management discipline or a form of facilitation process based on a close interpersonal relationship between a coach and a coachee. It is a process that leads to learning and the development of potential, and the core of coaching is learning and change (Ives, 2008).

From the organisational perspective, coaching programmes are expected to reap different benefits. According to Theeboom et al. (2014), various outcome measures have been identified in coaching effectiveness studies, including, but not limited to, job satisfaction, job performance, self-awareness, self-efficacy, resilience, hope, autonomy and goals in terms of evaluating the success or failure of a coaching engagement. Most organisations base their success upon whether agreed-to changes and objectives were achieved. In terms of assessing the success of a coaching engagement, coaching creates a supportive environment, and coaching alone does not guarantee success (Morgan, Harkins, & Goldsmith, 2003).

Despite the popularity of coaching, there are still several unanswered questions relating to the factors that determine workplace coaching effectiveness and understanding the process by which coaching works in an organisational setting (Grover & Furnham, 2016). To benefit both the trainee/ coachee and the organisation, the anticipated outcome of coaching is when the coachee can

practically apply what they have learned during the coaching intervention to their job. Therefore, to attain a durable and lasting return on coaching investments, it is essential to establish the role of contextual and coaching stakeholders' attributes as this may inhibit or aid the implementation of coaching.

To maximise the transfer of coaching benefits, Stewart, Palmer, et al. (2008) developed a coaching transfer model to highlight the factors associated with transfer to or maintenance of coaching benefits within the workplace. The model emanated from Baldwin and Ford (1988)'s training model of transfer. Baldwin and Ford (1988) maintained that transfer occurs when acquired knowledge is applied to the job context and maintained into the distant future. Coaching transfer is the sustained application of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other qualities acquired during coaching into the workplace to attain a lasting return on coaching investments (Stewart, Palmer, et al., 2008).

Subsequently, Stewart Coaching Transfer Model identified four factors supporting coaching transfer in the workplace (Stewart & Palmer, 2009). The factors are pro-development organisational culture, positive psychosocial support within the organisation for the coachee, pro-development coachee and leadership impact.

Furthermore, Rosha (2014) identified three conditions that may influence the success or failure of the use of coaching in organisations, namely:

1. External indirect conditions (innovations in business, psychology, education, etc., that facilitate developing coaching theory).
2. External direct conditions (coaching professional standards and coaching industry research).
3. Internal conditions at:
    a. Organisational level (pro-development culture)
    b. Group level (peer and supervisor support) and
    c. Individual-level (motivation, locus of control).

Stewart, O'Riordan, et al. (2008) and Rosha (2014) explain that coaching success depends on a partnership of mutual responsibility between the organisation and

the coachee. Their Coaching Transfer models suggest that conditions that promote coaching transfer in the workplace are resident in the organisational environment or climate. Different organisational role-players like the team, supervisor and leadership support and coachee attributes and affect the transfer.

There are at least two conceptual models that shaped the coaching transfer model. The first was based on Baldwin and Ford (1988), and this is presented in Figure 5. It comprises coaching input which includes coachee characteristics, coaching factors and working environment. This is followed by coaching output about coachee development, then conditions of transfer, which involves applying, generalisation, and maintenance.

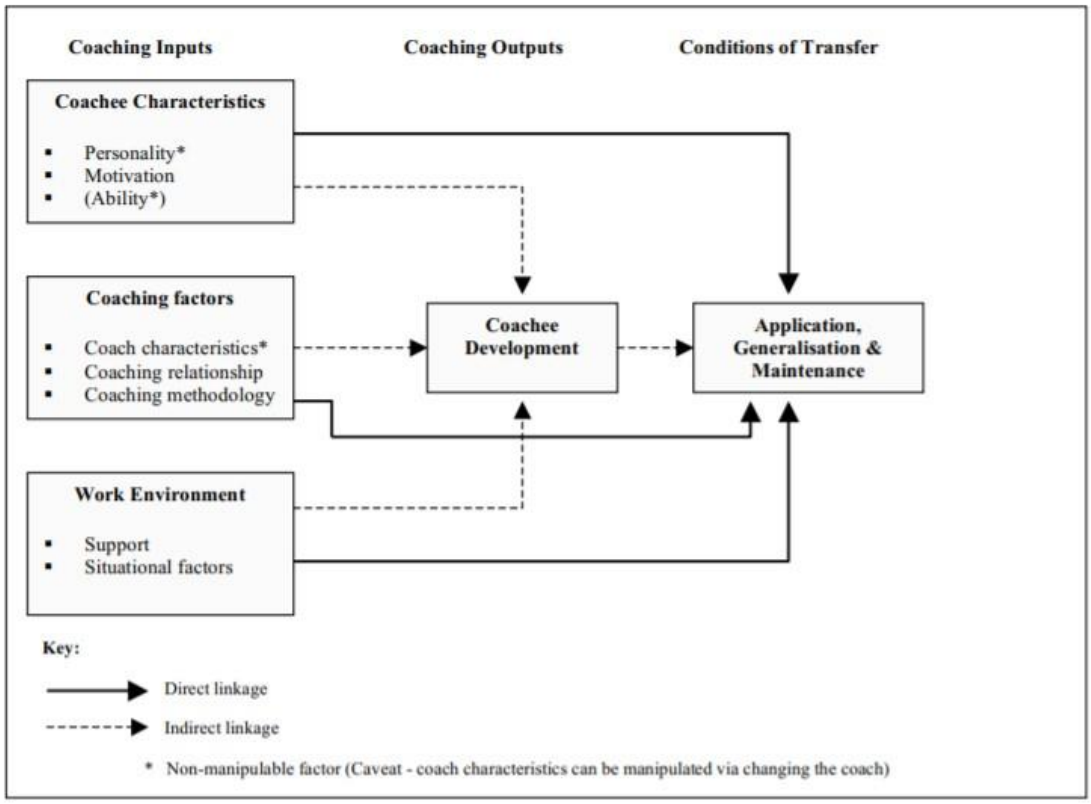



**Figure 5: Conceptual Coaching Transfer Model based on the transfer of training model**

Source: Baldwin and Ford (1988)

The other model is based on the work of Stewart, O'Riordan, et al. (2008 p.105). This conceptual model is underpinned by hypotheses that suggested that

“coachee motivation, peer and manager support, and positive situational factors would be associated with creating conditions conducive to positive coaching transfer. Full support was not found for all hypotheses”. This model highlights the coaching transfer conditions, which are about the interaction of personal and performance outcomes, development, and two-stage transfer (Figure 6).

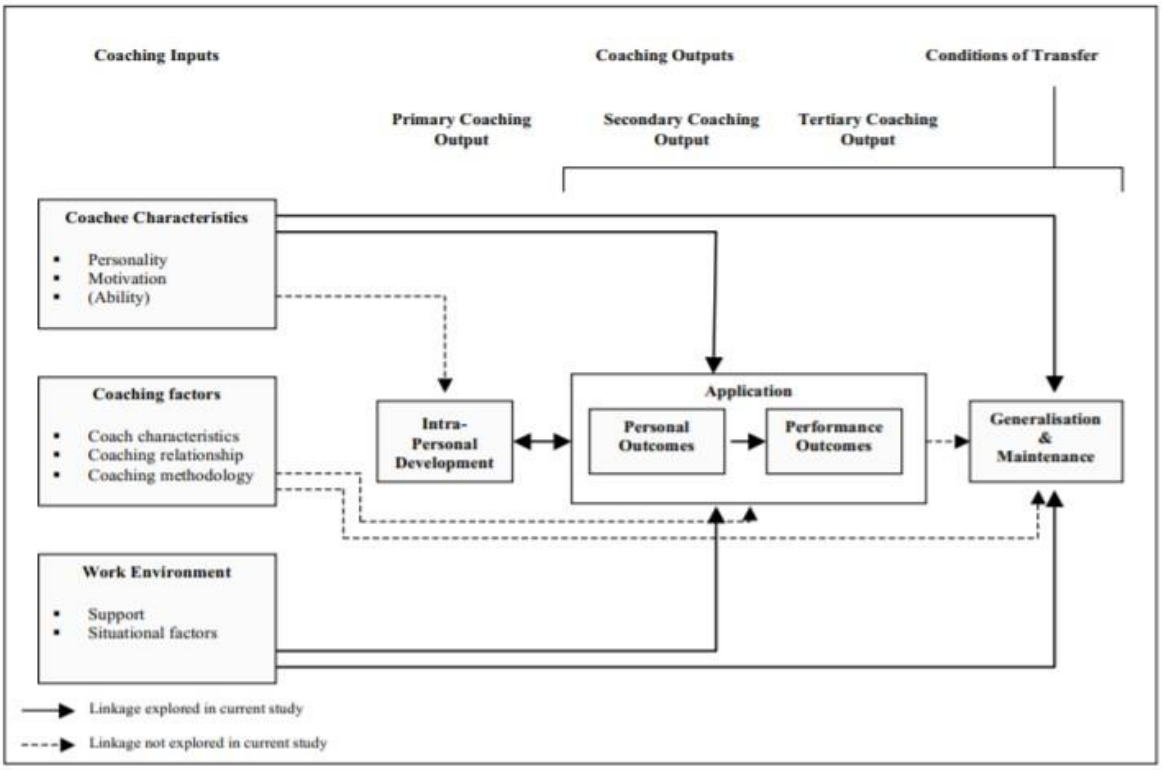



**Figure 6: Coaching Transfer Model**

Source: Stewart, O’Riordan, et al. (2008)

Learning transfer systems

Most transfer frameworks mentioned above assume that transfer factors affect transfer independently (Yamnill & McLean, 2005). However, some studies on transfer from the year 2000 considered the transfer factors a unified set of variables called a transfer system (Colquitt, LePine, & Noe, 2000; Holton III, Bates, & Ruona, 2000; Hutchins, Nimon, Bates, & Holton, 2013; Tracey & Tews, 2005). A transfer system comprises all the factors from the individual, the training

and the organisation that can affect the transfer of learning performance to the job.

Holton et al. (2000) designed a Learning Transfer System Inventory (LTSI) questionnaire to assess all factors that influence the transfer of learning in the work environment (Table 3). The conceptual framework for the LTSI views training transfer as a function of four categories: secondary elements, ability/enabling factors, motivation factors, and work environment factors. These are assessed using 16 constructs (Hutchins et al., 2013). The instrument measures 16 dimensions that are likely to influence training transfer. These 16 constructs include the factors from the individual, the training and the organisation that can affect the efficacy of transfer of learning to job performance (Table 3).

**Table 3: Conceptual Model of the Learning Transfer Systems Inventory**

| **Factor** | **Definition** |
|---|---|
| Learner readiness | The extent to which individuals are prepared to enter and participate in training. |
| Motivation to transfer | The direction, intensity, and persistence of effort toward utilising skills and knowledge learned in a work setting. |
| Positive personal outcomes | The degree to which applying training on the job leads to outcomes that are positive for the individual. |
| Negative personal outcomes | The extent to which individuals believe that not applying skills and knowledge learned in training will lead to outcomes that are negative. |
| Personal capacity for transfer | The extent to which individuals have time, energy, and mental space in their work lives to make changes required to transfer learning on the job. |
| Peer support | The extent to which peers reinforce and support the use of learning on the job. |
| Supervisor support | The extent to which supervisors-managers support and reinforce use of training on the job. |
| Supervisor sanctions | The extent to which individuals perceive negative responses from supervisors-managers when applying skills learned in training. |
| Perceived content validity | The extent to which trainees judge training content to reflect job requirements accurately. |
| Transfer design | The degree to which training has been designed and delivered to give trainees the ability to transfer learning to the job |

| Factor | Definition |
|---|---|
| Opportunity to use | The extent to which trainees are provided with or obtain resources and tasks on the job, enabling them to use training on the job. |
| Transfer effort performance expectations | The expectation that effort devoted to transferring learning will lead to changes in job performance. |
| Performance outcomes expectations | The expectation that changes in job performance will lead to valued outcomes. |
| Openness to change | The extent to which prevailing group norms are perceived by individuals to resist or discourage the use of skills and knowledge acquired in training. |
| Performance self-efficacy | An individual's general belief that he is able to change his performance when he wants to. |
| Performance coaching | Formal and informal indicators from an organisation about an individual's job performance. |

Source: Devos, Dumay, Bonami, Bates, and Holton III (2007)

The LTSI supports the notion that a transfer system comprises all the factors from the individual, the training and the organisation that can affect the transfer of learning to job performance. The transfer of learning is complex and involves multiple factors and influences (Kirwan, 2016a; Kirwan & Birchall, 2006). The factors outlined in Holton III, Bates, Bookter, and Yamkovenko (2007)'s Learning Transfer Inventory System questionnaire is used as a benchmark for the analysis of participant responses.

### 2.4.2 Organisational factors that affect coaching transfer

The internal conditions within an organisation refer to the aspects that make up the organisational culture. These include goal orientation, support orientation, learning culture, a relationship of mutual trust and openness, and a culture of feedback. One of the attributes of a pro-development culture is the operational factors that are supportive of coaching, such as the consideration of the coachee's workload (Stewart, O'Riordan, et al., 2008; Wilson, 2011). A pro-development culture facilitates coaching transfer by creating a positive organisational climate.

Given the nature and goal of the coaching programme, it is important to afford targeted managers competence and confidence to be manager coachees with the organisation deemed to be operating at the strategic stage as depicted in the Four Stages Coaching Culture (Table 4) (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 2006).

