

The Effectiveness of Strength-based Executive Coaching in Enhancing
Transformational Leadership

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Declaration

I hereby declare that no portion of the work referred to in this thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other University.

Dedication

This doctoral thesis is dedicated to my parents, Euan and Rona, who have modeled for me the value of academic attainment over a lifetime of dedication and commitment to their respective professions. It is a value that I am proud to have internalised and this thesis is its manifestation.

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List of Abbreviations

BCRS	Brief Coaching Readiness Scale
C1	Cohort 1 Coaching First Group
C2	Cohort 2 Waitlist first Group
CR	Contingent Reinforcement
CSES	Core Self Evaluation Survey
DRS	Developmental Readiness Survey
DV	Dependent variable
FRLM	Full Range Leadership Model
IIA	Idealised Influence Attributes
IIB	Idealised Influence Behaviours
IC	Individualised Consideration
IM	Inspirational Motivation
IS	Intellectual Stimulation
IV	Independent variable
LF	Laissez Faire
M	Mean
MBEA	Management by Exception Active
MBEP	Management by Exception Passive
MLQ	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire
MLQ5I	Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire combined 5 Transformational Leadership Elements
POB	Positive organisational Behaviour
POP	Positive Organisational Psychology
POS	Positive Organisational Scholarship
SD	Standard Deviation

Positive Leadership Development: Towards a strength-based approach to leadership coaching

Abstract

This article reviews contemporary trends in positive leadership development with a particular emphasis on its enhancement through strength based leadership coaching. The emerging science of positive organisational psychology offers both new theoretical models and empirical evidence that can help refine and extend contemporary models of leadership theory and development. The strength-based approach in particular offers a new classification system and orientation towards leadership development that seeks to redress the traditional deficit focus. Consequently understanding how strengths are both defined and linked to performance is a crucial element of positive leadership development (PLD). Existing theories of positive leadership including transformational leadership, authentic leadership and developmental readiness will be reviewed in the context of their application to enhancing the practice of PLD. Finally coaching is seen as a highly individualised and tailored approach to leadership development that is a natural ally with positive organisational psychology. There is increasing empirical evidence for coaching's efficacy in enhancing leadership behaviour and its critical role in developing positive leaders will be discussed.

Positive Leadership Development: Towards a strength-based approach to leadership coaching.

Introduction

Positive leadership development offers access to a range of new theoretical and evidence base approaches that have the potential to refine and enhance how leaders and leadership are developed. Leadership development consumes an estimated \$50 billion annually (Bolden, 2007) in the US alone and yet many programs lack a substantial evidence base or comprehensive underpinning theory of leadership (Brinner, 2012). This review aims to outline some of the potential contributions that the emerging field of positive organisational psychology can make to both enhancing leadership development and bridging this research-practitioner divide. The rationale for this approach is clear and compelling. Firstly the focus on strengths seeks to redress the traditional deficit reduction focus in leadership development (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Secondly, meta-analytic outcome studies show that current leadership models are unable to explain significant amounts of variance suggesting there are many more critical variables to be discovered in the field of leadership development, (Avolio et al., 2009). Thirdly practitioner application of the strength based approach appears to be significantly ahead of the research evidence making it an opportune time to review the status of the current evidentiary base (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Finally positive psychology constructs have been successfully applied in other domains including clinical psychology, suggesting the assessment of their cross-domain application is warranted and timely, (Seligman et al., 2005).

The review is divided into three broad and interconnected areas. Firstly the field of positive organisational psychology will be surveyed to assess what

opportunities it offers to positive leadership development. The concept of strengths in particular will be reviewed, as this is a core construct of the positive psychology project. Secondly the existing models of positive leadership including transformational leadership, authentic leadership and developmental readiness will be surveyed as these provide the platform from which further theoretical advances can be made. Finally the link between positive leadership development and executive coaching will be explored. As coaching is increasingly becoming a key delivery mechanism for executive and leadership development (Day, 2001), its alignment with positive psychology is potentially critical to applying these concepts in practice. Thus the aim of the review is to suggest how the positive approach to developing leaders and leadership can offer greater coherence, effectiveness and innovation in this crucial but disparate field.

Positive Organisational Psychology

Positive psychology originally called for a radical change in perspective away from the reduction of psychological distress and disease and towards the identification and enhancement of what made life engaging and meaningful (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Originally aimed at redressing the negative bias in clinical psychology, the positive psychology paradigm has been slow to influence organisational issues. This was in part due to the absence of the overtly negative bias that prevailed in clinical psychology (Hackman, 2009). However, a number of discrete research paradigms are emerging under the positive organisational psychology (POP) umbrella. Positive organisational psychology offers several distinct research areas in positive states including positive emotions and mindsets, positive traits including character strengths and virtues, positive behaviours including

authentic leadership and positive organisations including high performing teams (Cohn & Fredrickson, 2010; Linley, Harrington, & Garcia, 2010). In addition to these distinct research areas, positive psychology is also increasingly aligned with coaching as a methodology to deliver the positive interventions to leaders and their organisations (Linley, Woolston, & Biswas-Diener, 2009). Positive psychology coaching embraces the strength based approach and provides a coherent structure for the assessment and development of elements linked to both performance and well-being in the organisational setting (Biswas-Diener & Dean, 2007).

There are several contemporary research foci in positive organisational psychology that can inform positive leadership development. These can be divided into two major strands of research that feed into the positive organisational psychology paradigm. Positive organisational behaviour (POB) was articulated as a research based, measurable and state-like approach that consequently could be targeted for development (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). A contrasting approach to this has been defined as positive organisational scholarship (POS) which examines positive deviant behaviour from a more trait-like perspective. The POS focus on the classification and identification of virtues like compassion and gratitude (Boyatzis et al., 2006) in organisations lends itself more to selection than development processes. This state-trait debate runs through the field of POP and is clearly apparent in the differing approaches to the utilization of strengths with the POS approach favouring the “identify and use” approach where awareness and leverage are sufficient to enhance performance, and the POB orientation supporting the notion of “strengths development” where a more sophisticated and nuanced approach is taken to performance enhancement (Biswas-Diener, Kashdan, & Minhas, 2011). The POB approach has also been developed in conjunction with the concept of psychological

capital (psycap) where positive emotions like confidence, hope, optimism and resiliency are seen as essential prerequisites to developing a positive leadership style (Avolio & Luthans, 2006). By contrast, POS has maintained its focus at the more macro-organisational level through the investigation of positively deviant organisations, an affirmative bias and virtuousness or eudaimonism (Cameron, 2008). POS is consequently more interested in the identification of virtues that are seen as inherently good rather than necessarily linked to improved performance and includes well-being rather than just job performance as a desired organisational outcome (Fineman, 2006). Figure 1 illustrates how positive psychology links to these organisational concepts.

An alternative approach to the identification and measurement of fundamental positive psychological traits that influence behaviour at work, has been proposed in the concepts of core self-evaluations (Judge & Hurst, 2007). In contrast to the psychological capital approach with its emphasis on developing states, the core self evaluations approach that encompasses self-esteem, locus of control, neuroticism and self-efficacy, are seen as general traits that influence an individual's fundamental disposition across all domains. There is some evidence for the impact of core-self evaluations on job performance but these remain in line with other big 5 personality variables like extraversion, showing a typical correlational ceiling of around 0.3 that explains about 9% of the variance in individual performance (Judge et al., 2002). However the relative stability of these traits across time and consistency across situations, suggests this model may be more appropriate for leader selection than leadership development.