**Table 4: The four stages of measuring progress towards a coaching culture**

| Stage | Description |
|---|---|
| Nascent | Little or no commitment to creating a coaching culture, coaching is inconsistent and of low quality. |
| Tactical | The organisation has recognised the value of coaching commitment to coaching behaviours as integral to management style is low |
| Strategic | There is considerable effort expended to educate managers and employees in the value of coaching and to give people the competence (and therefore confidence) to coach in a variety of situations. |
| Embedded | At the embedded stage, people at all levels are engaged in coaching, both formal and informal, with colleagues both within the same function and across functions and levels. |

Source: Megginson and Clutterbuck (2006)

*Organisational climate*

Considering its impact on people and performance, Lindbom (2007) regards organisational culture as the soul of an organisation. Clutterbuck (2003) maintains that organisations utilising coaching services for organisational change have to invest in creating a coaching-friendly organisational climate. An essential attribute of a positive coaching climate is to consider coaching as an opportunity for personal growth, team development and organisational learning and a responsibility shared by managers. A pro-coaching environment will promote quality staff engagements where feedback and constructive and positive confrontation are valued, witness an increase in personal and organisational performance and improve employee retention (Stewart & Palmer, 2009).

*Operational factors supportive of coaching*

Before an organisation embarks on a coaching programme, all coaching stakeholders must be appraised of the requirements of a successful coaching outcome. All stakeholders must be aware of the procedural and logistical support expected of each role player in supporting the coachee before and after their programme of coaching sessions concludes (Wilson, 2011).

Stewart, O'Riordan, et al. (2008) contends that the best method of ensuring successful implementation of coaching is to afford coachees developmental activities with clear goals and allocated time and resources. Such initiatives could include targeted skills training, the opportunity to work with a mentor, the opportunity to practice their new development at their own pace, including the opportunity to learn from mistakes (Stewart, O'Riordan, et al., 2008).

*Workloads*

One of the key post-coaching support programmes offered to coachees is the opportunity to apply the newly acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes at work to prevent relapse. Significant workloads and tight deadlines may hamper coachees' intent to practice. Line managers have to consider the coachee's developmental activities when allocating work amongst team members. Coachees are more likely to transfer their development when their workload allows them to practice and introduce their new development (McGovern et al., 2001; Stewart & Palmer, 2009).

*Psychosocial support for the coachee*

Stewart and Palmer (2009) define psychosocial support as the support for people by people. The sources of psychological support at the workplace may be in the form of team or peer support and support from the supervisor or line manager and leadership (Rosha, 2014). To provide support, co-workers or supervisors can act as friends, cheerleaders, and reinforcers or providers of rewards for reaching developmental goals.

*Availability of a quality developmental champion*

Stewart, O'Riordan, et al. (2008) maintain that success requires support. Organisations ought to ensure that coachees have the support of a senior member who takes an interest in their development in the organisation (e.g., immediate manager) or via a sense of responsibility (e.g., self-appointed mentor). The quality developmental champion is involved in the coachee's development and encourages the coachee to achieve their goal.

*Peer Support*

Peters and Carr (2013) believe that team effectiveness and performance are underpinned by interdependence and cohesion among the group members. Although peer support received less mention than champion support in Stewart, O'Riordan, et al. (2008) coaching transfer studies. Rosha (2014) found that conditions at the level of groups are likely to significantly impact the promotion of coaching as team members may sabotage the coachee's development.

*Supervisor Support*

The dictionary definition of a supervisor is "a person in the first-line management who monitors and regulates employees in their performance of assigned tasks". The involvement of the supervisor or the line manager when their direct reports are receiving coaching from an internal or external coach is important. The supervisors and line managers are regarded as mentors and advocates for both the organisation and the employee. Their commitment prior, during and post the coaching intervention is beneficial as they are best placed to provide support and feedback (Kirwan, 2016b).

Nijman (2004) defines supervisor support as behaviour exhibited by the supervisor, which optimises employees' use of knowledge, skills and attitudes gained in training on the job. Supervisory support is a multidimensional construct and could include encouragement to attend goal-setting activities, reinforcement, and behaviour modelling.

The importance of supervisor support is emphasised by both learning transfer and coaching transfer studies. Support from supervisors has been suggested to play a crucial role in the achievement of learning and coaching transfer (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Raliphada et al., 2014; Stewart, O'Riordan, et al., 2008). The results of these qualitative studies concluded that there is a relationship between supervisor support and coaching outcomes. A positive relationship can lead to positive transfer, whereas a negative relationship can lead to inaction on the side of the coachee.

### 2.4.3 Coach attributes - Manager as a coach

The characteristics of a coach include the ability to employ the skills related to the core coaching competencies and awareness of business processes (Rosha, 2014). The coach should be able to create a rapport with the coachee, i.e. cocreating the relationship, making meaning with others and helping others succeed through authentic listening and effective questioning, based on a chosen methodology (Rogers, 2012). Rogers (2012) calls the coaching space unusual because it requires a high amount of trust and candour from both parties. Trust is probably the most complex issue for coaches, whether external or internal.

Some perceive the internal coach as having no anonymity as their role may require them to pass on information to top management. External coaches are considered as a safe haven, resulting from the confidentiality they provide (Linder-Pelz & Hall, 2008). The coaching contract should incorporate the ethical codes to govern decisions about how information from coaching sessions is used to prevent the disclosure of personal information to inappropriate recipients (Rogers, 2012). Table 5 presents the characteristics of a coach, focusing on the attitude, behaviour and experience.

**Table 5: Characteristics of the coach.**

| Attitude of the coach | Behaviour of the coach | Experience of the coach |
|---|---|---|
| Openness | Confronting | Business world |
| Respect | Giving feedback | Coaching |
| Empathy | Non-pedantic | |
| Commitment | Mirroring | |
| Being present | Listening | |
| Honest | Stimulating problem solving | |
| Sounding board behaviour | Helpful and give psychological support | |
| Self-disclosure | Using technique | |
| Role model | | |
| Non-judgmental | | |

Source: Rogers (2012)

### 2.4.4 Employee as a coachee – coachee attributes

The coachee is an important stakeholder in every coaching relationship. Coaching is deemed successful when the coachee applies the coaching-acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes within their work practice (Rosha, 2014). Audet and Couteret (2012) maintain that being receptive to coaching and especially being open to change is a building block for coaching success. Stewart and Palmer (2009), however, contend that not all coachees are poised to maximise the benefits of coaching. If coachees are coerced into coaching, they do not get the same benefit as when they have voluntarily acknowledged the need for it (McCarthy & Ahrens, 2011). Stewart, O'Riordan, et al. (2008) identified learning goal orientation, pre-training motivation, feedback receptivity, and developmental efficacy as the predictors of coaching success.

*Learning Goal orientation*

Goal setting and goal achievement are integral components of the coaching process. Stewart, O'Riordan, et al. (2008) reported an interrelation between a coachee's learning goal orientation and their level of professional development, namely, selecting goals, developing action plans, and identifying concrete steps to achieve goals and therefore, impact on coaching outcomes.

*Feedback receptivity*

The heart of coaching is learning and change (Ives, 2008). As a coachee-centred human development process, coaching places high value in encouraging clients to experiment with new behaviour options and seek feedback on the outcomes of those new alternatives (Finn, 2007). According to Stewart and Palmer (2009), coachees who seek opportunities to practice their development, who seek constructive feedback on their performance, and who do not abandon their development when faced with obstacles are more likely to transfer their development.

*Self-Efficacy*

Many experts consider individual traits, such as locus of control and self-efficacy as key coachee characteristics to advance coaching in an organisation (Bozer, Sarros, & Santora, 2013; Cheng & Ho, 2001). According to Bandura (1988), self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to execute behaviours to accomplish specific performance goals. It reflects confidence in the ability to control one's motivation, behaviour and social environment. Such attainments can be recognition, promotions, salary increases and job enlargement. Coachees with a high confidence level demonstrate a positive relationship with job performance and are more likely to apply what they have learned from training to their job (Bozer et al., 2013).

*Organisational commitment*

Organisational commitment is defined as the employee's psychological attachment to an organisation (Allen & Meyer, 1990). The people's commitment to the organisation is essential to implement the organisational mandate and strategy successfully. Allen and Meyer (1996) identified three components of organisational engagement: affective commitment (affection for the organisation), continuance commitment (fear of loss) and normative commitment (sense of obligation to remain within the organisation). In coaching transfer, employees who feel connected to the organisation are more dedicated to their work, which could influence their willingness to invest in the personal process.

## 2.5 Conclusion of literature and propositions of the study

Offering coaching programmes to employees is not a means to an end. Coaching helps coachees learn, transfer learning (skills, knowledge and attitudes) to the workplace and sustain changed behaviour—the latter two manifest at the workplace. Given the organisation's unique and dynamic environment and different internal stakeholders, it is important to understand internal conditions that contribute to coaching effectiveness.

According to Stewart, O'Riordan, et al. (2008) and Rosha (2014), coaching success depends on a partnership of mutual responsibility between the organisation and the coachee. The Coaching Transfer models suggest that conditions that promote coaching transfer at the workplace are resident in the organisational environment or climate, different organisational role-players like the team, supervisor, and leadership support and coachee attributes.

Stewart, Palmer, et al. (2008) and Rosha (2014) proposed a Coaching Transfer Model that sought to integrate the influence of coaching inputs, coaching outcomes and conditions of transfer. Coaching inputs are classified as coachee characteristics, coaching relationship and work environment factors that may promote or inhibit coaching transfer into the workplace. As such, Proposition One was developed as follows:

*$RP_1$: Coaching Transfer helps coachees to apply new-found knowledge, skills and attitudes at the workplace for the benefit of the individual and SOE.*

Studies suggest that coaching transfer is affected by facilitators and constraints resident in the workplace. They include, among others, goal orientation, leadership and management support orientation, learning culture, a relationship of mutual trust and openness, operational factors supportive of coaching and a culture of feedback (Peters & Carr, 2013; Raliphada et al., 2014; Stewart & Palmer, 2009; Stewart, Palmer, et al., 2008). As such, Proposition Two was developed as follows:

*$RP_2$: Work environment characteristics affect coaching transfer in the SOE*.

A coachee is often considered ready for coaching when they are willing to invest time and energy in the process and willing to do the work of development and take personal responsibility for transferring what is learned into action for change on the job (Smith & Brummel, 2013). Furthermore, Stewart, Palmer, et al. (2008) contend that the best method of ensuring successful implementation of coaching is to afford coachees developmental activities with clear goals, dedicated time and resources at the workplace. Such initiatives could include targeted skills training, the opportunity to work with a mentor, the opportunity to practice their new development at their own pace, including the opportunity to learn from mistakes.

*$RP_3$: Coachee's attributes affect coaching transfer in the SOE*.

Stewart, O'Riordan, et al. (2008) identified learning goal orientation, pre-training motivation, feedback receptivity, and developmental efficacy as the predictors of coaching success. These propositions are evaluated to answer the objectives of this research presented in Chapter one. The next chapter presents the approach to the investigation and a comprehensive description of the methodology of the study.

# CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the methodology used to investigate the propositions stated in Chapter one and two. The selected research approach is outlined, followed by a description of the research design, a discussion of the population and sample, the research instruments used, and the procedures for data collection and methods of data analysis and interpretation. This chapter concludes by describing the credibility and trustworthiness of the study and the methodological research limitations.

## 3.1 Research approach

The research paradigm is regarded as an all-encompassing system of interrelated practices and thinking that helps to define the nature of the research. Scotland (2012), also supported by Creswell and Poth (2016) called the paradigm a worldview, notes three different paradigms: interpretivism, post-positivism, and pragmatism. In this study, the interpretivism paradigm was adopted as it underpinned by the knowledge produced by understanding the social world and explored the experiences of the participants. More importantly, it extracted the meaning from the context of the setting (Welch & Piekkari, 2017). This approach is important for the study on coaching transfer, as it is about the sustained application of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other qualities acquired during coaching in the workplace (Stewart, O'Riordan, et al., 2008). Welch and Piekkari (2017) argued for the relevance and importance of this paradigm, and they explained that there is no better point of access to knowledge and understanding the worldview than the participant's lived experience.

Blanche, Blanche, Durrheim, and Painter (2006) posit that the research paradigm is explained with three dimensions: ontology, epistemology, and methodology. As such, within the interpretivism paradigm, there is an ontological, epistemological and methodological position. Scotland (2012, p.9) advances that the ontological position is about what constitutes the reality, and as such, the "ontological position of interpretivism is relativism because relativism is the view that reality is

subjective and differs from person to person". The epistemological position is about the form and the nature of the knowledge. Simply put how is the knowledge created and communicated. For the selected paradigm, the epistemological position was that of subjectivism, which highlights that knowledge is based on the real world and that it is not independent of the knowledge of the participants. In explaining the methodology, Scotland (2012) liken it to a strategy behind a choice of the research. Due to the research setting, the interpretivism methodology was about understanding the individual's perspectives of a phenomenon, which in this study was coaching transfer, as well as investigating the interaction of the individuals.

Against this backdrop and the focus of the dimensions of the paradigm, the interpretivism paradigm was ideal for the study. This paradigm is aligned with qualitative research. The qualitative research approach was optimal for this study compared to the quantitative research. It requires in-depth knowledge of critical factors or characteristics related to the environment and the individual that influence the coaching transfer in the workplace. Coaching transfer, mainly adapted from training, is at a relatively early stage with developing knowledge. Thus qualitative research is regarded as the umbrella of interpretivism for knowledge that is socially produced to be the most appropriate for building knowledge using exploratory research. The exploratory nature of this study is compatible with the qualitative research approach as it focused on the exploration of values, meanings, beliefs, thoughts, experiences, and feelings characteristic of the phenomenon under investigation (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006). According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2007), exploratory research is conducted to determine the nature of the problem and help develop a better understanding of phenomena.

Utilising a qualitative research approach for this study helped demonstrate various perspectives, namely, those of the coachee, supervisor and the human resources practitioner, by studying the participants' knowledge and practices.

## 3.2 Research design

Flick (2014) posits that the research design is about how the research is structured to connect the empirical data to the objectives of study and, ultimately, to its conclusions. The purpose of the research design is to ensure that the data is interpreted and extrapolated correctly to the best of the researcher's ability.

Five designs are associated with qualitative research: basic or generic research design, case study, grounded theory, phenomenology, and ethnography (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark, & Smith, 2011; Zikmund, Babin, Carr, & Griffith, 2010). In this study, the basic or generic research study was employed due to its simplicity and effectiveness through semi-structured interviews.

## 3.3 Population and sample

### 3.3.1 Population

The population for this study includes the 2600 employees of a Public Entity Institution in South Africa across the various provinces. The entity has invested considerable time and resources in training individuals, teams and managers in workplace coaching. The institution being studied has implemented coaching for some employees over the past five years (2014– 2019). The company has spent a considerable amount of their development budget on external coaches to deliver coaching services.

### 3.3.2 Sample and sampling method

The sample of the study were management-level employees of the state-owned entity across all the provinces who have participated in coaching during the years 2014-2019. A sample with 15 participants were selected across different provinces, which included Eastern Cape (EC), Free State (FS), KwaZulu-Natal, (KZN), Gauteng (GP), Mpumalanga (MP), Limpopo (LP), North-West (NW) and Western Cape (WC). They were within the age group of 32 – 48 years and were all nominated to attend coaching, mainly during the 2017/18 financial year. All the

participants were at the management level. This sample was within the range of the 5-25 respondents for a basic or generic semi-structured qualitative research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2016; Vasileiou, Barnett, Thorpe, & Young, 2018).

**Table 6: Profile of participants**

| Participants | Gender | Age | Province | Level in the organisation | Participation in coaching | Year of coaching |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Participant 1 [RSP1] | Female | 35 | GP | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/18 |
| Participant 2 [RSP2] | Male | | EC | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/2018 |
| Participant 3 [RSP3] | Male | 32 | KZN | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/ 2018 |
| Participant 4 [RSP4] | Female | 36 | MP | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/2018 |
| Participant 5 [RSP5] | Female | 35 | WC | Middle Manger | Nominated | 2017/2018 |
| Participant 6 [RSP6] | Female | 30 | LP | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/2018 |
| Participant 7 [RSP7] | Male | 32 | KZN | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/2018 |
| Participant 8 [RSP8] | Male | 40 | LP | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/2018 |
| Participant 9 [RSP9] | Female | 49 | EC | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/2018 |
| Participant 10 [RSP10] | Female | 34 | GP | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/2018 |
| Participant 11 [RSP11] | Female | 39 | WC | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/2018 |
| Participant 12 [RSP12] | Male | 36 | FS | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/2018 |
| Participant 13 [RSP13] | Male | 40 | KZN | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/2018 |
| Participant 14 [RSP14] | Female | 35 | NW | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/2018 |
| Participant 15 [RSP15] | Female | 33 | KZN | Middle Manager | Nominated | 2017/2018 |

Furthermore, there was also a confirmation of code saturation, with saturation reached after 12 interviews, with no new information in the last three interviews (Figure 7).

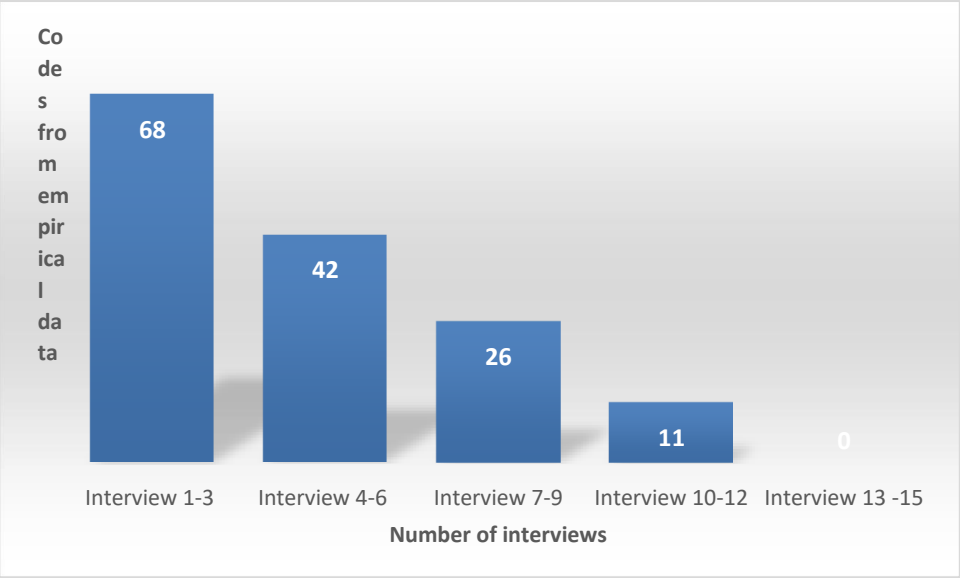



**Figure 7: Saturation graph from the empirical data**

## 3.4 The research instrument

The research instrument for this study was an interview guide, which was used for semi-structured interviews, with questions more open-ended to obtain in-depth information from the participants. Patton (1999) contends that qualitative interviews questions should be based on situational, relational and behavioural attributes. The interview guide comprised five questions. The first question provided biographic information of the participants, which highlights their relevance to the study (Guetterman, 2015).

This was followed by questions on coachee motivation and readiness – the reason to participate in a coaching intervention and clarity about expectations of outcome which focused on proposition one on coaching transfer, then questions on the coachee's overall evaluation and assessment of the coaching intervention, namely, views regarding any benefits they perceived they gained as a result of attending coaching which focused on coachee attributes. This was then followed

by context and environmental questions, starting with the opportunity to use skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired from the coaching in practice, factors, which assisted with coaching training transfer or factors that led to the achievement of the formulated goals and any barriers to utilising the acquired skills knowledge and attitudes in practice. The full interview guide is provided in Appendix A.

## 3.5 Procedure for data collection

The identified participants were contacted via e-mail or telephone and invited to participate in the interviews individually, based on their relevance to the study. Due to the COVID-191 pandemic, in-person interviews were not possible; therefore, all the interviews were conducted online using Microsoft Teams and/or Zoom. This approach to schedule the interviews in advance at a designated time and location is supported by Sofaer (2002).

At the beginning of the interview, the researcher's ethical obligation (see Appendix B) was explained, focusing on the requirements to respect confidentiality, protecting the identity of participants and the employer organisation against any prejudice or potential harm. The interview was recorded and transcribed for analysis. The transcription was done verbatim to capture all the contents of the discussion, and it was supported by the notes taken by the researcher. A combination of verbatim transcription and researcher 's notes has been cited as being central to the reliability, validity, and veracity of qualitative data collection (Halcomb & Davidson, 2006).

A total of fifteen interviews were conducted for this study. The total duration of all the interviews combined amounted to 900 minutes. The average time of the interviews was 60 minutes. The shortest interview was 40 minutes, and the

1 COVID-19: Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus, SARC-COV-2 which causes severe acute respiratory illness in humans (World Health Organisation, 2020).

longest interview was 70 minutes. These times indicate that there was significant time spent with the interviewees to discuss the topic of interest. Table 4 presents the details of the transcripts.

**Table 7: Details of the transcripts**

| Description | Quantity |
|---|---|
| Number of interviews | 15 |
| Total duration of the interviews | 900 minutes |
| Average duration | 60 minutes |
| Shortest duration | 40 minutes |
| Longest duration | 70 minutes |

## 3.6 Data analysis and interpretation

The analysis was conducted in Atlas Ti 8.0 as this is a computer-aided programme that simplifies the analysis, using six steps for thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2012), the use of thematic analysis involves searching for repeated patterns across data sets. It provides a rich and detailed account of data by identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes. This type of analysis reports on experiences, meanings and realities experienced by participants. A theme captures something important about data in relation to the research objectives.

The criteria used for identifying themes was based on a combination of the following (Braun & Clarke, 2006):

- The themes are theory-driven and were approached with certain questions in mind,
- Counting the number of times participants articulated the theme.
- Identifying interesting aspects coming out as repeated patterns across the entire data set.

- Looking for the individual occurrence of themes across the entire data set.

Following a guided approach used, the analysis was based on the phases of thematic analysis as indicated in Table 8.

**Table 8: Phases of thematic analysis**

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

Source: Braun and Clarke (2006)

In summary, the researcher re-familiarised herself with the data of the transcribed text to obtain a sense of the whole empirical data. This was followed by line-online coding of the data without filtering, and then the codes and categories were combined into code groups. These code groups were then combined to form themes that were used to test the propositions of the study. Where applicable, the thematic map presented with their association and contradictions.

## 3.7 Trustworthiness of the study

Morse (1991a) highlights four strategies to determine rigour and trustworthiness in qualitative research. These include credibility, transferability, confirmability and dependability.

### 3.7.1 Credibility of the study

The credibility of the qualitative research is the extent to which the design, the data, and data analysis have rigour and are trustworthy. Credibility is analogous to internal validity, that is, how research findings match reality. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that ensuring the credibility of the study is extremely important as it is one of the most important aspects required to establish trustworthiness. Critically though, it is imperative to keep in mind that since the underlying paradigm or philosophy of the qualitative study is interpretivism, the reality is relative with the meaning that people construct is done within social contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Shenton (2004) proposed several strategies that the research can follow in ensuring credibility, of which several of them were adopted in this study. These were research methods, triangulations, members' check and examination of previous research findings.

The study followed well-established methods and design, which are also used by other research, including the use of the interpretivism paradigm, the qualitative research approach, and the use of generic or basic design with semi-structured interviews. Furthermore, the empirical data was collected from different stakeholders, ensuring that the different angles are obtained, which in this study was the coaches and the human resources personnel who developed the coaching programme, allowing for data triangulation. The study also incorporated member checking into the findings, and this was done by gaining feedback on the empirical data. Member checking was a critical step, as advised by Morse (1991b) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) as a critical strategy for establishing credibility. Finally, the examination of the previous findings of similar research was conducted (Baldwin & Ford, 1988; Rosha, 2014; Stewart, O'Riordan, et al., 2008).

### 3.7.2 Transferability

Transferability is regarded as a major challenge in qualitative research because of the subjectivity of the research, and as such, research needs to be thorough to ensure it. Seale (1999) advised that transferability can be achieved by providing detailed information of the research setting, thus providing enough information and conveying the boundaries of the study. This allows for transferability if the subsequent research is in situations similar to the current research. In this study, the delimitations of the study, assumptions and research setting provided the information necessary for the transferability of the study. The critical information is that this study is conducted within the state-owned entity (section 3A entity), focusing on research where the managers are the coachees that conduct coaching transfer to their teams in the organisation.

### 3.7.3 Dependability

Dependability is the extent to which the findings of the research are replicated within a similar context and similar participants (Shenton, 2004). Merriam (1998) earlier proposed that dependability should be determined by ensuring that the results are consistent with the empirical data collected. As data were recorded and transcribed verbatim, this allowed the research to validate the narrative with a confirmatory quotation from the different participants during the writing of the findings.

### 3.7.4 Confirmability

Confirmability is the other aspect of trustworthiness, and it is regarded as the extent to which others can confirm research findings. Simply put, it is the extent the research is aware of individual subjectivity or bias. Interpretive qualitative research is subject to bias because of its nature of subjective interpretations. To limit researcher bias, LeCompte and Goetz (1982) and Angrosino (2007) caution participants to change their behaviour because of a foreign presence. An in-depth text description of the study was provided to give a clear picture of the findings of

the study, to immerse the reader within the environment, and they can best see where the study fits their needs.

One of the other ways to ensure this is to account for all aspect of the research, and this was done in this research. This includes the research objectives and propositions, the designs and methods, and the participant's demographic details. This would allow for a theoretical audit trail, which is necessary for the confirmability of the study. In this study, the audit trail was also kept using transcription and notes confirming the empirical data that was collected.

Additionally, the data was collected until it reached saturation, meaning until no new information or themes was discovered. As such, this increase chances of confirmation by others in a similar setting.

## 3.8 Limitations of the study

Utilising the qualitative research approach with the interpretivism paradigm for this research study strengthened the findings. However, this research was not without limitations, and there were several limitations of the study that need to be acknowledged.

- Firstly, in this study, managers were requested to report on their own perception, which may not necessarily be factual. No post-confirmation was done with the participants to cross-validate if the findings of the study are aligned with their experiences.
- Secondly, the study was conducted only in one State-Owned Entity, whereas there are so many public entities, and this may not allow for transferability to other entities that are not similar to the entity that was not investigated.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person interviews were not possible; therefore, all the interviews were conducted online using Microsoft Teams and/or Zoom.

## 3.9 Ethical considerations

Ethical issues are an integral part of qualitative research design. The ethical considerations spread throughout the research process, including identifying the research problem, engagement in the inquiry, and disseminating results (Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001). The research protocol maintained the ethical principle of beneficence, namely, doing well for others and preventing harm for the human subjects. According to this principle, researchers are to provide the participants with an outline of the risks and benefits involved to the participants in the study (Mellick & Fleming, 2010).