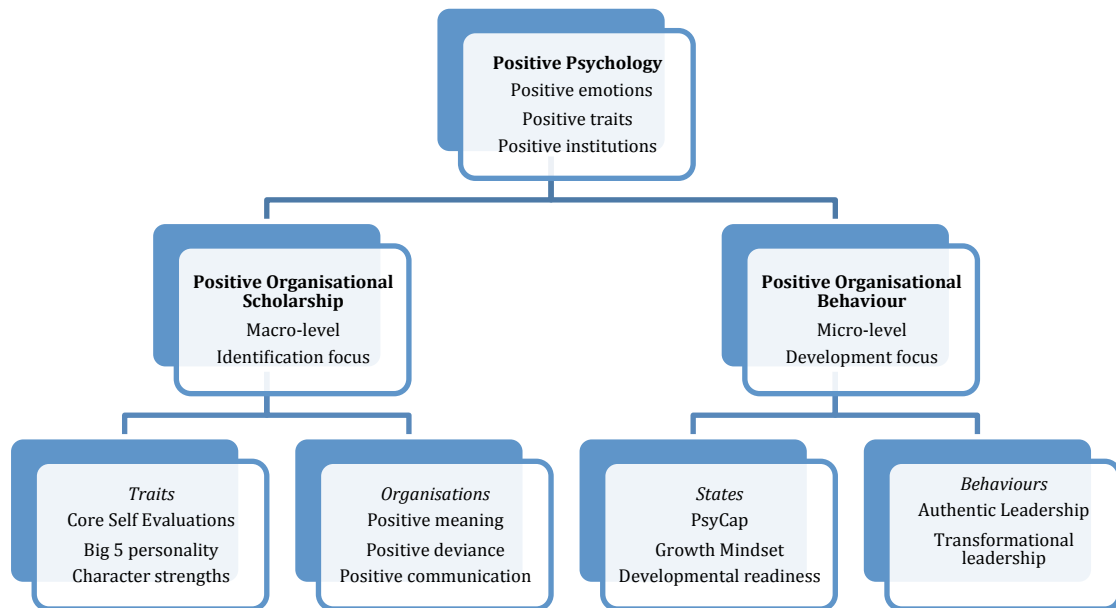


Figure 1. The links between positive psychology and organisational psychology

The positive psychology framework is not without its critics and these need to be considered when applying its constructs to the development of leadership. Only the most proselytizing ideological proponents advocate a complete focus on the positive with no attention to deficits or derailers. However the ideal ratio of positive to negative emotions has been debated until Losada and Heaphy (2004) published compelling results on the ratio in high performing teams and confirmed the criticality of a 5:1 ratio of positive to negative communication. Other researchers have argued for the importance of negative emotions and stressed their evolutionary origins as adaptations to loss and threat (Gilbert, 2006). In addition, there is also an ongoing concern that strengths can be overdone and that all strengths if leveraged without regard to context or impact, will become derailers (Kaiser, 2009). Given that many people already overestimate their competence on a wide variety of tasks (Dunning et al., 2003) there is also the risk that a unrelenting focus on the positive further distorts intrapersonal perceptions and reaffirms preexisting positive biases. As self-awareness

requires increasing recognition and alignment between the perceptions of self and others, the exclusive emphasis on the personal and the positive would appear to be antithetical to the development of self-insight, one of the cornerstones of multiple models of leadership development (Avolio, 2010). Finally there is the risk that a focus on strengths becomes just another trait-based approach to developing individuals and organisations and ignores the complex interplay of personal qualities with team, group and dyadic and situational variables (Hernandez et al., 2011). These criticisms in their totality clearly argue for a balanced and considered approach to the application of positive psychology constructs to the leadership development domain where the limitations of a blinkered and partial approach to positivity are clearly recognized and avoided.

Strength Based Approaches in Organisations

Strengths assessment. One of the cornerstones of the applied positive psychology paradigm has been the focus on strengths (Luthans & Yousseff, 2007). Understanding how strengths are defined, identified, utilised and leveraged is key if they are to be successfully applied to positive leadership development. In order to test the effectiveness of a strength based approach, it is necessary to both be consistent in the definitions and classification of strengths and also demonstrate sufficient construct validity so that the concept can be seen as independent of competencies, personality variables and other trait-based approaches.

There have been a variety of attempts to define strengths in the context of individual and organisational development. Rath (2007) defined strengths as “the ability to consistently produce near-perfect performance on a specific task” with the performance predicated on a combination of elements of skill, knowledge and talents.

While skills and knowledge are seen as acquired through experience, talents are reported as naturally occurring entities that cannot be acquired through development. These elements were then combined into the strengths equation where talents multiplied by time spent in practice equaled strengths. This model found its psychometric manifestation in the Gallup Strengthsfinder (Rath & Conchie, 2008) which attempts to describe four domains of leadership namely executing, influencing, relationship building and strategic thinking which are themselves clusters of the thirty-four strengths identified in the Strengthfinder instrument. Despite being assessed on all thirty-four strengths, subjective self-assessment routinely only produces a list of the participant's top five relative strengths. The challenge with this approach is that much of the research is published in-house with limited peer reviewed information about the psychometric qualities of the instrument available. In addition the scoring is ipsative with no attempt to reference scores to a broader normative sample limiting the Strengthfinder's utility as a dependent variable.

A contrasting approach has been taken by Peterson et al. (2010) in the development of a model designed to assess and measure strength of character. The Values in Action (VIA) project was developed as a counterpart to the various attempts to classify psychiatric disorder and distress. A review of the world's most influential religious and philosophical texts by the authors of the inventory led to the identification of six domains, (wisdom, courage, humanity, justice, temperance and transcendence) all underpinned by specific signature strengths. The VIA then aimed to identify twenty-four signature strengths from these domains, that individuals recognise and apply to achieve fulfillment. Again like the Strengthfinder, the VIA depends on the veracity of the self-assessment to produce a relative ranking of the top five character strengths. In terms of the construct validity of character strengths

identified in the VIA, the underlying factor structure has been challenged and there is evidence to suggest it more closely fits the big five model of personality than a discrete construct of six independent virtues (MacDonald et al., 2008). Unlike the Gallup Strengthfinder, there is no overt connection between the VIA and leadership behaviour. However there are some implicit links to leadership with character strengths like authenticity, teamwork and leadership identified in the assessment (Money, 2008).

The Realise 2 model (Linley & Stoker, 2010) attempted to take a broader approach to the process of strengths assessment by including development areas and relative weaknesses in the assessment. Defining strengths as, “a pre-existing capacity for a particular way of behaving, thinking, or feeling that is authentic and energising to the user, and enables optimal functioning, development and performance” (Linley, 2008, p.9), the Realise 2 model requires participants to rate sixty attributes according to how energising, how competently and how frequently they use them. The model then divides the responses into four quadrants; realized strengths that are known and used, unrealized strengths that are known but underutilised, learned behaviours where performance has been acquired but is not energising and weaknesses where both competence and energy are low. According to the model, the greatest developmental opportunity is found in unrealized strengths as these are underutilised areas of interest and competence. This approach differs from the VIA and Strengthfinder in that it explicitly addresses the issue of weaknesses and strives to make them irrelevant rather than ignoring them in the identification process.

All extant strength assessment measures allude to an innate ability or talent that is more fully leveraged through the identification process. This is consistent with the “identify and use” approach where awareness of strengths alone is seen as a

sufficient catalyst to instigate change. There is also clearly a degree of equivocation about what exactly strengths are with significant overlap with personality traits, competencies and virtues. In addition, the lack of normative comparisons, reliance on subjective assessment, absence of peer reviewed publications and the utilization of opaque proprietary scoring systems makes this domain fraught with difficulty for comparative research. Consequently, there is a real question here as to whether future research should continue to focus on refining the discriminant validity of strengths or accept they are inherently multi-modal and focus instead on describing a methodology that facilitates the development of strengths that enhance leadership effectiveness.

Strengths and performance. How strengths relate to performance has also generated a significant amount of research with a consensus emerging that the relationship is predictably curvilinear rather than linear with strengths following a classic inverted U shape in their relationship with performance (Kaiser & Overfield, 2010). The evidence for this comes from a variety of sources. The leadership derailment literature shows that when overdone, strengths become weaknesses and this can be in the form of excessive leverage or contextual misapplication. Thus, a leader with a well developed strength for inclusivity can persist with this beyond the point of additional value or apply this to a situation that requires a more urgent and directive response (Kaiser, 2009). Secondly the research on the relationship between personality and job performance has also recently demonstrated convincing evidence for a curvilinear relationship (Le et al., 2011). Given that many strengths are defined as trait like constructs, it would be reasonable to assume that by analogy, the same relationship would hold for strengths and performance. This research gives an unambiguous direction on how strengths might be developed and strongly suggests

that the unregulated leverage of strengths independent of intensity or context, will adversely impact on performance (Kaiser & Overfield).

There is converging evidence for the effectiveness of strength-based approaches in other domains. Drawing on the work in positive psychotherapy, much has been made of the benefits of increased positive moods states and emotions that are predicted to emerge from a strength-based approach (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). Similarly, Harter, Schmidt, and Hayes (2002) found individuals who regularly use their strengths report more engagement in their work. Furthermore there is some evidence that when managers emphasized performance strengths in their direct reports, their performance increased significantly. The converse was also reported, that focusing on weaknesses reduced performance (Corporate Leadership Council, 2002). In addition to potentially enhancing employee performance, engagement and retention, there is also increasing evidence for the impact of a strengths based approach on the subjective well-being of the individual. Increased psychological well-being (Govindji & Linley, 2007), reduced stress (Wood et al., 2010) and increased goal attainment (Linley et al., 2010) have all been correlated with a strength-based approach to coaching. Despite this range of positive outcomes, there remains little consensus on how best to leverage strengths. Much of the practitioner focus consequently appears to be that of a commitment to a strengths identification process rather than the adherence to a specific strength development methodology or protocol (Lopez & Snyder, 2003). This has made the identification of specific strength based mediators and moderators problematic.