The study provided sufficient information on the research aim and data collection procedure, followed by details of informed and voluntary consent, the confidentiality of information shared and anonymity of research participants, how results are published, accessed and storage of data (Ryen, 2016). The researcher obtained informed consent through written consent forms from all participants so that they were not coerced into participation and had access to relevant information before obtaining their consent. See Appendix B.

Apart from the written consent, the researcher asked the participants to verbally consent to participate in the interviews several times during the research process and assure the participants that they had the right to disengage from the study at any time. The researcher protected the research participants' identities. This ensured that the information shared by the participants remained anonymous and protected. In all the interviews, there was the use of pseudonyms [RSP]. Where possible, participants were asked to approve the use of quotations in the publications as using quotations could reveal the participants' identity (Ryen, 2016). This provided anonymity for the participants to be protected (Mellick & Fleming, 2010). Armed with adequate communication of the intention of the investigation, assured of confidentiality and information shared and anonymity, participants had the liberty to reconsider their participation.

# CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

## 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore factors that affect coaching transfer at a South African State-Owned Entity (SOE). The study was prompted by the need to understand coachee attributes and contextual or environmental factors that may influence coaching transfer, i.e., the extent to which skills, knowledge and attitudes (SKA) acquired during the coaching programme was applied in the SOE The research method applied for this study was qualitative, with fifteen semi-structured interviews, which was the empirical data that was analysed using thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clarke (2006).

This chapter presents the findings of the study, starting with the development of the themes, followed by the presentation of the results based on the propositions of the study. The chapter closes by summarising the findings of the study, which are then discussed in Chapter five.

## 4.2 Theme development to evaluate the propositions

The transcribed interviews were analysed using Atlas T.I version 8, creating unique codes, after which these codes were categorised into code groups (subthemes). There were 26 sub-themes identified from this study, which were further consolidated into five themes (Table 8). The themes are coaching investment in the workplace, coaching transfer benefits in the workplace, work environment factors that promote coaching transfer, work environment barriers to coaching transfer and coachee attribute that affect coaching transfer.

**Table 9: Sub-themes and themes of the study linked to proposition**

| Sub-themes | Themes | Research Proposition (RP) |
|---|---|---|
| ▪ Purpose of coaching<br>▪ Selection of coachees and coaching approach adopted | Coaching investment in the workplace | $RP_1$: Coaching Transfer help coaches to apply new-found knowledge, skills and attitudes at the workplace for the benefit of the individual and SOE |
| ▪ Build / promoted self-directed teams and teamwork.<br>▪ Improves morale and cohesion.<br>▪ Enhance transfer of knowledge and skills.<br>▪ Cultivate problem-solving skills.<br>▪ Enhance self- and career development.<br>▪ Helps to improve performance | Coaching transfer benefits in the workplace | |
| ▪ Performance driven culture<br>▪ Opportunity to apply knowledge learned during coaching.<br>▪ Motivation to apply new-found knowledge.<br>▪ Buy-in and positive feedback.<br>▪ Visibility of leadership and supervisory support | Work environment factors that promote coaching transfer | $RP_2$: Work environment characteristics affect coaching transfer in the SOE. |
| ▪ Coaching not part of core business activities<br>▪ Lack of a sustainable coaching transfer plan<br>▪ Time constraints due to work-load<br>▪ Financial constraints<br>▪ Workplace structural changes due to COVID-19<br>▪ Lack of continuing training for coachees | Work environment barriers to coaching transfer | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ▪ Coachee readiness to learn.<br>▪ Feedback receptivity<br>▪ Relationship with the team –trust and openness<br>▪ Self-awareness<br>▪ Transparency and meaningful engagements<br>▪ Leading by example<br>▪ Possesses emotional intelligence | Coachee attributes that affected coaching transfer | $RP_3$: Coachee's attributes affect coaching transfer in the SOE. |

## 4.3 Coaching Transfer in the SOE

The first research objective investigated in the study was the concept of coaching transfer with the participants in the state-owned enterprise. It was investigated with proposition one:

> *$RP_1$: Coaching Transfer help coachees to apply new-found knowledge, skills and attitudes at the workplace for the benefit of individual and SOE.*

Coaching Transfer is preceded by coaching, and then transfer takes place to maximise the transfer of the coaching benefits. As such, to understand this concept, it was prudent first to review coaching, followed by the coaching transfer, and these are analysed with coaching investment in the SOE (theme one) and coaching transfer benefits in the workplace (theme two).

### 4.3.1 Coaching investment in the SOE

There were two critical aspects of coaching interventions that were highlighted by the participants. These were the purpose of coaching as well as the selection of coachees and coaching approach adopted.

*Purpose of coaching*

The purpose of coaching is important because this can help to galvanise the individuals within the organisation and provide them with a purpose to participate and be committed to the programme. Based on the feedback of the participants, the purpose for introducing the coaching intervention was purely performance

driven. The programme was intended to increase individual performance against the entity's business performance. The pre-determined evaluation criteria for the effectiveness of the programme was shared with the participants at the beginning of the intervention. The impact of the programme would be measured via the existing performance appraisal system. The coaching programme's impact would be evaluated by comparing the performance score before the intervention and intervention. The outcome of this assessment would indicate improvement or lack of improvement against the business goals. In the event of no progress, management would revisit the programme, i.e. make informed adjustments to the programme. On initiation, targeted participants were middle managers with a considerable span of control (with more than ten employees reporting to them). The participants were offered an in-depth coaching process course by external coaches. Upon completing the course, the coachees were granted access to an online Coaching Portal with coaching tools and resources. With the Coaching course and a managerial coaching toolkit, the coachees were expected to coach their teams comprising supervisors, professional practitioners, and administrative staff to improve their unit outputs. Reasons for implementing the managerial coaching programme within the state-owned entity to ramp up productivity is understandable. Continued use of external coaches is sometimes unaffordable and unsustainable, especially for the cash strapped public entity and the South African public service, in general.

*Selection of coachees and coaching approach adopted*

Though the programme's closing report mentioned an online personality profiling for targeted participants that was administered before the beginning of the programme, the research study's participants held a different view. When asked how they landed on the programme, all participants mentioned that they were nominated. When asked what she thought was the reason why the organisation recommended her to be trained on the coaching programme, Participant 15 responded thus,

*"I would not know why they recommended me, I guess they believed in that I can be able to transfer the skills that I will acquire from there and I can be able to share with others and maybe the experience as well and the position that I am in, it is a requirement. In fact, I will say from my viewpoint it is a requirement, it is a critical skill that a manager should have, or it is a competency that each and every manager should have." [RSP15]*

In the same vein, when asked the criteria used for recommending her to the coaching programme, Participant 14 (P14) states that;

*"I cannot specifically say a reason why, but because I have been with the organisation for a very long period of time, and I think in 2017 I was already ten years in management. I have worked in different offices as well and was able to engage with staff in different teams, different offices. I was able to train the candidate attorneys. I was given an opportunity as well to supervise the work that is being done by the attorneys as well as the supervisors which are the supervisory legal practitioners in the office". [RSP14].*

This was supported by RSP8 and RSP 9.

"*I received a notification from HR to advise that I have been nominated to attend the coaching training". [RSP8].*

While RSP9 supported in saying

*"I think the organisation, like because of our positions, the leadership and the management, you know they always decide to put us through these programmes to ensure that we are equipped, you know, to coach our teams and all that, and to be able to impart knowledge."*

From the evidence from the participants, there was no standard yardstick followed by the SOE on how to appoint a manager for the role of the coachee. It is, however, interesting to observe that a self-assessment from the participants' sheds light on the criteria followed when these participants were selected for the coaching programme. Rather than it being a random process of recommending

managers to the coaching programme training, the SOE assessed the managers' attributes in terms of their experience and propensity to share the skills derived from the programme with their team members.

The on boarding programme did not consider the coachees' personality, aptitude and pre-training motivation, i.e. coachee readiness to learn and acquire new skills. Transfer relies on coachees' motivation to implement and sustain the skills and attitudes derived from coaching in the workplace. The likelihood of coaching transfer is linked to coachees' perception of the importance of the programme. Coachees who have a pro-development approach and who are proactive in pursuing their goals are more likely to transfer. Participant 8 [RSP8] is grateful for the opportunity of participating in the public entity's coaching programme.

*"I am passionate about developing skills of others and I naturally care*

*about employees. I want them to succeed in their respective fields." [RSP8]*

Coachees who feel coerced into coaching and those without a true need for coaching may not be ideal candidates especially for the manager as a coaching initiative. The assertion that Individual motivation is a possible predictor of positive transfer is supported by Participant 9 [RSP9].

*"only ones that really showed a tremendous desire to be coached properly benefited from the programme. Am happy to tell you that one coachee progressed to a senior management role".*

Given the nature and goal of the SOE's coaching programme of affording targeted manager's competence and confidence to be manager coaches, the SOE is deemed to be operating at the strategic stage, ensuring incremental development of coaching culture with the organisation.

### 4.3.2 Coaching transfer benefits in the SOE

The SOE's coaching programme objective was to sharpen the managers' leadership capabilities so that they, in return, coach the employees reporting to

them. In line with the coaching intervention's purpose and coaching transfer design, the coachees were expected to transfer their coaching acquired knowledge to the workplace, namely, start using their learnings and the coaching toolkit to coach their team members.

If adequately implemented, coaching transfer has positive spinoffs to the organisation. It enhances the organisation's life. It empowers and capacitates the coachees to be independent thinkers, thereby enhancing their problem-solving skills for the attaining of the organisation's objectives. This is clearly captured by Participant 15 [RSP15], who has narrated about the benefits of the coaching programme:

*"Okay, if I reflect on that journey, my highlight was to see performance in terms of our deliverables improving and seeing the legal practitioners that I have assisted, also being able to come up with solutions and getting self-confidence to what they are achieving, their goals and doing their work. And also, it also helps me as well, because I improve my listening skills because each time you have this coaching session with a person, you need to listen because they can tell as well if you are not listening." [RSP15]*

Coaching transfer has benefits as it allows for the sustained application of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are acquired during coaching into the workplace (Figure 8.).

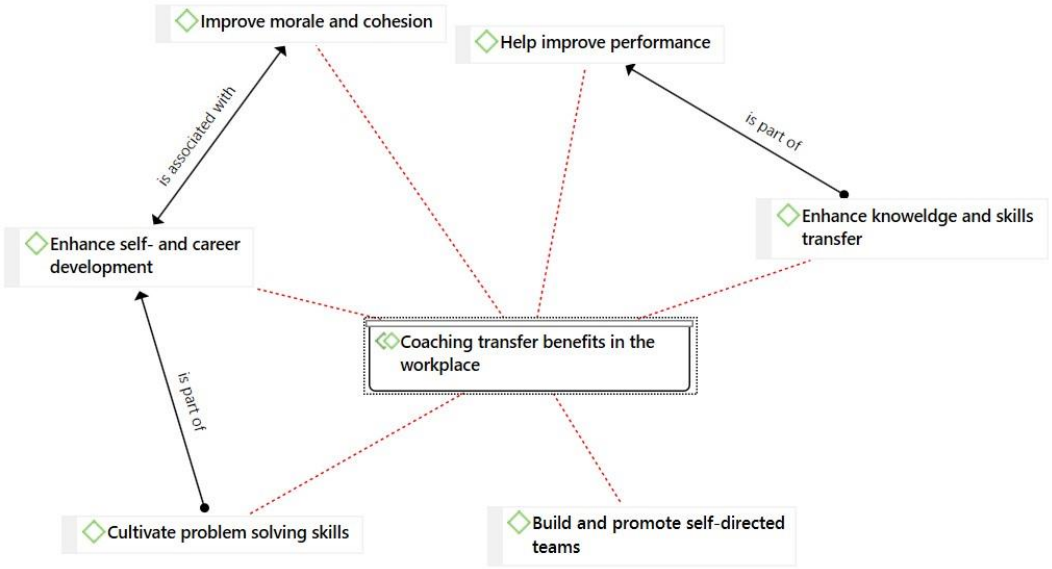



**Figure 8: Thematic map of coaching transfer benefits in the SOE**

The coaching transfer is necessary to build and promote self-directed teams and teamwork, improve organisational morale and cohesion, enhance the transfer of knowledge and skills, cultivate problem-solving skills, enhance self- and career development and help to improve performance.

*Build and promote self-directed teams*

The participants highlighted that coaching transfer is important to build and promote self-directed teams and teamwork in the organisation. It was evident that a healthy atmosphere with a positive spirit creates a space in one's mind to think and analyse productively, thus providing the solution to seniors and other colleagues. Creating an environment where employees perform positively and deliver quality work, enabling them to develop effectively, is an important outcome of coaching transfer. Participant 11 [*RSP11*] explained,

*"Also, the process created an environment that was conducive for me to develop in the organisation. Shared with team-mates - so that when they are empowered they will contribute meaningfully*."

This is also shared by Participant 8,

"*To me the working environment was very conducive for me to apply my newfound learnings.*" [*RSP8]*

The organisations leverage coaching transfer to ensure that the working environment is healthy for employees to work in. This means that the staff members get along, conflicts are resolved constantly and fairly amongst employees, employees are given enough time to do their work, and the employees are given the platform to exercise their skills and be diverse within the workplace.