Strengths development. Part of the challenge of advocating a strength based approach in leadership and executive development, is to define exactly how strengths, once identified, can be further leveraged in the pursuit of individual and

organisational goals. Biswas-Diener, Kashdan and Minhas (2011) have identified two current approaches in the literature namely the “identify and use” approach and the more sophisticated approach of “strengths development”. The “identify and use” approach follows the protocol suggested by several strength inventories, that the process of diagnosing and making explicit the top few strengths independent of context or role, is sufficient to bring about positive behavioural change. This approach is consistent with a general ideological orientation to a strength based approach and supported by the belief that raising awareness and increasing attention on a specific element of the coachee’s repertoire is sufficient to bring about sustainable change. This approach has been labeled by Hogan and Benson (2009a) as “another personality based model of organisational effectiveness”. The “strengths development” approach involves viewing strengths as potentials rather than traits and suggests that strengths identification alone is insufficient without a mindful and measured approach to their cultivation. In addition, Kaiser (2009) has emphasized the importance of both context and amplitude in terms of strength development. All strengths have the potential to become derailers if overplayed (Kaiser, 2009) and this focuses attention on not just raising awareness of strengths as in the identify and use approach, but also considering how they are applied, in what context and with what intensity. The leadership derailment literature confirms the risks of encouraging the unregulated amplification of strengths (MacKie, 2008). Just as leadership theory has evolved from great man and trait theories to embrace situational, interpersonal and organisational complexity (Elliot, 2011), the strengths based approach needs to develop beyond being just another trait based approach to leadership development. Whether this development relies on the further development in the identification and classification of strengths or in refining the methodology of how both strengths and weaknesses are

balanced and integrated in the leadership development process, remains equivocal. However the identification of strengths in itself carries the risk of discouraging effort depending on the mindset of the coachee. Thus the fixed or entity perspective may perceive this as a fixed trait not open to change whereas the growth or incrementalist mindset would view this as a strength to be developed through deliberate practice (Biswas-Deiner et al., 2011; Dweck, 2008).

Positive Leadership Theory

Despite an increasing interest in the application of positive psychology to organisations, its specific application to leadership and its development have been slow to emerge (Avey et al., 2011). Two significant exceptions to this trend are the emergence of the concepts of developmental readiness (Avolio & Hannah, 2008) and authentic leadership development (Avolio et al, 2009). Developmental readiness is a potentially key mediator of successful leadership development that seeks to identify key positive states and traits in the individual that are suggestive of a readiness to constructively engage in enhancing leadership capacity. Authentic leadership is defined by Luthans & Avolio (2003, p243) as, “a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organisational context which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviours”. Consequently the development of authentic leaders involves the identification and enhancement of positive psychological states and the integration of a moral element into leadership development to further develop the purpose as well as the process of leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Authentic leadership emerged out of the concept of transformational leadership when a distinction was made between pseudo and genuine transformational leaders (Avolio et al.). Transformational leadership emphasised the leader’s impact

on their followers in terms of inspiring them towards enhancing their performance towards a shared vision for the benefit of the organisation and its values, (Bass,1999). Bass integrated the five transformative elements of leadership into his full range leadership model (FRLM) that in addition, included two transactional elements that focused on rewarding follower's behaviours and two laissez-faire elements that described the less functional passive and avoidant leadership styles. The model attained its psychometric manifestation in the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Bass & Avolio, 1997). There is now a substantial amount of evidence supporting the construct validity of the FRLM and the MLQ is one of the most commonly used leadership instruments by both researchers and practitioners in the field, (Alban-Metcalf & Mead, 2010).

The concept of authentic leadership also capitalized on the increasing influence of positive organisational behaviour and offered a way to integrate this into a more strengths orientated leader development process. Authentic leadership was seen to contain four key elements; balanced processing in decision-making, an internalized moral perspective, relational transparency with others and self-awareness (Walumbwa et al., 2008). These four scales appeared to load onto a higher order factor of authenticity that was distinguishable from the concept of transformational leadership. Like the full range leadership model, authentic leadership emphasizes the dyadic loci in terms of leadership origin and transcends multiple mechanisms of transmission. However it also aims to distinguish between genuine and pseudo transformational leaders who lack the necessary ethical decision making capacity or who use their charisma to manipulate followers for their own purposes (Walumba et al.). Authentic leadership is closely aligned to the concept of psychological capital in that the goal of the authentic expression of beliefs and values is the elevation of trust,

hope and optimism in their followers (Hernandez et al., 2011). However these models are largely normative rather than prescriptive, despite some values being clearly more generative and functional in organisations than others. Consequently they do not specify what values the leader should adopt in the pursuit of authenticity but only that values as a construct, are a key component of authentic leadership development.

Independent of which leadership theory is being assessed, leadership development cannot occur without sufficient motivation and ability to change (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Avolio, 2011). Consequently the identification of positive states that are predictive of the development of leadership expertise become paramount.

Developmental readiness is defined as “both the ability and the motivation to attend to, make meaning of, and appropriate new knowledge into one’s long-term memory structure” aims to assess one such positive construct (Hannah & Lester, 2009). The concept derived inspiration from the clinical literature on readiness to change and drew support from the genetic research that found that only up to 30% of leadership ability was heritable (Ilies et al., 2004). This left up to 70% of leadership behaviour acquired through opportunity and experience, suggesting a greater flexibility in leader development than trait and “great man” theorists had appreciated (Hannah & Avolio, 2010). Developmental readiness is seen as a prerequisite of successful leader development in that it attempts to identify and assesses key individual and organisational criteria for the change inherent in positive leader development to occur (Avolio & Hannah, 2008). A comprehensive meta-analysis of the outcomes of leadership development (Avolio et al., 2009) found that even after controlling for theory, setting, organisation, level, the dependent variable being measured and the quality of intervention, there was still significance variance left over suggesting the

presence of as yet unidentified moderator variables. Developmental readiness is proposed to be one of these key variables (Avolio & Hannah, 2008).

Developmental readiness is seen very much in the context of the positive organisational behaviour tradition, as a state that can be developed and modified as a result of instruction. Developmental readiness as a construct is hypothesized to divide into two elements with three sub-themes under each element. These have been described in detail elsewhere (Avolio & Hannah, 2008) and will only briefly be reviewed here. The first element is seen as the motivation to develop and this is comprised of interest and goals, goal orientation and developmental efficacy. The second key component is the ability to develop and this is comprised of self-awareness and self-concept clarity, leader complexity and meta-cognitive ability.

The motivation to develop was predicated on several existing theories of individual change. Goal orientation drew on the implicit theories of self (Dweck & Leggett, 1988) that proposed that leaders could either adopt an incremental view of their own development where their growth mindset encouraged exploration and assimilation of new experiences or an entity model where a relatively fixed mindset encouraged self-limiting beliefs about their potential to develop. Developmental efficacy too had a long history and is conceptualized as the level of confidence the leader possesses in the development and application of new knowledge, skills and abilities (Luthans et al., 2001). There is significant debate about whether this efficacy is domain specific or generalizes to a trait like quality of general confidence (Judge, 2009).

The ability to develop was also founded on existing theoretical constructs. Self-awareness has long been seen as a prerequisite of successful development but this is complimented in this model by the notion of self-concept clarity. This suggests

that clear, consistent and stable self-beliefs provide the crucible for adaptive reflection and integration of new concepts and experiences. It also promotes insight into personal strengths and implicit theories of self. This is further assisted by leader complexity, the quantity and sophistication of social constructs and roles that the leader holds about themselves. This construct could potentially appear in conflict with the notion of self-concept clarity.

The construct of developmental readiness does seem to be an amalgam of potential mediators of the willingness and ability to engage in the process of leadership development. The development of the concept itself is impaired on at least two grounds. Firstly there is no universally agreed method of measuring this construct. This prevents reliable, valid and transferable measurement of developmental readiness that can be compared across studies. Secondly, there is limited direct evidence for its effectiveness in predicting who will benefit from leadership training. Much of the evidence comes from studies on the individual sub-domains including goal-setting (Locke & Latham, 1990), mindsets (Dweck, 2006), metacognitive ability (Hannah, 2006) and self-awareness (Avolio et al., 2007) but it remains to be seen if the construct of developmental readiness in its totality adds anything more than the sum of its parts to the prediction of who will benefit most from leadership development.

A related concept that has been operationalized and tested albeit in more clinical domains, is that of change readiness (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1982). The model suggested that individuals lie on a continuum on the change cycle in relation to their awareness and intention to modify aspects of their behaviour. In an investigation of the active ingredients of change readiness in clients undergoing psychotherapy, Hanna (1996) identified key factors in the change process including the sense of

necessity to change, willingness to experience discomfort in the pursuit of change, awareness of issues to address, willingness to confront issues, willingness to expend the requisite effort, belief in the possibility of change and social support. Clearly some of these constructs overlap with the motivational and ability domains of developmental readiness. Indeed developmental readiness can be seen as a subset of change readiness where the focus is much more on the acquisition and development of new knowledge, skills and attitudes rather than the broader but directionless concept of change per se. These change processes have been suggested to be key client variables in coaching (Franklin, 2005) and are potentially important prerequisites of successful engagement in a coaching process. Whilst this is a broader and less leadership specific construct than developmental readiness, it has been the advantage of recently being operationalized in a brief coaching readiness scale (Franklin). In conclusion there seems to be convergent evidence from both clinical and organisational domains that there are key elements of insight, motivation and capacity that clients bring to the leadership development process but that the specific elements of these domains that predict positive outcomes remain elusive.

As new theories of positive leadership emerge, attempts have been made to integrate them into the numerous extant theories of leadership (Hernandez et al., 2011). In a review of multiple leadership theories, Hernandez et al. looked at both the loci of leadership, that is where does leadership come from and the mechanism of transmission to others. This has evolved into a two dimensional framework that maps leadership theories onto five loci and four potential mechanisms of transmission. Strengths as a construct most logically fit in the leader loci and rely on trait based methods of transmission whereas transformational leadership sits more in the dyadic loci and spans trait, behavioural, cognitive and affective methods of transmission.

While the framework omits motivation as a key mechanism of transmission and has yet to integrate emerging models of team leadership (e.g. Hawkins, 2011), it provides a coherent framework for mapping core elements of leadership theories and more importantly provides a mechanism for the synthesis of positive states and traits into existing leadership theory.

Positive Leadership Practice

Positive leadership development. There is compelling evidence that leadership can be developed over time via a variety of methods and processes (Day, 2001; Day, 2012). There have been several meta-analyses that have examined the combined effectiveness of leadership development interventions. Collins and Holton (2004) examined eighty-three formal leadership training studies that looked at enhancing leadership performance at the individual, team and organisational level. Of these, nineteen studies used a longitudinal controlled design to assess objective outcomes at the level of increase leadership expertise and found an overall effect size of 1.01. However the range of effect sizes was from -0.28 to 1.66 suggesting the presence of as yet unidentified design and delivery elements of the program that make a significant difference to the effective development of leadership.

Avolio et al. (2009) reviewed two hundred laboratory and field studies of leadership development. They found an overall small effect size of leadership change after the development intervention of 0.65 (versus 0.35 for control groups) and could find no significant difference depending on the theory utilized in the intervention. Despite this relatively small combined effect size, the standard deviation of outcomes was 0.80 suggesting significant variation in the effectiveness of the studies assessed. Overall they concluded that despite the heterogeneous mix of theory, dependent

variables, developmental processes and outcomes, leadership could be enhanced over a short period of time using a variety of methodologies.

These meta-analyses provide convincing evidence that leadership ratings can change significantly over time but tell us little about the impact of those changes on subsequent performance criteria. Fortunately the performance impacts and outcomes of some of the more recent models of leadership, especially transformational leadership, have been extensively studied. Wang et al. (2011) performed a meta-analysis of 113 studies investigating the impacts of transformational leadership on task, contextual and creative performance outcomes. They reported a mean correlation between individual level performance and transformational leadership of 0.25 using non-self-report measures.

In conclusion, there is considerable evidence that leadership is more state like in its ability to be enhanced by specific development interventions and that improved leadership impacts directly on objective performance criteria. The specific methodologies that may lead to more significant changes in leadership together with the processes that result in changes in leadership remain equivocal. Within this uncertainty exists the opportunity to empirically test a specific strengths assessment and development methodology to ascertain its impact on developing leadership effectiveness.

Positive leadership coaching. Individualised coaching has become an increasingly popular method for facilitating and supporting leadership development processes (Carey et al., 2011). Coaching has been used in a leadership development context in a number of ways including building and transferring skills, raising self-awareness and enhancing motivation (Hernez-Broome & Boyce, 2011; Passmore, 2010). Coaching has historically been asserted to be primarily a skills or insight

acquisition process that is content neutral and can be applied to a wide range of development goals in a range of contexts (Whitmore, 2002). Consequently multiple theories, models and processes can be inserted into the coaching framework (Grant, Green, & Rynsaardt, 2010). However recently the content neutral stance has been challenged with the emergence of specialist models of coaching (Elliot, 2005).

There are several reasons as to why leadership coaching potentially may offer the most effective pathway to integrate positive states and traits into the development of effective leaders. Firstly the coaching process is individually tailored to the needs of the coachee rather than part of a more generic leadership training process making it a more specific, relevant and concordant experience. Secondly coaching shares the affirmative bias of positive psychology with its focus on goal attainment and individual professional development (Burke & Linley, 2007). Thirdly coaching routinely includes the tripartite process of assessment, challenge and support offering the capacity to identify and develop specific positive constructs like strengths (Ting & Riddle, 2006). Finally coaching is an iterative process that facilitates the transfer of learning by its quotidian setting and reviewing of specific actions (Carey, 2011). Consequently it has been claimed that positive psychology coaching provides the potential vehicle for the integration of the insights and concepts of positive psychology into the leadership development process (Biswas-Diener & Dean, 2007; Kauffman, 2006).

There is increasing evidence that effective executive coaching requires a core set of common principles at its foundation (McKenna & Davis, 2009; Grant et al., 2010b). These include a collaborative working alliance between coach and coachee, the integration of activities to raise self-awareness of the coachee, some clearly defined goals and specific actions to achieve them. Many of these common principles

designed to raise self-awareness and set and attain relevant goals, are well aligned with the core constructs of positive psychology. Despite this alignment, there remains an ongoing debate about both the relative contributions these core components make to a successful outcome in coaching and the degree to which differing theory and techniques influence successful coaching interventions (De Haan & Duckworth, 2013; MacKie, 2007). Research in the profession has yet to evolve to the point when clearly delineated theoretical approaches to coaching, including strength based approaches, are compared in a reliable and valid manner.

The concept of comparative efficacy is further challenged by the lack of consensus on what constitutes a successful outcome in executive coaching which in turn is a function of the breadth and complexity of issues that can be addressed under the umbrella of coaching in organisations (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Lee, 2003). This diversity of outcomes has in some way been ameliorated by the emergence of domain specific coaching that seeks to impact on a particular element of individual performance. Thus leadership coaching has been explicit in its focus on raising the leadership capacity of the coachee in the organisational context (Elliot, 2011). This focus is contrasted with executive coaching which defines the level of the coachee but gives no indication of the focus of the coaching process. Given this current methodological heterogeneity, a strength based coaching methodology offers the opportunity to test the efficacy of a specific and coherent approach to the development of leadership skills and behaviours.

A number of studies have supported the use of a range of techniques derived from positive psychology both to develop positive emotional states and more optimistic perspectives in a coaching context (Arakawa & Greenberg, 2007; Fredrickson, 2001). Secondly positive psychology has supported the use of self-

concordant goals in coaching with evidence to suggest that this alignment with personal values enhances goal attainment (Burke & Linley, 2007). Finally positive psychology has championed the utilisation and enhancement of strengths in the coaching process amidst claims that this provides greater engagement and developmental gains for the individual and the organisation (Govindji & Linley, 2007; Linley, Willars, & Biswas-Diener, 2010). However, strengths coaching can both be viewed as an approach or method of coaching where strengths are identified and development in the pursuit of other goals and an outcome of coaching where the coachee gains a clearer understanding of their strengths and how to leverage them, as a result of the coaching process (Carter & Page, 2007).

While there is growing evidence of the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions, the majority of the organisational research has focused on well-being criteria like mental health and engagement rather than performance criteria such as the development of transformational leadership behaviours (Linley, Harrington, & Garcea, 2010). In a review of evidence on the effectiveness of coaching in the workplace, Grant et al. (2010a) found only two controlled studies of coaching in the workplace and neither study measured outcomes beyond the level of self-report, examined specific changes in leadership behaviour or employed a specific strengths based coaching methodology (Deviney, 1994; Duijts et al., 2008). An innovative study by McColl-Kennedy and Anderson (2002) did examine the link between coaching and leadership and found that frustration and optimism fully mediated the link between leadership style and subordinate performance in a study of 139 sales representatives. However the study used a survey design with existing performance criteria so the trainability of the optimistic explanatory style and its capacity to predict future performance was not assessed.

Cilliers (2011) reported one of the few studies to actively take a positive psychological approach to leadership coaching. He defined positive psychology leadership coaching as a focus on the people aspects of learning, growth and change in order to positively impact on the intrapersonal and interpersonal aspects of leadership. The study examined the impacts of positive leadership coaching on eleven leaders in a financial organisation. Participants engaged in ten experiential coaching sessions that focused on work engagement, coherence, values, resourcefulness and locus of control. Using discourse analysis in a series of single case designs, Cilliers identified six emergent themes. These included engagement in the role, role complexity, emotional self-awareness, self-authorisation (where the locus of perceived control resides internally rather than waiting for others to provide direction) and facilitating the growth of others. Whilst this study presents some important qualitative associations between positive psychology and leadership coaching, no quantitative data was reported and no post-intervention outcomes evaluated so the broader impact of this intervention is difficult to ascertain. Nonetheless this developing research base suggests positive psychology has both a coherent theoretical framework and a growing empirical validation that could provide a firm foundation for executive and leadership coaching (Seligman, 2007). Focusing on a strength-based approach to leadership coaching provides the opportunity to test the performance impact of a specific element of the positive psychology framework.