*Improve organisational morale and cohesion*

Coaching, among others, helped with the team climate, which in turn helped to forge a good team spirit resulting in people relating well with each other. In essence, the coaching helped to develop these skills in the coachee, which in turn helped to build the team (beneficiaries). Participants 1 and 6 explain,

*"Team morale improved. Relationship with Line Manager also improved*." [*RSP1]* while [*RSP6*] indicated that

"*Coaching / Mentoring promotes team cohesion -coaching sessions are safe spaces".*

*Enhance transfer of knowledge and skills*

The different participants noted that the coaching transfer was useful to enhance the transfer of knowledge and skills. Some of the skills they mentioned included the improvement in their planning and prioritisation skills and also improvement in conflict management and negotiations skills, among others.

*"Coaching improved planning and prioritisation skills" [RSP13]*

*"Improved conflict management / persuasion/ negotiation skills" [RSP2]*

*Cultivate problem-solving skills*

A leader must be able to identify gaps and problems to have a positive outcome of the project and coaching programme. This helps save time and the organisations resources.

*"When you coach, you are coaching people properly and then how to, properly listen, identify the issues and the performance gaps from people and then identify or establish where they are falling short" [RSP7]*

*Enhance self- and career-development*

The interviews highlighted that It was important that all the leaders and top managers of the organisation undergo the training and coaching programme to gain more skills in mentoring and leading the junior employees. This programme further helped the management adapt the type of leadership style that best suits them and their employees.

Furthermore, the ability to up-skill and develop others is also important. The primary objective of the intervention is to coach individuals to a leadership position. It further outlines the importance of waiting for information to come to the coachee and intensively seeking information and exposure on where the improvement can take place.

*"It taught me about myself to say that if you want to be more than just sitting in an office and working like this, then you have to open yourself up to people to do more things". [RSP4]*

*"My intention is always to develop a person to a higher position that that person is currently in. so most of my coaching is directed on developing that person higher than the position that it is" [RSP6].*

The ability to transfer what is learned from coaching is important for the work environment and development of the organisation.

*Help to improve performance.*

The participants had different reasons as to why they joined the coaching intervention and how coaching transfer could help the organisation. These reasons ranged from gaining more knowledge for self-awareness purposes to gain more skills and to grow personally and in the workplace, with all of these

subordinated towards improving performance. The majority of the participants highlighted that their leaders identified them at work to take part in the training programmes. A person joining a coaching programme needs to be willing and not pushed by others to take it seriously and fully commit.

> *"I think the organisation, like because of our positions, the leadership and the management, you know they always decide to put us through these programmes to ensure that we are equipped, you know, to coach our teams and all that, and to be able to impart knowledge". [RSP9]*

> *"Coaching sessions with staff helped identify issues that may impact on performance". [RSP7]*

> *"Improved Performance - Goal setting linked to Performance contract" [RSP11]*

So, one of the highlights mentioned by the participants was improved performance through goal setting that is linked to a performance contract, improving the alignment and leading to better clarity of purpose for all.

The participant clearly illustrates the value of the coaching programme to both herself as the coach and her team members. In so far as the organisation benefits in terms of overall performance by the employee, various stakeholders equally benefit from being independent problem thinkers (coachees) and the abilities at self-examination. This important feature also brings about self-fulfilment.

To this end, the first proposition was confirmed, that coaching transfer help coachees to apply new-found knowledge, skills and attitudes at the workplace for the benefit of individual and organisation.

## 4.4 Work environment characteristics that affect coaching transfer

The second proposition was that work environment characteristics affect coaching transfer in the SOE. Theme three and theme four were developed to

outline the work environment promotion and barriers factors that affected coaching transfer within the SOE.

### 4.4.1 Work environment factors that promote coaching transfer

The work environment factors that were identified by the participants that promote coaching transfer were performance-driven culture, opportunity to apply knowledge learned during coaching, motivation to apply new-found knowledge, buy-in and positive feedback and visibility of leadership and supervisory support (Figure 9).

Participant 11 states that, "*Okay, the highlight for me was that the whole process enhanced my thinking skills. I conducted trainings with them, identified their weaknesses, identified their strengths and then I ensured that I empower them where empowerment is needed so that when they are empowered they will contribute meaningfully".*

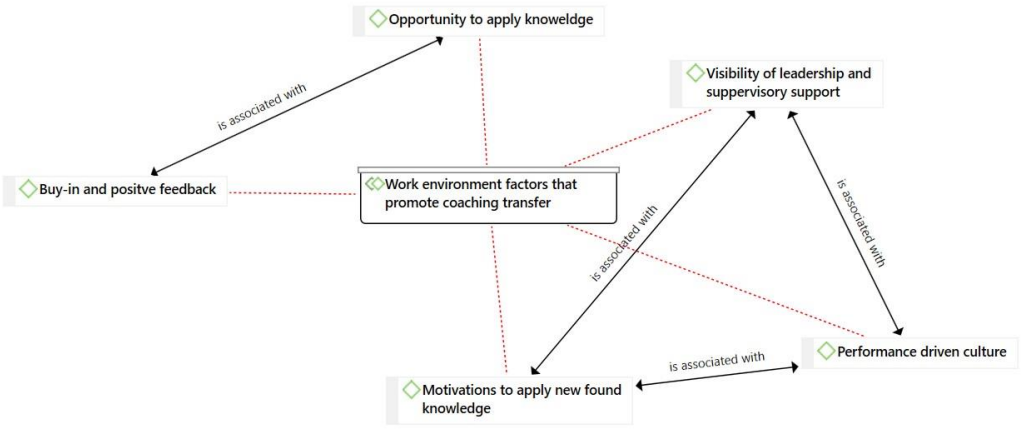



**Figure 9: Thematic map of work environment factors that promote coaching transfer**

### 4.4.2 Work environment barriers to coaching transfer

The participants highlighted five elements that are barriers to effect the coaching transfer within the SOE. These were coaching as not part of core business activities, lack of a sustainable coaching transfer plan, time constraints due to

workload, financial constraints, workplace structural changes due to COVID-19 and lack of continuing training for coaches (Figure 10).

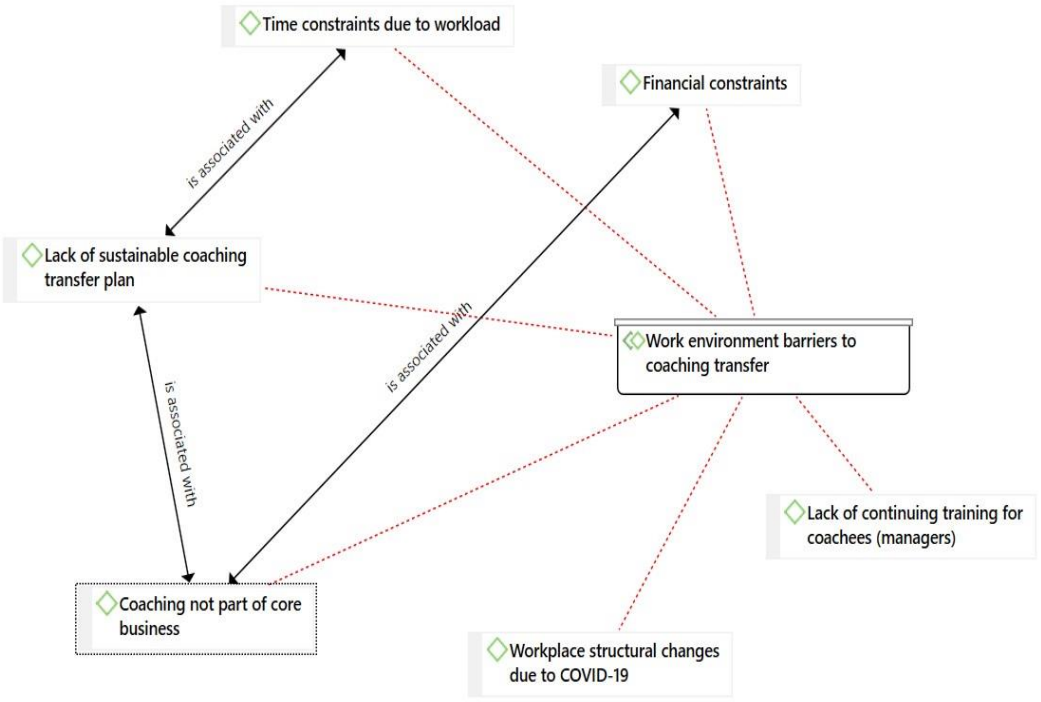



**Figure 10: Map of barriers to effective coaching transfer**

*Coaching not part of core business activities*

The participants indicated that one of the barriers they experienced was an inadequate opportunity to implement new skills. Participant three highlighted that she was not given enough opportunity to implement the skills she achieved through the intervention. This defeats the purpose of the training programme. It is crucial that whatever skills the coachees learn from the programme, they are able to implement these therefore, they should be given the platform to do so; otherwise, the purpose of conducting the training programme is forfeited.

*"I think on hindsight is that I might, I do not think that I have been given enough opportunity to be able to implement some of these skills that I have achieved through the intervention". [RSP3]*

Part of the problem why there is a lack of opportunities to implement was because coaching was not part of core organisational activities, with the so-called ‘substantive’ work taking priority.

*Lack of a sustainable coaching transfer plan*

The participants further indicated that the SOE ‘s coaching sessions with team members were not compulsory. This was a challenge because the coaches and coachee did not take this programme seriously. They did not attend as they should and also did not perform to the best of their ability because the programme was not formal. The attendees would sometimes participate to get away from work and not because they were interested in learning anything, and sometimes they would not attend. Therefore, it is critical that the roll out of employees ‘s coaching interventions be made compulsory for the organisation to see positive results.

> *“I think they should have made it more formal and incorporate this coaching on compulsory one-on-one meetings and maybe a short coaching”. [RSP1]*

> *“We are coaching informally all the time, but it was just too sort of formalise it”. [RSP9]*

*Time constraints due to work-load*

Time constraints is aligned with training intervention. According to the participants, there was no time to meet between the parties due to distractions at work, being over-committed, and sometimes, work emergencies occur, and one has to attend to these. This leads to training failure and the coachees being discouraged. During their sessions, someone had walked in asking for the mentees to be excused. They have to keep postponing, which results in the programme not being where it is supposed to be.

> *“But in terms of logistics, it is time. Time becomes a challenge sometimes you know, where for instance like when before we started the formal session we spoke about time and the schedule and that seems to change now and again,*

*you know, so sometimes you will set your day and arrange it in a particular way, but there will always be like emergencies". [RSP7]*

*"Take people away for two weeks and just focus on one thing and get this thing into their heads with nothing else distracting them, but unfortunately life is not that perfect". [RSP10]*

*"You know you would set up an appointment and maybe someone else would have like an emergency at work. It is not supposed to be like that, but they come to the office, they need something, or your manager needs something and then the session is actually disturbed". [RSP13]*

In essence, everyday work took priority and even if sometimes the people thought coaching was more important, as it helped to improve how to do the work in the future. The reality is that work is the priority and needs to be treated as such by the employees. Participant 7 [RSP7] highlighted the burden of balancing the demands of his substantive role and the role of a manager coach.

"*Heavy workload and time pressures may preclude one from being available for employees and the high coach / coachee ratio may affect quality of delivery*".

*Financial constraints*

Finance is a major influencer for any project success, no matter the size, no matter the primary objective of the project. However, the participants indicated that a limited budget was a barrier to successfully implementing the coaching transfer programme. This could be due to the fact that with COVID-19, the mentor and mentee could not meet in person. They had to conduct online training that requires data, but they could not afford to buy that much data due to the limited budget. Furthermore, failure to supply the resources necessary to perform the training programme because of financial constraints also leads to unsuccessful training.

*"The only barrier that I see which is beyond everyone, is the budgetary constraints, finance. You know, finance is key to success.*

*Due to a lack of budget, educational budget or training budget, I think we are unable to extend training to everyone". [RSP8]*

*"Sometimes you will find that you do coaching mostly on the phone, you do coaching, via e-mail, so which necessitates you know, everyone involved to have all those necessary tools and now there is a finance factor also that you have to like to put in there, do we have a budget for that". [RSP7] Workplace structural changes due to COVID-19*

COVID-19 came with many changes that we all had to adapt to. For the coaching programmes, it means they must be conducted through online platforms like Skype, Zoom, and E-mail, and even over the phone. This mode of communication is a challenge because, through these platforms, there are network barriers, and sometimes, the other person does not have data to attend the meeting. It is expensive because of the amount of airtime one needs to buy to cover the conversation period.

*"COVID played a very. It had a big, you know, impact, which is not positive in terms of time as well and which required, or which necessitates that if you have to meet with your coaches". [RSP7]*

*"Now it is challenging because most of the time half of the staff is not at work, they are working from another destination, like an administration, you know they do not have connection at home, so it is challenging if I am talking about today". [RSP13]*

Participant 6 also highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on her informal coaching and mentoring programme. She walked the floor to check on the well-being of her team members. The walk-about was beneficial because she could offer on the spot guidance and motivation in a less intimidating environment. COVID-19 deprived her of the opportunity to provide personal on the spot coaching and mentoring sessions continually.

*Lack of continuing training for coaches.*

In the coaching programme, the coachee encounter different people with different personalities and attitudes. This is a challenge because with each person coached, there is a need to align the coachee's personality with the beneficiary. According to participant seven [RSP7], the challenge comes when the people are of a different generation, there is a lot of misunderstanding and misalignments, which leads to coaching failure.

*"People change but there will be new people coming in and then there are other things that people need to do and the attitudes of people as well. So, others do not have this, the good attitude in terms of learning". [RSP7]*

The SOE is blessed with individuals from different backgrounds, race, age groups and creed. It is therefore important that everyone, including management, understands and accepts everyone with their differences.