In conclusion, while there is growing evidence for positive psychology coaching to be an effective process in the enhancement of well-being and mental health (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009) there is not yet a coherent strengths-based coaching methodology that can provide an empirical test of the model's effectiveness in enhancing leadership behaviour. Such a model would be informed by a number of

constructs derived from positive psychology including the setting of self-concordant goals, the balance of development between strengths and weaknesses, the inculcation of an optimistic and resilient explanatory style and the promotion of a growth mindset. A strength-based leadership coaching model also offers the opportunity to integrate both novel constructs and an individualised development methodology in the pursuit of enhancing leadership capacity. Such a coherent approach would offer a valid and transferable test of a strength-based coaching approach to leadership development delivered through the medium of positive psychology coaching. Until such an approach to leadership coaching is empirically tested, it will remain unclear as to whether a positive, strength-based perspective in the coach or coachee is necessary or sufficient to develop leadership capability.

Summary and Conclusion

Building on the tenets of positive psychology, positive leadership approaches are being influenced by both the emphasis placed on strengths development in conjunction with the traditional deficit focus and the recognition that the leadership development process is dynamic and cyclical with individuals demonstrating differential rates of readiness for growth and change during their career and lifespan trajectories (DeRue & Workman, 2012). Both these themes offer potential innovation in the positive leadership development arena and while there is currently limited direct evidence for their effectiveness in this domain, there is substantial convergent and analogous evidence to suggest this approach can add additional effectiveness to the leadership development process. Building on strengths offers the potential to align more closely individual preferences and talents with the attainment of organisational objectives. Conversely the inculcation of greater self-regulation and application of positive mood states in leaders offers the potential of significant reductions in stress

related behaviour amongst their followers and direct reports (Kelloway & Barling, 2010; Skakon et al., 2010).

The strengths based approach to leadership development is both a process of identification and a method of aligning the individual's strengths and weaknesses against the challenges of the organisation. Strengths development is a much more complicated and nuanced process that is suggested by the identify and use approach and requires taking a systemic view of strengths profiles in the context of the environment in which they are applied (Zenger & Folkman, 2011). Given the current challenges in enhancing the discriminant validity of strengths as a construct, it seems like that progress in integrating strengths into the positive leadership development will depend on the refinement of strength development methodologies. Leadership coaching offers the natural vehicle for the delivery of positive leadership development but exactly how to integrate a strength-based process into a coaching methodology with its multiplicity of variables, processes and models can only be clarified by further research. Longitudinal controlled studies with alternative positive leadership coaching methodologies that target malleable positive constructs are most suited to answering this comparative question (Mills et al., 2013).

Existing models of positive leadership including authentic and developmental readiness are insightful additions that offer the opportunity to streamline delivery and enhance effectiveness to those most ready to engage in the leadership development process. However these need to be incorporated alongside the existing multifactor full range models such as transformational leadership (Bass & Bass, 2008) to avoid repeating the bias in perspective and partial focus that they were designed to redress. The full range leadership model (FRLM; Bass, 1999) offers exactly this balanced leadership model with its integration of the strengths of transformational leadership

and the more passive and dysfunctional elements of laissez-faire and management by exception leadership styles. Finally positive leadership development needs to move beyond the trait based approach and consider under what situations and in what contexts are the considered and mindful application of positive states, mindsets and strengths able to facilitate optimal leader and leadership development.

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The Effectiveness of Strength-based Executive Coaching in Enhancing
Transformational Leadership

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Abstract

This study attempts to investigate the effectiveness of a strength-based coaching methodology in enhancing transformational leadership. Transformational leadership is the process whereby leaders engage and influence their followers towards attaining a shared vision through their capacity to inspire, innovate and personalize their attention. A between-subject quasi-experimental design was used to explore the impact of strength based coaching on transformational and transactional leadership behaviours measured in a 360-degree feedback process. Thirty-seven executives and senior managers from a large not-for-profit organisation were non-randomly assigned to either a coaching or waitlist cohort. The coaching cohort received six sessions of leadership coaching involving feedback on leadership and strengths, goal setting and strengths development. The coaching process was manualised (via a six session strengths-based coaching manual) to ensure some methodological consistency between the 11 executive coaches providing the intervention. After 6 sessions of coaching over three months, cohorts then switched roles. The results showed that participants experienced highly statistically significant increases in their transformational leadership behaviour after coaching and this difference was perceived at all levels within the organisation but not by the participants themselves. Adherence to the strength-based protocol was also a significant predictor of ultimate degree of change in transformational leadership behaviour. The results suggest that strength based coaching may be effective in the development of transformational leaders.

The Effectiveness of Strength-based Executive Coaching in Enhancing Transformational Leadership

The challenges for contemporary leadership in organisations are profound, dynamic and complex (Youssef & Luthans, 2012). This places increasing demands and expectations on leadership development methodologies to cultivate leaders whose capacity matches these challenges. Executive coaching is now one of the dominant methodologies for developing leaders and yet there remains significant debate about what the effective components are, what outcomes can be achieved and what are the qualities of an effective coachee (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011; Grant et al., 2010). This gap in the evidence base is in part a function of the fact that conducting coaching research in organisations presents at least four significant challenges. Firstly, there is no established universal coaching methodology so establishing any kind of consistency in the delivery of executive coaching is problematic and may attenuate the very idiographic focus of coaching that may significantly add to its effectiveness (Passmore & Fillery-Travis; De Haan & Duckworth, 2013). Secondly the range of potential outcomes is vast, making cross-study comparisons nearly impossible. This has led to a focus on process eg goal attainment rather than content eg leadership skills and a tendency to focus on self-reported outcomes rather than assessing the broader impact on the organisation (Spence, 2007). Thirdly, coachees engage in coaching with a variety of abilities, motivation and capacity to change. Establishing the effectiveness of executive coaching means establishing what coachee variables predict better outcomes and where coaching resources should be targeted (Stewart et al., 2008; Best, 2010). Finally, organisations are increasingly dynamic and complex places (Luthans et al., 2001). Other interventions and initiatives can be going on in

parallel, making it difficult to attribute change purely to coaching. Only controlled interventions utilizing objective criteria can disentangle the myriad of contaminating factors and they are difficult and demanding to perform in organisations (Grant et al., 2010).

This article will provide an overview of the existing research on the effectiveness of workplace coaching with a particular emphasis on leadership as a core outcome criterion. It will also introduce readiness for change and core self-evaluations as key coachee variables before positioning a strength-based methodology as one potential solution to the challenge of methodological heterogeneity.

Evidence for the effectiveness of workplace coaching

The evidence for the effectiveness of executive coaching in the workplace is surprisingly limited. A number of reviews of the effectiveness of executive coaching have been conducted (MacKie, 2007; De Meuse et al., 2009; Grant et al., 2010). Grant et al (2010) found 39 within-subject and 16 between-subjects coaching outcome studies. Of those studies with within-subject designs, there was some evidence that 360-degree feedback and coaching was correlated with enhanced workplace performance (Smither et al., 2003). In the between-subject studies reviewed, only 11 of those were randomized. Of those 11, only two were conducted in the workplace. Deviney (1994) used a randomized controlled design with 45 line supervisors and found no difference in their feedback skills following coaching from their managers. Duijts et al. (2008) found participants increase on subjective ratings of well being and reduced symptoms of burnout after receiving between seven and nine hours of preventative coaching. However, no significant difference was reported on the primary objective measure of sickness absence was found. Grant (2009) in a study of 41 executives in a public health agency used a randomized controlled design to assess

the effectiveness of 360-degree feedback and four sessions of coaching on enhancing goal attainment, resilience and well-being. Utilising a cognitive-behavioural solution focused methodology (where the focus is on thoughts and behaviours that lead to a positive and pragmatic solutions to an issue or challenge), the results showed a subjective perception of an increase in goal attainment, resilience and well-being and a decrease in stress and anxiety. No objective performance data was gathered and the 360-degree feedback was not repeated after the coaching making the impact on leadership uncertain.

Grant et al. (2010) conducted a further randomized controlled trial of executive coaching in the educational setting. The study again utilised a cognitive-behavioural solution focused approach and randomly assigned 44 teachers to an experimental group receiving ten coaching sessions or a control group. The results showed a significant increase in goal attainment and well-being and a reduction in stress. The leadership styles inventory (LSI) 360 also found significant improvements in constructive leadership styles on the self-reports of the coachees over time. Constructive leadership styles include an achievement focus, promoting development in self and others and engaging others in a co-operative and affiliative manner. However there was no significant difference in constructive leadership when the ratings of their managers and peers were analysed. This absence of significant change was attributed to rater inconsistency over time. Consequently, data demonstrating the impact of executive coaching on leadership behaviour beyond the realms of self-report, remains elusive.

Leadership as a core outcome of coaching

One way to address the challenge of the multiplicity of potential outcomes in executive coaching is to identify the core criterion for change. Leadership coaching

provides this focus with an explicit agenda to positively increase knowledge and enhance effective behaviour in the leadership domain (Elliot, 2011). In addition, cross research comparisons require some consistency in the measurement and reporting of outcome domains in order to insure their validity (MacKie, 2007; Grant et al., 2010). Executive coaching that explicitly targets leadership development must by necessity, employ reliable and valid measures of leadership behaviour that gather data from a wide range of stakeholders in order to assess the impact of the coaching intervention. This approach to outcomes can circumvent the relatively context specific elements of coaching evaluation and assess the reliability and validity of these measures across different coaching contexts (Bowles et al., 2007). Leadership has been conceptualized and measured in numerous ways but one of the most consistent, researched and comprehensive models has been the multifactor leadership theory or full range leadership model (Bass & Avolio, 1993). This model encompasses both the transformational elements of leadership (that is building trust, establishing a compelling vision, inspiring others, innovating and developing others), transactional elements and avoidance or laissez-faire leadership behaviors. Transformational leadership was hypothesized to add to the benefits of transactional leadership through the *augmentation effect* where the transformational engagement of followers encouraged their enhanced performance through increased discretionary effort (Bass, 1999). Thus the more transactional elements of leadership like goal setting can be enhanced with the addition of transformational elements of leadership where followers are inspired to give more of their time and effort by the vision and charisma of the leader.

Cerni et al. (2010) utilised the Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ, Bass & Avolio, 1997) in a controlled investigation of the impact of executive

coaching on 14 senior school principles. The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) offers both a comprehensive theory of leadership ranging from the passive and ineffective to the active and effective elements and a reliable and valid psychometric assessment of the construct (Antonakis et al., 2003). It includes five elements of transformational leadership which are Idealised influence attributes (eg. building trust), Idealised influence behaviour (eg. discussing values and beliefs), inspirational motivation (eg. setting a compelling vision), intellectual stimulation (eg. taking different perspectives) and Individualised consideration (eg. coaching others). In addition, there are three transactional elements which are rewarding achievement (eg. setting expectations), management by exception active (eg. tracking mistakes) and passive (eg. being unresponsive until problems occur). Finally there is one non-transactional and more dysfunctional style which is laissez-faire leadership, where the leader is basically absent when needed. These nine elements give rise to the full range leadership model (Avolio & Bass, 1991) and offer coaching research a robust and targeted broad based leadership construct on which to measure its efficacy.

Cerni et al. showed significant differences in the ratings of transformational leadership in the principals after coaching when rated by the school staff. These changes were apparent at the broad composite transformational leadership level and well as two of the transformational leadership subscales, Idealised influence and Individualised consideration. This suggests both that coaching can enhance elements of transformational leadership and that the MLQ is sensitive to changes in leadership behaviour.

Key Coachee Variables: Developmental and Change Readiness

If leadership development is the preferred outcome of coaching then identifying those coachees who can benefit most from it becomes a priority. Recently

the concept of developmental readiness has been put forward as a potential predictor of effective outcomes in leadership development (Avolio & Hannah, 2008; Hannah & Avolio, 2010). This combination of motivation and ability to change is often seen as a prerequisite for effective engagement in the leadership development process.

Developmental readiness is a more focused element of the broader construct of change readiness (Franklin, 2005). This broad construct brings together a number of underlying concepts including beliefs about the possibility of change, willingness to experience discomfort in the pursuit of change and awareness of potential areas of focus. These coachee variables have been operationalized in the brief coaching readiness scale (Franklin) and are predicted to positively influence coaching outcomes. In addition, his study aims to establish whether developmental and change readiness are predictors of successful coaching or an outcome of the intervention by assessing this constructs prior to coaching

Finally, core self-evaluations are a related positive coachee variable that has been successfully modified as a function of executive coaching (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011). Core self-evaluations are trait-like constructs and include emotional stability, locus of control, self-efficacy and self-esteem (Judge et al., 2003). These constructs have been found to be correlated with both job performance and satisfaction at levels consistent with other personality traits (Judge et al., 2003).

Recently the research on core self-evaluations have been refocused on how they may identify individuals who are more able to adapt and thrive in contemporary, dynamic organisations (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011). Core self-evaluations have been found to increase after executive coaching (Libri & Kemp, 2006) and may mediate the setting of more ambitious goals in a leadership context (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2011).

Strength based Coaching as a Coherent Methodology

The issue of methodological coherence also needs to be addressed to control some of the multiplicity of variables that can occur under a typical coaching methodology. There is increasing evidence that effective leadership coaching requires a core set of common principles at its foundation (McKenna & Davis, 2009; Grant, Green & Rynsaardt, 2010). These include a collaborative working alliance between coach and coachee, the integration of activities to raise self-awareness of the coachee, some clearly defined goals and specific actions to achieve them. However there remains an ongoing debate about both the relative contributions these core components make to a successful outcome in coaching and the degree to which differing theory and techniques influence successful coaching interventions (MacKie, 2007, De Haan & Duckworth, 2013). The strength-based approach in positive psychology offers both a coherent theoretical framework, empirical validation and a well developed range of reliable and valid psychometric assessment tools that could bring some methodological consistency to the delivery of executive coaching (Kauffman, 2006).

Positive psychology with its emphasis on building on strengths and enhancing confidence and positive emotion, is increasingly being applied in an executive coaching context (Biswas-Diener & Dean, 2007). There is growing evidence of the effectiveness of positive psychology interventions in clinical populations (Seligman et al., 2005) but to date, the majority of the organisational research has focused on the enhancement of well-being criteria such as mental health and engagement rather than performance criteria like the development of transformational leadership behaviours (Linley, Harrington & Garcea, 2010; Wood et al., 2011). Focusing on a strength-

based approach to leadership coaching provides the opportunity to test the performance impact of a specific element of the positive psychology paradigm.

A strength-based methodology however, requires more than just the identification and leverages of strengths in the coachee. Part of the challenge of advocating a strength based approach is to define exactly what that entails. Strengths can be identified through a variety of standardised inventories like the Realise 2 (Linley & Stoker, 2012). How those strengths are subsequently developed requires some consistency in order that a similar process is applied across different coaching engagements. Manualisation provides a potential solution to the challenge of methodological inconsistency and provides an objective index of adherence to the protocol. Manualisation also offers the opportunity to be specific and consistent about what is meant by strengths development (Biswas-Diener, Kashdan & Minhas, 2011). Developing strengths involves the process of optimal titration (Linley et al., 2010), managing the potential overuse of strengths (Kaiser & Kaplan, 2009), pairing strengths with other similar competences (Zenger & Folkman, 2010) and aligning strengths with the broader business goals and with intrinsic interests (Govindji & Linley, 2007; Linley et al., 2009). These four elements form the core of the strength-based leadership coaching protocol.

Rationale and Aims

The limited number of controlled trials in coaching that have been performed to date use a variety of methodologies, draw on differing theoretical orientations and rely largely on self-report outcome data, making conclusions about effectiveness difficult to generalize (MacKie, 2007; Grant et al., 2010). This study aims to investigate some of the specific active components of executive coaching using a standardised strength-based coaching methodology. Standardisation was achieved by

way of a manualised strengths-based coaching intervention that explicitly aimed to identify and develop participant's strengths in a leadership development context. The process of standardization is also enhanced by adopting a between subjects design and recruiting subjects from the same organisation. Secondly this study aims to examine the effects of executive coaching on a specific outcome criterion, namely transformational leadership. This leadership outcome provides 360-degree feedback on changes in leadership behaviour throughout the organisation and moves the assessment of coaching outcomes beyond the reliance on self-report measures. Finally this study aims to assess the impact of three core coachee variables including developmental and coaching readiness and core self-evaluations, to assess their impact in identifying who will benefit most from a coaching intervention. Figure 1 outlines some of the potential key variables in the leadership coaching process that are considered in the current study. Whilst coach and organisational variables are seen as important for effective outcomes, they are not directly manipulated in this study.