*"It prepared me to deal with not only difficult situations, but difficult clients as well, both internal and external". [RSP11]*

So, when encountering these problems, the manager coach (coachee) had no access to supervisory coaches for professional guidance.

In summary, the participants agree that there were work environment factors that promote and others who are barriers to coaching transfer programme. As such, the work environment characteristics affect coaching transfer in the SOE, which confirm the second proposition of the study.

## 4.5 Coachee attributes that affected coaching transfer.

The last proposition of the study was that the coachee's attributes affect coaching transfer in the SOE. Several attributes were identified that could affect the coaching transfer. These were coachees' readiness to learn, relationship with the team – trust and openness, weakness identification and self-awareness

capability, transparency and meaningful engagements, leading by example and possessing emotional intelligence (Figure 11).

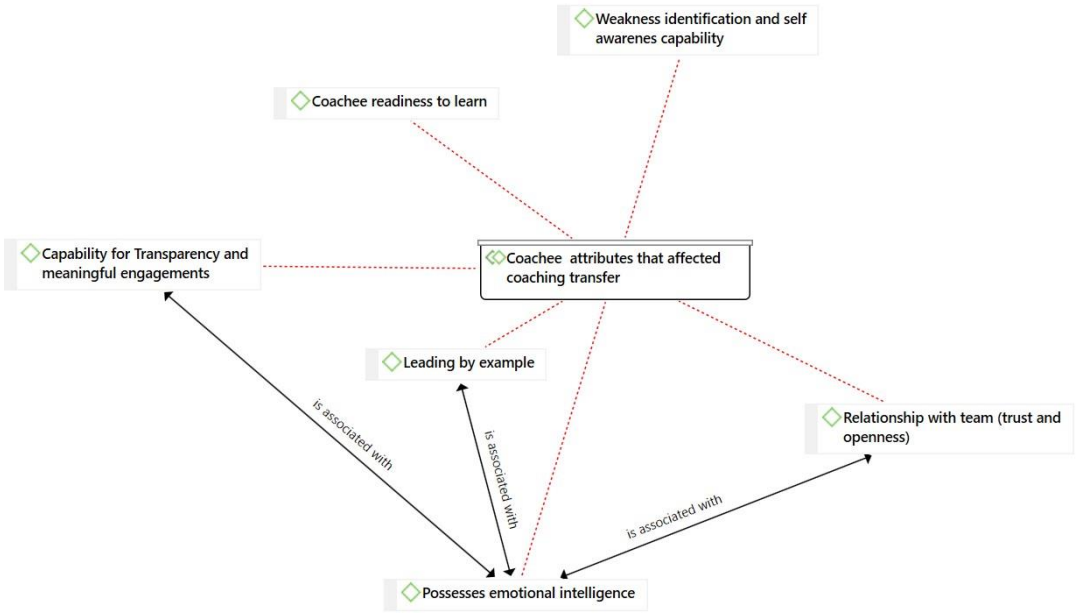



**Figure 11: Map of Coachee attributes that affect coaching transfer**

*Coachee readiness to learn*

Coachee readiness to learn and implement the new-found knowledge was found to be one of the most important attributed necessary in the coachee. This is because the organisation's primary purpose for implementing a coaching programme is for the coachees to transfer knowledge and gain more skills that helped the organisation to grow and meet its vision. Therefore, the mentor must be able to align the purpose of the training programme with the needs of the SOE.

*"Aligning her sort of individual goals with the needs of the organisation and sort of you know, fine-tuning it". [RSP9]*

*"We had to set goals and the timeframes within such goals had to be achieved. I found it to be a particularly useful tool when you lead and manage a group of people from a diverse background" [RSP12]*

*"Enjoyed applying the new-found knowledge, skills and attitudes" [RSP5]*

*Relationship with the team –trust and openness*

The participants were asked about the aspects helped them have a successful coaching transfer and what channels they implemented to meet their goals. The results indicate that the participants agree and believe that willingness to connect with their teams played a huge role in the success of this programme, the willingness to share the same vision, being open with each other and building a trusting relationship amongst each other.

*"Is that attitude in terms of relating to your colleagues both horizontally as well as vertically, it is important to achieve every outcome that you would have determined to achieve". [RSP2]*

*"So, like I happened to have a friendly relationship with my subordinates because they will inform me about their families and about the issues that they are not happy with and like they had a free relationship like I was not like a manager to them that they are shy to talk to, like they were free". [RSP1].*

*"First thing I realised is that you need to be more like an open door, you need to be a more open personality with the people that you are going to help". [RSP4]*

*"The first thing I did with her was to sit down with her and we sort of you know, had a bit of a personal discussion and got to know each other a little bit better on a personal level". [RSP9]*

This is relevant because people tend to work well with those they trust, and also, being open to each other opens doors to communicate and resolve matters quickly efficiently. If there is unhappiness with someone's behaviour, it can be easily addressed because there is a good understanding between the parties.

*Self-awareness*

Introspection and self-assessment were listed as one of the critical aspects one needs to understand for himself or herself to be able to have a complete grasp on particular topics. This is regarded as central to coaching, as it allows for the development and improvement of the individual in a quest to close the gap and improve performance in the workplace. The programme assisted the participants in identifying their weaknesses first before they attempted to identify those of the others.

> *"The coaching intervention entailed identifying your weakness as a person in terms of your area of responsibility, being it the technical area of knowledge and also your managerial skills, how you would manage human beings". [RSP2]*

Coaching is often intended to develop or improve one from a lower understanding to a more strategic or managerial position. Self-awareness is central to effective performance in the workplace. Leaders, especially, need to be aware of who they are, where they are going and what needs to be achieved before having expectations of such from others. The participants agree that the coaching programme made them more self-aware, not only about themselves but their surroundings as well. Participants such as participant 10 [RSP10] indicated that the coaching programme helped him to be more attentive and constantly aware of where help is needed within the organisation and with the teammates. This contributes toward understanding the shortcomings of the organisation and the individuals in the team. Meanwhile, participant 12 [RSP12] concurred and indicated that the coaching programme focused more on self-improvement and self-assessment and helped to improve skills.

> *"You get to understand yourself; you get to understand what makes you tick, what makes you happy, what makes you angry, you get to understand what makes other people tick, what makes them happy, what makes them sad, what*

*makes them angry, and you get to understand as well why people behave as such at certain times". [RSP12]*

*"If you do the training then you are constantly aware of where you can help and if you have not done the training, it is not always in the upper level of your awareness, it is like the third or fourth thing you think of to do". [RSP10]*

*"So, it created opportunities for me and opened my mind as well". [RSP11]*

Coaching or other related training and development allow the individuals to realise that there is more to themselves than just the experience they have, which improves how to deal with things in both scope and decision-making processes, and this helps to enhance productivity and performance.

As a leader and a coach, there is a need to be aware of one's strength and weaknesses because a coaching programme is not only for the coachee to learn but for both members to learn and be upskilled. The more a coach is aware of themselves as an individual, the easier they can engage with the relevant people and help up-skill themselves where needed.

*"You have to know yourself and sort of learn your strengths and weaknesses, and that is what I suggested. That she does first, and I gave her a link to an assessment test that my son has done at school for Life Orientation, so she was able to follow the link and take the test, and it gave her a better idea as to, you know, what type of personality she was and that". [RSP9]*

*"I then realised that I have to change certain things because there were weaknesses which I was not aware". [RSP8]*

Understanding and identifying strength and weakness is associated with self-awareness. The mentor must be able to identify the strengths and weakness of his work and of his colleagues in order for him to empower and focus more on the missing aspects and skills.

*"For instance, I would first understand the strength and the weaknesses of my work, my colleagues and from there I coached them in line with their weaknesses or in line with their strengths". [RSP8]*

*"So, what I did was, I conducted training with them, identified their weaknesses, identified their strengths and then I ensured that I empower where empowerment is needed". [RSP11] Transparency and meaningful engagements*

A coach must be willing to listen to others' opinions, share ideas and also be willing to be corrected. Furthermore, the manager must be willing to engage beneficiaries at a personal level to understand better and know each other.

*"It also taught me that as a manager you do not have to suppress the views of those that report to you". [RSP2]*

*"We cannot just assume that everyone knows what is happening and so it is only if you talk, and you engage with them. You have to get to know them a bit, you know just to know their struggles also because that helps you to guide them". [RSP4]*

*"When you engage with the person, you pay attention to what the person says because one thing that the course also taught us is that listening is a skill". [RSP12]*

*Leading by example*

As a coach, there is a need to be able to lead by example for the coachee's to believe in and trust what was being taught them and drive them to success. Furthermore, the coachee must be able to set goals and meet them and on time.

*"You have to be an example; coaching only is not theoretical, coaching is more practical basically, it is performance-driven mostly". [RSP7]*

In the reflections of how participants went about transferring the coaching skills, they mentioned the learning. Participant 8 [RSP8] said

*"it was an empowering process as he adopted a participatory management style versus the command and control one post-coaching programme and the collaborative leadership style promoted a conducive working environment in his unit"*.

*Possesses emotional intelligence*

The participants also indicated the need to develop emotional intelligence by having an ability to grant respect, patience and kindness, remain calm in different circumstances and improve the ability to listen to others in explaining the need to grant respect. Participant two [RSP2] explained that one of the factors she gained from the training programme was to give others respect, not because of the position they hold or their title but based on their value as human beings. This is one of the most critical aspects of emotional intelligence.

*It also taught me not to respect people in terms of position but to respect people in terms of the value that they add and the way that they treat others. [RSP2]*

The participants also highlighted patience and kindness. Any coaching intervention implies or represents a formal structured mechanism that seeks to develop specific individuals or groups to a relatively high understanding of a specific position. Patience and kindness are two factors that were noted to be paramount in the coaching transfer.

*The newfound knowledge also that I found was the issue relating to tolerance in terms of mistakes. [RSP3]*

Furthermore, it is the ability to remain calm. This intervention, in general, intends to identify, train and produce efficient leaders. The training impeccably outlines the importance of emotional intelligence and understanding where to answer or not.

*It taught me just sometimes you need to remain calm even in the most difficult situations, that as a leader I should not panic, no matter the consequences might be harsh.[RSP3]*

Another emotional intelligence skill is the ability to listen to others. A good leader and coach need to have good listening skills. He must be willing to sit down and listen to his mentees to understand them. Manager coaches who listen to their teammates best understand the team member's needs better, which can help them achieve their goals.

*"The biggest thing was listening to other people. You know what you want to coach on, but to listen to another person's response and not hear what you want to hear but hear what that person is actually saying" [RSP10]* The findings confirm the proposition that the coachee's attributes affect coaching transfer in the SOE. The main highlighted coachee's attributes were coachees' readiness to learn, relationship with the team – trust and openness, self-awareness, transparency and meaningful engagements, leading by example and possessing emotional intelligence.

## 4.6 Summary of the findings of the study

To this end, coaching helps the individual to have better attitudes in the SOE. This is evident from the findings of the study, as such can be classified as 'self-actualisation', where the managers as coaches have a realisation of their potential and development of their ability to conduct coaching transfer to the individuals, teams and organisations. The participants further indicated that understanding teamwork plays a role in the success of every project, as the teamwork must be delegated equally, the members must understand the main purpose of the project and work together towards meeting it. More importantly, the members must understand each other's strengths and weaknesses, and such understanding will assist them to know where they need to focus more to improve.

The participants agree that a good leader and coach must have a close and personal relationship with the team. This personal relationship enables him to identify the recipients' weaknesses and strengths easily and quickly. The relationship between manager coach and their teams also opens up a relationship built on trust and openness; if this happens, the coaching period is

efficient and yields positive results in the end. Effective coaching transfer leads to enhanced knowledge and skills, which in turn leads to a high performing SOE.

# CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

## 5.1 Introduction

In chapter four, the findings of the study were presented and revealed that the coaching transfer helps coachees apply new-found knowledge, skills and attitudes in the SOE for the benefit of both the individual and the entity. Participants highlighted that the contextual or work environment and coachee's attributes could positively or negatively affect coaching transfer in the SOE. Coachee's attributes, such as pre-training motivation, feedback receptivity, relationship with team, self-awareness, transparency and meaningful engagements and leading by example, affect the coaching transfer in the workplace. These results are discussed within the study context, with them compared to and contrasted with the literature. This discussion contributes to an enhanced understanding of coaching transfer within an organisation. This helps to provide affirmations and further insights into the literature and contribute to the body of knowledge. These discussions lead to the development of the conceptual model and discussion in chapter seven, which can be used for coaching transfer within the organisation.

## 5.2 Credibility of the sample used for empirical data

Guetterman (2015) explains that sample extensiveness and sample relevance or appropriateness are critical for the credibility of the sample used for the empirical data. It was established in the methodology chapter that the sample size of 15 interviews is sufficient for this study (Saunders et al., 2016; Vasileiou et al., 2018). Furthermore, there was also a confirmation of code saturation, with saturation reached after 12 interviews, with no new information in the last three interviews. This also indicates the extensiveness or sufficiency of the sample. Regarding the relevance of the sample, all the participants were nominated and participated in coaching programmes between 2014 and 2019. The participants were from eight provinces, Eastern Cape, Free State, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga,

Limpopo, North-West and Western Cape. All these participants were in management roles, having teams to whom they can apply coaching transfer, necessary for the improvement of performance. This confirms the relevance of the sample. As such, there was credibility of the sample used for empirical data.

## 5.3 Coaching transfer to improve the SOE

The first proposition of the study was based on coaching transfer to help coachees apply the new-found knowledge, skills and attitudes at the workplace for the benefit of the individual and the SOE. The findings of the study revealed three major aspects where coaching has helped the managers who have undergone coaching within the SOE. It has helped them identify their weakness, allowing them to work on them to improve self-awareness and develop emotional intelligence. This is a critical output for coaching investment as this process provides a rich, holistic approach for releasing the potential in people and organisations. In this process, the people's potential is unlocked to maximise their performance (Whitmore, 2009).

The study results revealed that the coaching transfer has several benefits to the entity. It helps build and promote self-directed teams and teamwork, improves team organisational morale and cohesion, helps to improve performance, cultivates problem-solving skills, and enhances self- and career development. This is congruent to some of the findings in the literature regards organisational culture as the soul of an organisation (Lindbom, 2007).

Clutterbuck (2003) maintains that positive coaching climate that considers coaching as an opportunity for personal growth, team development and organisational learning is likely to motivate coachees to apply their new skills. Peters and Carr (2013) believe that the team's effectiveness and performance are underpinned by interdependence and cohesion among the group members. Although peer support received less mention than champion support in Stewart, Palmer, et al. (2008)'s coaching transfer studies. Rosha (2014) found that

conditions at the group level are likely to significantly impact the promotion of coaching as team members may sabotage the coachee's development.

## 5.4 Work environment affects coaching transfer

The second proposition of the study was on work environment characteristics that affect coaching transfer and can be recapped as follows:

*$RP_2$: Work environment characteristics affect coaching transfer in the SOE*.

The findings revealed the work characteristics that promote and those that inhibit the coaching transfer. For promotion, organisations need to create a performance-driven culture, opportunity to apply knowledge learned during coaching, motivation to apply new-found knowledge, buy-in and positive feedback and visibility of leadership and supervisory support. The importance of psychosocial support and organisational culture was also regarded as a facilitator of coaching transfer by the studies by (Stewart, Palmer, et al., 2008). These authors highlighted that positive psychosocial support normally includes the physical and emotional support of the participants. Having this in place can create a conducive environment for coaching transfer. At the same time, there are inherent and emerging barriers that can hinder the coaching transfer. Coaching not being part of core business activities, lack of a sustainable coaching transfer plan, time constraints due to workload, financial constraints, workplace structural changes due to COVID-19 and lack of continuing training for coaches are barriers to coaching transfer. These needs to be managed and mitigated, using an effective coaching management system and embedding and codifying the guiding principles in developing the coaching transfer.

## 5.5 Coachee attributes that affect coaching transfer

The third proposition of the study was based on how the coachee's attributes affect coaching transfer in the workplace and can be recapped as follows:

*$RP_3$: Coachee's attributes affect coaching transfer in the SOE*.

The findings of the study have shown that the necessary coaching attributes should include pre-training motivation – coachees' readiness to learn and acquire new skills, feedback receptivity, relationship with the team – trust and openness, self-awareness, transparency and meaningful engagements and leading by example. The importance of coachee attributes is highlighted by Audet and Couteret (2012), who maintained that being receptive to coaching and especially being open to change is a building block for coaching success. Stewart and Palmer (2009) supports this but contend that not all coachees are poised to maximise the benefits of coaching.

If coachees are coerced into coaching, they do not get the same benefit as when they willingly participate (McCarthy & Ahrens, 2011). As coachees with a high level of confidence can attain the anticipated performance and behaviour change, this is imperative as coachees were more likely to apply what they have learned from training to their job (Bozer et al., 2013). As such, in the context of coaching, an individual's level of attachment to the organisation could influence their willingness to invest in the personal process.

Regarding the identification of the weaknesses, this is a commendable outcome as it enables the managers to be ready themselves to improve other people. This is because when a person is blindsided or has a blind spot towards their weaknesses, they tend to reflect behaviour that is not congruent to their development or improvement. P. Linley (2008) mentions the importance of identifying the weaknesses as one of the intervention steps necessary to develop the manager's strength. In knowing their weaknesses, the managers are able to understand the things that are holding them back and work on them to ensure these do not drag them down. The focus on their weaknesses must not be overemphasised. The best opportunity for personal development lies in investing in their strengths and not managing their weaknesses (P. A. Linley, Woolston, & Biswas-Diener, 2009; Miglianico, Dubreuil, Miquelon, Bakker, & Martin-Krumm, 2020)

The other aspect is self-awareness. In a way, identifying weakness and self-awareness is intertwined as they work together to better the person. Self-awareness, job performance, self-awareness, self-efficacy, resilience, hope, autonomy and goal attainment are some of the outcome measures that have been identified in coaching effectiveness studies (Theeboom et al., 2014).

More importantly, the results revealed that coaching improves emotional intelligence, highlighting activities that enhance the process. These activities include having the ability to grant respect, patience, and kindness, remain calm in different circumstances and improve the ability to listen to others. Srivastava and Banaji (2011) explained the importance of emotional intelligence in ensuring that the people monitor their own emotions and the emotions of others, in doing so, discriminating between the different emotions and allowing this to be used as emotional information to help in guiding their thinking and behaviour. Being patient and kind, remaining calm in different circumstance and listening to other requires emotional maturity.

Identifying one's weaknesses, self-awareness and emotional intelligence is critical for coaching transfer. The present centred awareness is aligned to the Gestalt theory that emphasises the role awareness plays in achieving effective behaviour, greater personal responsibility and ownership (Bluckert, 2014). This heightened awareness leads to effective decision-making and action (Bluckert, 2006).

## 5.6 Conceptual framework for coaching transfer in the SOE

The theoretical foundations of the study highlight that an effective coaching transfer in the workplace is affected by the transfer of learning, the coaching axis and integration. The transfer of training model posits that the transfer is influenced by the appropriateness of the content, ability, personality and motivation of the coachee (trainee) and a work environment that supports the opportunity to use training Baldwin and Ford (1988). Similarly, Khan (2011) 's coaching on the axis model places high value on the coaching relationship and its systemic interface

with the business environment. His coaching on the axis model uses a tree as a metaphor to depict the interface between the three business coaching elements: the environment (branches and leaves), the individual being coached (the root system) and the coaching relationship itself (the tree trunk). In addition to the triad, Khan (2011) added environmental factors such as company vision, mission, culture, performance scorecard and ethics code that one could consider as determinants for favourable coaching outcomes. Gestalt theory emphasises the role awareness plays in achieving effective behaviour, greater personal responsibility and ownership (Bluckert, 2014). This heightened awareness leads to effective decision-making and action (Bluckert, 2006).

Based on the theoretical foundations and the findings of the study, the conceptual model that guided the coaching in the state-owned entity is developed and presented in Figure 12.

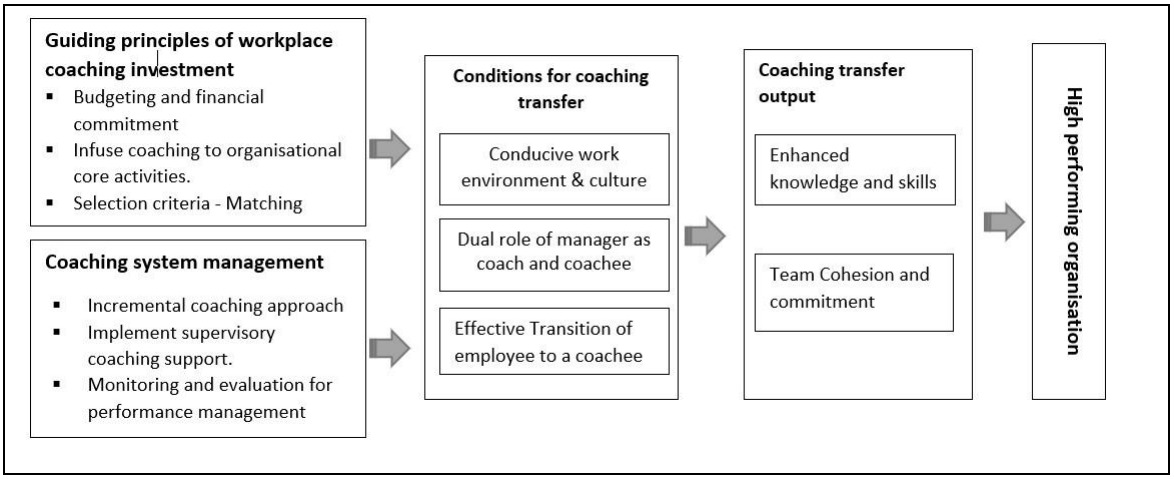



**Figure 12: Conceptual framework for coaching transfer in the SOE**

*Guiding principles of workplace coaching investment*

It is evident from the findings that there are sometimes good intentions from the organisations to adopt coaching. The organisations turn to coaching to combat under-performance in training transfer, i.e., the translation of learning from training into improved performance in the workplace (Spencer-Thomas, 2011). Based on these findings, it is clear that though the intention might be good,

coaching does not come naturally, and as such, there is a need of developing guiding principles for workplace coaching investment to increase the chances of success of the programme.

There are three critical guiding principles for coaching investment. Firstly, budgeting and financing of coaching as part of the core activity budgeting of the organisation. This ensures that the programme is well-funded and there is a process in place on evaluating the return on investment like the other organisational strategic activities. Secondly, the organisation ought to infuse coaching and coaching transfer, so it becomes part of the core organisational activities, thus allocating time for it and avoiding interference from other activities – so-called 'substantive' job activities and ensuring that work-load does not hinder its progress and success. Lastly, there must be clear selection criteria and matching of the parties to ensure that coaching has relational dynamics between the triad of coach, coachee and organisation (Kahn, 2011).

*Coaching system management*

The coaching system management must incorporate critical dimensions, which are the incremental coaching approach, have supervisory coaching support for the manager coaches, and monitor and evaluate the process for the outcome and impact of coaching and coaching transfer in the organisation. The study by de Haan et al. (2011) supported the need for supervisory coaches to have coaching for further professional development. Megginson and Clutterbuck (2006) recognised that the achievement of a coaching culture is a lengthy and gradual process. They developed a four-stage process that represents the progressive stages of the journey to measure progress towards a coaching culture and these four stages were named nascent, tactical, strategic and embedded (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 2006). It is possible, though, that not all managers are poised to maximise the benefits of coaching.

Future coaching programmes' intake should be on a voluntary basis and conducted in a systematic manner (Stewart & Palmer, 2009) and this involves selecting and training individuals throughout the organisation. Garvey, Garvey, Stokes, and Megginson (2017) found that inviting volunteers is helpful because such individuals are more likely to remain involved with the programme and make time for coachees than those coerced into coaching. More importantly, the system must be able to evaluate the performance of coaching and its transfer in the organisation, so it can assess the return on investment, which can be both financial and non-financial, as required by the business.

*Conditions for coaching transfer*

Effective coaching transfer requires a conducive work environment and culture, the dual role of manager as coach and coachee, and the effective transition of the employee to become coachees. As revealed by the findings from this study, the work environment can promote or inhibit coaching transfer. For promotion, the organisations need to create a performance-driven culture, opportunity to apply knowledge learned during coaching, motivation to apply new-found knowledge, buy-in and positive feedback and visibility of leadership and supervisory support. There are inherent and emerging barriers that can derail the coaching transfer, such as coaching not being part of core business activities, lack of a sustainable coaching transfer plan, time constraints due to workload, financial constraints, workplace structural changes due to COVID-19 and lack of continuing training for coaches. These need to be managed and mitigated, using an effective coaching management system and embedding and codifying the guiding principles in developing the coaching transfer. The coachee attributes should include pre-training motivation – coachee readiness to learn and acquire new skills, feedback receptivity, relationship with the team – trust and openness, self-awareness, transparency and meaningful engagements and leading by example.

*Coaching transfer output that leads to high performing organisation*

Coachees are more likely to transfer their development when their workload allows them to practice and introduce their new development (McGovern et al., 2001). Coaching transfer would lead to enhanced knowledge and skills, team cohesion and commitment, which results in engaged and motivated individuals who can contribute towards a high performing organisation. This is congruent with the outcomes of the study by Stewart, O'Riordan, et al. (2008, p.93), which found that the coaching transfer can lead to "job performance, relationship management and job-specific knowledge and/or skills. Coachees, coaches and stakeholders all cited enhanced job performance as the key performance outcome".

## 5.7 Chapter Conclusion

In evaluating the success or failure of a coaching investment, most organisations base their success upon whether agreed-to changes and objectives were achieved. This underpins the importance of coaching transfer. In this study, the conceptual model highlights how the coaching transfer can be implemented in organisations. This model is based on developing guiding principles of the workplace for coaching investment, coaching system management, implementation of effective conditions for coaching transfer and coaching transfer output that can result in high performing organisations. The conclusions and recommendations of the study are presented in Chapter six.

# CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

## 6.1 Introduction

There is little dispute that coaching is one of the most effective ways of learning for individuals, which would help overall organisational performance. The challenge that exists is how this coaching can be transferred in a sustained way to ensure an application of knowledge, skills, attitudes into the workplace. Coaching transfer allows for this to systematically take place by ensuring that there is enhanced knowledge and skills and team cohesion, which helps create a high performing organisation. In this chapter, the conceptual model developed from findings and aligned to foundational theories is presented. This is followed by limitations of the study, then the recommendations for the coaches who are managers and the decision-makers. The chapter closes by presenting suggestions for future studies.

## 6.2 Conclusions of the study

The conclusions of the study provide overall answers of the investigation incorporating all findings, particularly within the context explained in the report, and similarities and differences where applicable between this research and previously published research.