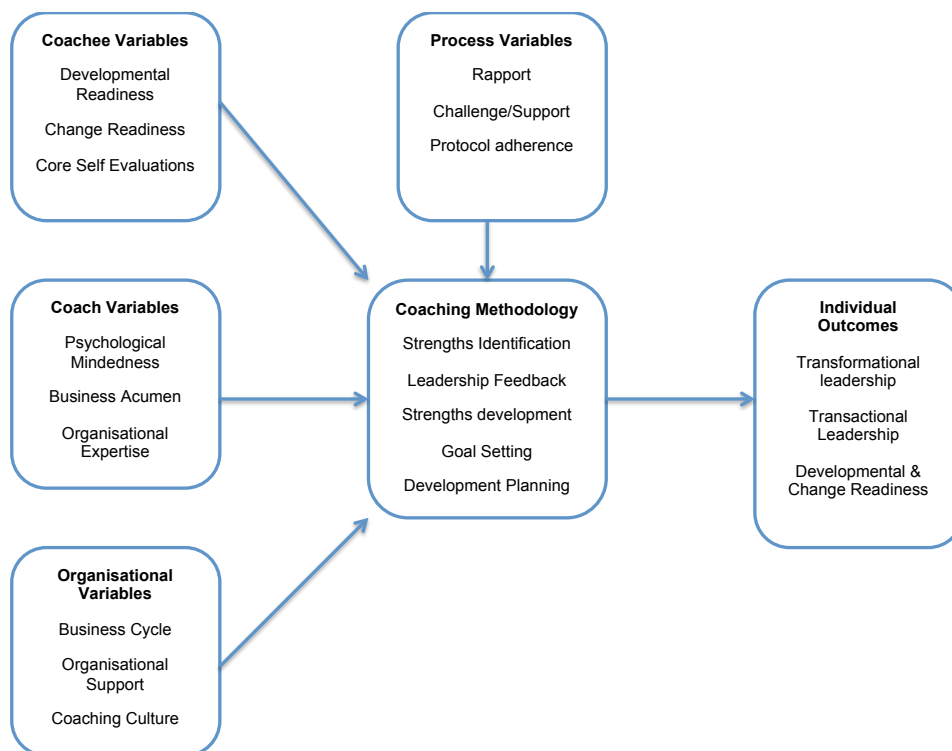


Figure 1. A model of key potential variables in the leadership coaching process.

Hypotheses

The following specific research questions will be addressed to answer the aforementioned aims of the study.

- 1) Leaders who experience strength based leadership coaching first (Cohort 1) will show a greater increase in transformational leadership behaviour than those on the waiting list first (Cohort 2) at Time 2. Equally Cohort 2 will show a greater increase in transformational leadership behaviours at T3.
- 2) Both Cohort 1 and 2 will show a significant increase in transformational leadership behaviours (as reported by self and others) after strength-based leadership coaching at Time 3 as compared to their pre-coaching leadership scores at Time 1.
- 3) The positive changes in leadership behaviour demonstrated after the coaching process will be observed at both the level of self-report and by others in the organisation including peers, line manager and direct reports.
- 4) Developmental and coaching readiness in the coachee will be positively correlated to coaching outcomes. Participants who display a higher initial readiness for change will show a greater increase in leadership behaviour as a result of the coaching process.
- 5) Participants who adhere to the strength based coaching methodology will show a greater increase in transformational leadership behaviour than those who do not adhere.

Method

Participants

A total of 37 senior managers (17 male, 20 female) were recruited from the same organisation in the Not for Profit (NFP) sector. They were all senior managers and leaders in the Australian arm of a multi-national not for profit organisation. The average age was 45 years (range 31-62 years). This represented all available senior managers from the top two levels in the organisation and included the executive director and the leadership team. A total of 41 individuals were invited to participate but four declined due to overseas postings and maternity leave. Having managerial responsibility for a number of direct reports was a pre-requisite of participating in the study. The participants were then divided into two groups – the coaching first group (Cohort 1), and the waitlist first group (Cohort 2). The process of group allocation was not random as it depended on the availability of the participants and the preferences of the organisation. All participants gave their written informed consent to participate in the study.

Research Design

The study utilised a quasi-experimental design with two cohorts; a Coaching first cohort (Cohort 1) and a waitlist first group (Cohort 2) (see Figure 2). While cohort 1 was engaged in the coaching, Cohort 2 acted as the control group. Cohorts then switch roles at the mid-point (Time 2). However because Cohort 1 had had the coaching intervention at this stage, it was not able to act as an independent control group for Cohort 2. Each participant received 6 sessions (9hrs) of strength based leadership coaching. The main dependent and independent variables were as follows;

Key Variables:

Independent Variables

- 1) The variables that are being manipulated in the design are the strength-based leadership coaching components based on positive psychology and the number of coaching sessions.

Dependent Variables

- 1) The variables that are designed to measure change in the IV are Transformational Leadership Behaviour change – leadership behaviours rated by self and others in a Multi-rater Leadership Questionnaire methodology.
- 2) The second dependent variable is change readiness for coaching.
- 3) The third dependent variable is developmental readiness based on the ability and motivation to develop as a leader.
- 4) The final dependent variables are core self-evaluations e.g. self-efficacy, confidence, locus of control and neuroticism.

Coaches. A total of 11 coaches provided their services pro-bono for the research. They were highly experienced practitioners who were mainly recruited from the local executive education department of a prestigious business school and had been preselected for both psychological mindedness and business acumen. All coaches were self-employed practitioners who earned a significant part of their income from providing executive coaching services to corporate entities. On average they had 12 years of experience providing executive coaching in organisations and had been working in organisations for an average of 28 years. The majority (70%)

were qualified at Masters level or above and were registered practicing psychologists. Each coach was trained in the author's strength-based methodology by way of a half-day induction process. This process described the underlying rationale for strength based approaches to leadership and provided a structured strength-based coaching manual for the coach to follow. Each coach provided leadership coaching to between one to two participants per cohort.

Procedure

Strength based protocol. Each coachee received six 90minute coaching sessions that followed a format articulated in their coaching manual. Initially coaches began with a strength-based interview followed by feedback for the coachee on their MLQ report and Realise 2 Inventory. The strength based interview focused on their peak experiences and what energized them about their work. The Realise 2 questionnaire provided feedback on what energized them, where they felt competent and where they had the opportunity to apply their strengths. This led to structured feedback on their realised strengths (those that were known and utilised), unrealized strengths (those that were know but underutilised), learned behaviours (those that were competent but not energising) and weaknesses (where both competence and energy were low). The MLQ 360 provided qualitative and quantitative multi-rater feedback on their scores on the full range leadership model (FRLM) that included transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles. Coachees were then required to select three goals they would like to focus on during the coaching; a realized strength, an unrealized strength and a learned behaviour or weakness. Coachees then tracked their progress on these goals for the remaining five sessions and committed to actions designed to help their goal attainment. Coachees also

tracked their progress on a sessional basis by reflecting on and rating their strength awareness, alignment, pairing and utilization, (See Appendix D).

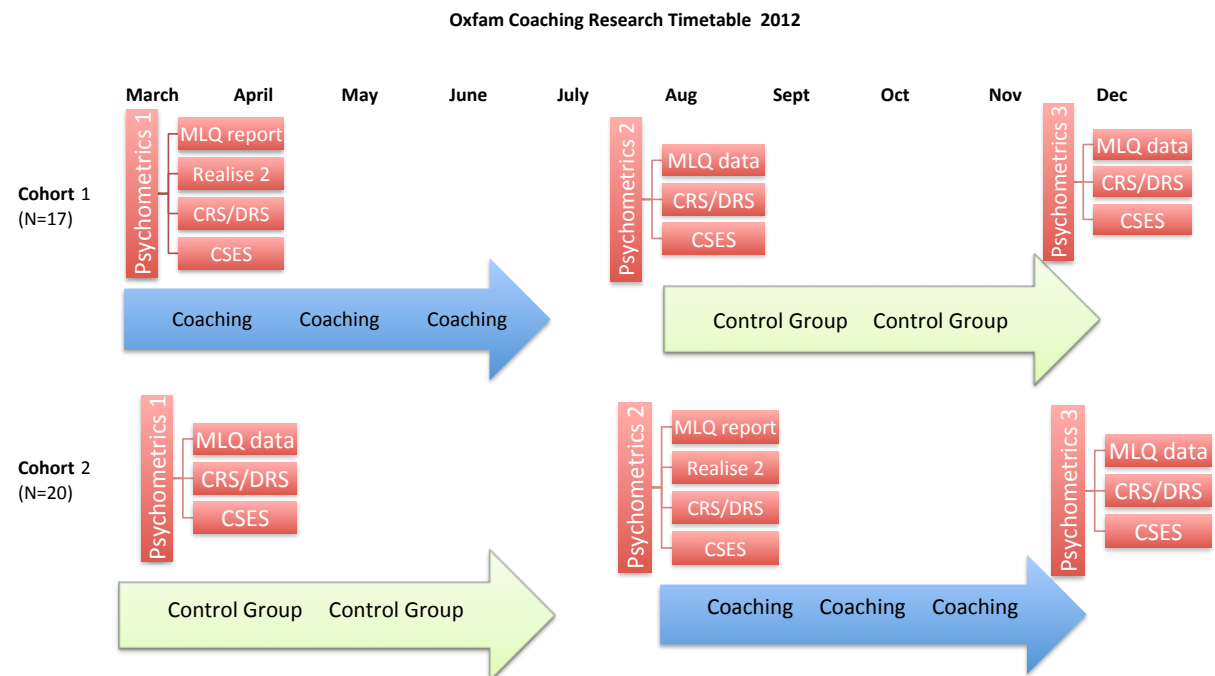


Figure 2. Quasi-experimental Waitlist Control Research Design including psychometric administration, (CRS= coaching readiness scale, DRS= Developmental Readiness Scale, CSES=Core Self Evaluation Scale).