### 6.2.1 Conclusions on coaching transfer in the SOE

It can be concluded that coaching transfer does help coachees to apply new-found knowledge, skills and attitudes in the workplace for the benefit of both the individual and the SOE. This was based on the findings of this study, where it was found that coaching transfer does build and promote self-directed teams and teamwork. It improves team and organisational morale and cohesion, enhances knowledge transfer and skills, helps cultivate problem-solving skills, enhances self- and career development and more importantly, it helps to improve performance. This is congruent with the views of Stewart, Palmer, et al. (2008), that coaching transfer is important for sustained application of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and other qualities acquired during coaching in the workplace.

However, the coachee characteristics, coach factors and work environment factors are present in both coaching transfer models of Baldwin and Ford (1988) and later adapted by Stewart, Palmer, et al. (2008) and this study.

### 6.2.2 Conclusions of work environment on coaching transfer

It can be concluded that work environment characteristics affect coaching transfer in the workplace, sometimes in a positive way and other times in a negative way. The value provided by the findings is the holistic assessment of the work environment that can assist the organisation to effectively run a coaching programme, using the necessary strengths and managing the barriers in the form of risk management. Above, in the literature Review, the Rosha / Stewart Coaching models/transfer systems factors plus themes emerging from the study proved that the unique factor from the work environment that guaranteed positive coaching transfer was the SOE's performance-driven culture.

The effectiveness of any programme intervention must be analysed to assess whether its intended objectives are met. The coaching programme's effectiveness was to be measured via the existing performance appraisal system—the performance score before the intervention and after the intervention was used to quantify the coaching impact. The predetermination of the evaluation yardstick, the assessment transfer model, as espoused by the purpose of the coaching programme to improve performance and the transfer design (coaching toolkit), maximised the coaching transfer prospects. The notion of supporting the transfer before the learning intervention occurs is supported by Broad (2005) and Broad and Newstrom (1992). They maintained that the support of transfer from training interventions primarily occurs before, during, and after the learning intervention.

Based on the views and perceptions of all participants who received the training, the coaching programme was deemed beneficial for themselves and their teams. The participants' accounts provided insights into how they transferred the skills learned from the programme.

### 6.2.3 Conclusions of coachee attributes on coaching transfer

The attributes of the coachee affect coaching transfer in the SOE. Some of the highlighted attributes in the study included the coachee's readiness to learn, feedback receptivity, relationship with the team grounded on trust and openness, weakness identification and self-awareness capability, transparency, and meaningful engagements, leading by example, and possession of emotional intelligence. It is evident from this study that 'self-actualisation' is the main grounding of coaching transfer, where the management as coaches identify their weakness, improve self-awareness, and strengthen their emotional intelligence. This does not come across strongly in the literature even though it was evident in this study the importance of improving the success chances of coaching transfer in the organisation.

The life of an organisation is dependent on the skills set of its employees. From the evidence presented from the interviews and the calibre of the participants, it seems as if the employer assessed the managers' personal attributes in terms of the experience they possessed and their propensity to share the skills derived from the programme with their teams. The themes that emerged from the data in Chapter 4 indicated that the coachees displayed similar personal attributes as those espoused in the study's Conceptual Model that integrates the Stewart and Rosha Models.

By examining the concept of coaching transfer, highlighting the individual and organisational factors affecting the implementation of coaching transfer, this research managed to create a framework for coaching transfer within state owned entities in South Africa.

## 6.3 Recommendations to state-owned entities

Studies on coaching transfer have examined the organisational and individual factors, including effective and ineffective coaching behaviours affecting managerial coaching implementation (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Bozer et al., 2013; Raliphada et al., 2014; Rosha, 2014; Stewart & Palmer, 2009). There are few studies on the factors affecting coaching in South African public services. Based

on the findings of the study and the conclusions, the following recommendations are made to the decision-makers (management) and the coaches of the state owned entity.

### 6.3.1 Recommendations to the coaching managers

The coaches as managers are important for the success and sustainability of the coaching programme; as such, the following recommendations are made to them:

- **Coaching readiness and motivation**: Attributes, such as personality, emotional and intellectual intelligence, readiness and motivation determine the individual's coaching ability level and are a strong predictor of favourable coaching outcomes (Bozer & Jones, 2018; Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006; Grover & Furnham, 2016). It is recommended that the coaches be committed and motivated to effective transfer of coaching as this is central to get other people onto the programme and to create a sustained programme for the organisation.
- **Effective coaching transfer**: The public entity's coaching programme was goal-orientated towards increasing individual performance against business deliverables. The effectiveness of any programme intervention must be analysed to assess whether its intended objectives are met. The managers, as coaches were expected to transfer the coaching skills onto the workplace to achieve the programme's goals. Targeted recipients of future coaching programme participants should emulate the attributes of the current coaches' high personal capacity to transfer' trait.

### 6.3.2 Recommendations to the employee as coachees

The coachee is an important stakeholder in every coaching relationship. A coachee is often considered ready when they are willing to invest time and energy in the process; willing to do the work of development even when it becomes difficult and lastly, are able to take personal responsibility for transferring what is

learned into action for change on the job. As such, it is recommended that the employee be receptive to coaching and coaching transfer in the organisation. This should be seen as part of equipping the employee for skills development which would help to improve their performance and job satisfaction.

### 6.3.3 Recommendations to the decision managers

Firstly, it is recommended that management introduce coaching for all staff as the core activity for learning transfer and as a method to improve organisational performance. The public entity's formal coaching programme is limited only to middle managers. Though there is a broad understanding of the potential benefits of coaching, not all employees are engaged in coaching due to budgetary constraints. The limited roll-out of coaching is not expected to pave the way for the incorporation of coaching as a business driver. Being a coachee should be encouraged to achieve a systematic and sustainable coaching transfer (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 2006).

Secondly, the management of the state-owned entity should systematically phase in internal coaches to ensure coaching sustainability in the organisation. The move towards creating a cadre of internal coaches to embed coaching as a management style is supposed to happen in the third stage of Megginson and Clutterbuck (2006)'s the four-stage journey model towards building a coaching culture. Given the nature and goal of the public entity's coaching programme – manager as a coach, the company jumped the nascent, tactical stages and embarked on the strategic phase, i.e., deployment of internal coaches. As such, it is recommended that management should formalise the phasing-in of internal coaches.

Thirdly, management should infuse coaching and coaching transfer into the organisation, so it becomes part of the core organisational activities. The results revealed that there is a burden of balancing the demands of what is regarded as the 'substantive' role and the role of a manager coach. Heavy workloads and time pressures preclude managers from being available for coachees, and the high coach-to-coachee ratio may affect the quality of delivery. The challenge of finding

the time to coach or be coached is supported by Wilson (2011). The public entity needs to consider coaching as a core activity and infuse it into core organisational activities that are allocated times and are part of the performance management system with reasonable weighting. This ensures that coaching is enhanced and is part of the organisational agenda rather than an *ad hoc* activity.

Lastly, it is recommended that management provides continuing training for coaches to enhance the coaching transfer. Coaching success depends on continuing training and supporting coaching practitioners. This will equip the coaches with a versatile toolkit, i.e., the ability to employ various techniques effectively and at the right moment and for different situations (Rosha, 2014). Access to a 'master' coach for coaching managers will refine their coaching skills and improve the chances of coaching success, which will contribute to improved organisational performance.

## 6.4 Suggestions for further research

This study is exploratory and was confined to one state-owned entity. Three recommendations for how this study can be built upon are proposed:

**Validate the conceptual model of coaching transfer in the workplace**: The main findings and insight from the study resulted in the development of the conceptual model. It is recommended that the academic community conduct optimisation and validation studies of the model. This can be done with a mixed method or quantitative method where Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) can be used to measure the statistical significance of the association and other relationships.

**Multiple case study on coaching transfer**: This study would allow for the transferability to other similar settings. It is recommended that future studies should be conducted using multiple-case studies, between 6 – 10, to ensure validity (Yin, 2017) in the different SOEs to evaluate the coaching transfer and its effect on organisational performance.

**Levels of coaching culture**: As shown in this study, organisational factors have an influence on coaching transfer. The relationship between the organisational factors and organisational and coaching cultures could be studied to determine the level of coaching culture. This will provide good insight into the organisational climate and culture that has been found to have a big influence on coaching transfer.

**Monitoring and evaluation of coaching transfer**: Coaching transfer, like a programme that is implemented in the organisation, needs to have a return on investment. It is suggested that future studies be conducted to develop a conceptual model with individual dimensions that can be used to perform performance management, using a monitoring and evaluation approach, such as those recommended by Markiewicz and Patrick (2016), focusing on appropriateness, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

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# APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Please indicate the following Biographic information to help understand you more, as well as your relevance to the study

| | |
|---|---|
| What is your position in the company? | |
| What does the position entail? | |
| How long have you been with the company? | |
| How old are you? | |

2. Coachee motivation and readiness - reason to participate in a coaching intervention and clarity about expectation of outcome.

✓ *Coachee:* On an annual basis, your company sponsors about 50 employees for the coaching programme. Share with me how you landed in the coaching cohort of 2017(year)?

_____

_____

_____

✓ *Line Manager:* Of all your deserving employees why did you recommend employee x for the coaching programme?

_____

_____

_____

✓ *HR Practitioner:* Considering the company's limited human development budget, what made you motivate for the coaching programme for the past five years?

_____

_____

_____

3. Coachee's overall evaluation and assessment of the coaching intervention i.e., views regarding any benefits they perceived they gained because of attending coaching.

- ✓ *Coachee:* Considering your coaching journey, what were the highlights and why did the ones you selected stand out from the rest?

  _____

  _____

  _____

- ✓ *Line Manager:* In your view, do coaching investments bode well for the individuals and employees?

  _____

  _____

  _____

- ✓ *HR Practitioner:* In your view, are coaching outcomes aligned to the learning objectives and business strategy?

  _____

  _____

  _____

4. Factors, which assisted with coaching training, transfer or factors that led to the achievement of the formulated goals i.e., opportunity to use skills knowledge and attitudes acquired in coaching in practice, involvement of coaching stakeholders i.e., line manager's involvement in the coaching of their direct reports and human resource practitioner's contribution.

- ✓ *Coachee:* Armed with the knowledge, skills and attitudes acquired during coaching, please share with me what helped you apply the new-found learnings in your job roles and responsibilities?

  _____

  _____

  _____

- ✓ *Line Manager*: How did you provide action plan to retain and improve motivation to transfer knowledge post the coaching programme?

  _____

_____

_____

- ✓ *HR Practitioner*: In your view, were all coachees afforded an opportunity for practice at the workplace?

5. Any workplace barriers to utilising the acquired skills knowledge and attitudes in practice.

   *Coachee:* In hindsight, is there anything the company would have done to cement the learning acquired during coaching onto the workplace?

_____

_____

_____

- ✓ *Line Manager:* On a scale of 1-5, how would you rate the support for the coaching programme and why?

_____

_____

_____

- ✓ *HR Practitioner*: In your view, what would you amend or add to the coaching programme to ensure that the coaching outcomes are durable and lasting?

_____

_____

_____

# APPENDIX B: INFORMATION SHEET

If you have any questions about the study, please contact me on the following:

Cell :( 083) 469 1844; Email: Mantiti Kola, University of the Witwatersrand, Mantitik@gmail com.

**STUDY TITLE: FACTORS AFFECTING COACHING TRANSFER AT A SOUTH AFRICAN STATE-OWNED ENTITY**

Dear (Respective participant)

I would like to extend my gratitude for your participation in this research study. The study will be conducted as part of my Master of Management in Business Executive Coaching at the University of the Witwatersrand. Below is an outline of the research being done, what it involves and your role as a participant? I am willing to answer any questions you might have regarding the study or if you require clarification on parts you are unsure about.

Your participation is voluntary, should you feel the need to stop with the proceedings of the interview, and you are free to decline to participate. If you decide not to participate, this will not affect you negatively in any way. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you had agreed to take part prior.

*Why have you been invited to participate?*

Your participation in this research study is important based on the insights that you can share with me regarding your experience post the coaching intervention

*What I need from you:*

To avail yourself for a 45-60-minutes interview. Semi structured interviews will be conducted asking you to describe your experiences regarding factors that led to the utilization of skills, knowledge and attitudes acquired during coaching and any barriers to utilizing the achievement of the coaching learnings.

With your permission, the interviews will be recorded and transcribed using a transcriptionist. You will have the opportunity to review the transcript of your interview and make corrections and/or clarify your responses.

*Will you benefit from taking part in this research?*

Your participation will contribute towards the gap in knowledge in the context of Coaching Transfer in State Owned Enterprises. Upon completion of the study, all participants will receive a copy of the findings of the study.

*Are there any risks involved in your taking part in this research?*

There are no risks involved from taking part in this research. Interviews will be conducted in an environment that best suits you, the participant. All information contained in the study will be kept confidential.

Please return the below consent form with signature as your consented intent to participate in the study.

_____

# APPENDIX C: CONSENT FORM

By signing below, I …… agree to take part in a research study entitled: **Factors Affecting Coaching Transfer at a South African StateOwned Entity**.

I declare that:

- I have read or had read to me this information and consent form and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the study doctor or researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) .....…..…… on (*date*) ……...…….

Signature of participant Signature of witness

_____

**DECLARATION BY RESEARCHER**

I *(name)* ……..…… declare that:

I explained the information in this document to the participant

- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above

Signed at (*place*) .....…..…… on (*date*) ……...…….

Signature of researcher Signature of witness