Measures. Each participant received;

Realise 2 Strengths Inventory. This is an online strengths assessment and development tool that assesses 60 different attributes or strengths in the individual (e.g. curiosity, authenticity, and action). Participants respond on a 7 point Likert scale for each attribute across three dimensions of energy, performance and use. The responses are then classified into realized strengths, unrealized strengths, learned behaviours and weaknesses (Linley et al., 2010). The mean Cronbach alpha across all 60 attribute item groupings was 0.82 (Linley & Stoker, 2012). Criterion validities with individual strengths include action and the work engagement scale (0.41).

The Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire. The MLQ (Bass & Avolio, 1997) is a 49-item questionnaire that measures nine elements of the full range leadership model (FRLM) namely idealized influence attributes (e.g. Display a sense of power and confidence), idealized influence behaviour (e.g. Talk about my most important values and beliefs), inspirational motivation (e.g. Articulate a compelling vision of the future), intellectual stimulation (e.g. Seek different perspectives when solving problems), individualized consideration (e.g. Help others to develop their strengths), contingent reward (eg Provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts), management by exception active (e.g. Keep track of all mistakes), management by exception passive (e.g. Fail to interfere until things become serious) and laissez-faire (e.g. Avoid making decisions). The inventory also has three measures of leadership outcomes; extra effort (e.g. Heighten others' desire to succeed), effectiveness (e.g. Lead a group that is effective) and satisfaction (e.g. Work with others in a satisfactory way) (Bass & Avolio, 1997). It measures all items on a 5 point Likert scale from “*not at all*” to “*frequently if not always*”. Cronbach's alpha for the main transformational leadership factor has been reported as 0.85 (Antonakis et al., 2003) and criterion validities vary for satisfaction (0.71), effectiveness (0.64) and performance (0.27), (Judge & Piccolo, 2004).

Brief Coaching Readiness Scale (BCRS). A 17-item scale that measures constructs relating to readiness to change including accepting responsibility for change, persistence, flexible thinking and setting specific goals (Franklin, 2005). It measures items on a scale from 0 (*not at all*) to 100 (*very strongly*). The overall Cronbach's alpha was 0.90. There are no reported validities for this scale (See Appendix E).

The Core Self Evaluation Scale (CSES). The CSES is a 12-item scale measuring the combined trait of core self-evaluations. Judge et al. (2003) found that the combined CSES scale represented the four underlying personality traits of self-esteem, self-efficacy, neuroticism and locus of control. Participants rated each item according to a five point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Half the items were reverse scored. The overall Cronbach's alpha was 0.79 and the predictive validity for work performance has been reported at 0.30 (Judge & Bono, 2001).

Developmental Readiness Questionnaire. This is a 14 item questionnaire constructed by the author that attempted to tap into the underlying constructs of developmental readiness namely implicit person theory, change readiness, mastery orientation, emotional regulation and growth mindset (Avolio & Hannah, 2008). Scores ranges from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*almost always*). Items were generated for each of these constructs and the overall Cronbach's alpha was 0.71 and criterion validity with the BCRS was 0.54. (See Appendix F).

Each coach received;

Adherence to Strengths Protocol Scale. A 14-item checklist that surveyed the coachee's adherence to the strength-based elements of the protocol including strengths awareness, alignment, pairing and overuse. The scale identified the strengths based elements of the manual and asked the coach to rate adherence to these elements during the coaching on a 5 point Likert scale from "*not at all*" to "*almost always*". A total adherence score was then calculated (See Appendix G).

Table 1

Data Collection Process

Domain	When Data Collected	Respondents	Method	Measures
Readiness for Change	T1, T2 & T3	All participants	Self-report inventory	Brief Readiness for Coaching Scale Developmental Readiness Scale
Core Self Evaluations	T1,T2 & T3	All participants	Self-report inventory	CSES
Leadership	T1, T2, &T3	Participants plus 360 raters	Survey distributed via email	MLQ 360
Strengths	At the beginning of coaching	All participants	Self-report inventory	Realise 2
Methodology adherence	End of coaching	Coach	Survey	Manual & Protocol Adherence Scales

Analysis. Data was collected from coaches, coachees and peers. Table 1 shows the data collection points were T1 (March, 2012) T2 (July, 2012) and T3 (December, 2012). The main aim of the study was to examine the impact of strength based leadership coaching on transformational leadership behaviour. Consequently it was important to test whether the two groups, Cohort 1 (Coaching first) and Cohort 2 (Waitlist first) differed at the beginning of the research on their Transformational leadership scores. Analysis was via a 2x2 repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Independent groups and paired sample t-tests. Correlations were used to examine the impact of developmental readiness on coaching outcomes. An ANCOVA was also used to examine the differences on transformational leadership between the two groups at time 2. Finally regression analysis was used to test if developmental and change readiness at Time 1 predicted changes in transformational leadership at Time 3.

Results

Descriptive Statistics MLQ Leadership and Readiness Scores at Time 1

Given that Cohort 2 was initially acting as the control group for Cohort 1, it was important to ascertain whether they initially differed on any of the dependent variables measured. As the main hypothesis involved the impact of strength-based leadership coaching on transformational leadership behaviours, this dependent variable is reported first in Table 2. Although 37 participants began the program at time 1, six dropped out between time 1 and time 2 so only those participants who contributed data at T1 and T2 were included in this analysis.

Table 2

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Transformational Leadership ratings for Both Cohorts at Time 1

MLQ Variable	C1 Coaching First (N=14)		C2 Waitlist First (N=17)		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	M	SD	M	SD			
Transformational Total	2.63	0.30	2.77	0.34	1.20	29	.238
Idealised Influence Attribute	2.70	0.29	2.97*	0.37	2.23	29	.033
Idealised Influence Behaviour	2.68	0.39	2.69	0.41	0.11	29	.913
Inspirational Motivation	2.63	0.31	2.72	0.44	0.60	29	.551
Intellectual Stimulation	2.60	0.28	2.75	0.35	1.31	29	.199
Individualised Consideration	2.58	0.43	2.71	0.39	0.90	29	.372

Note. Comparison of means between Waitlist first group and Coaching first group using independent sample t-tests at Time 1.

* $p < 0.05$

An independent sample t-test conducted on the data presented in Table 2 showed that there was no significant difference in the transformational leadership scores at Time 1 for the two cohorts. Equal variance was assumed as the Levene's test for equality of variance was not significant. The only exception was Idealised Influence Attribute, $t(29) = 2.24, p = 0.033$.

Table 3

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Transactional, Passive, Avoidant and Outcome Leadership ratings for Both Cohorts at Time 1

MLQ Variable	C1 Coaching First (N=14)		C2 Waitlist First (N=17)		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Contingent Reward	2.66	0.38	2.77	0.32	0.87	29	.390
Management by Exception Active	1.49	0.29	1.58	0.38	0.68	29	.500
Management by Exception Passive	1.11	0.45	0.93	0.36	1.28	29	.211
Laissez-faire	0.85	0.43	0.63	0.30	1.67	29	.104
Effectiveness	2.73	0.33	2.98*	0.35	2.07	29	.047
Satisfaction	2.92	0.32	3.10	0.43	1.31	29	.200
Extra Effort	2.41	0.33	2.60	0.45	1.36	29	.184

Note. Comparison of means and standard deviations (SD) between Waitlist first group and Coaching first group using independent t-tests at Time 1.

* $p < 0.05$.

In addition to checking for initial differences in transformational leadership behaviours between the two cohorts, it was also important to check for differences in the transactional, passive and avoidant styles of leadership. If groups differed at Time 1 in the less functional styles of leadership, this could again have a significant impact on the impact of the leadership coaching intervention. Table 3 shows the results of these elements of the Full Range Leadership Model (FRLM) at Time 1.

An independent sample t-test conducted on the data presented in Table 3 showed that there was no significant difference in the transactional, passive and leadership outcome scores at Time 1 for the two cohorts. Equal variance was assumed as the Levene's test for equality of variance was not significant. The only exception was Effectiveness, $t(29) = 2.07, p = 0.047$. Thus leaders in the Waitlist first group were seen as more effective in terms of their leadership capability at the start of the study. There were no significant differences between Cohort 1 and 2 on the developmental readiness scale, the brief coaching reading scale or the core self-evaluation scale at Time 1.

The impact of rater consistency on transformational leadership scores

The core aim of the study was to investigate the impact of strength based leadership coaching on transformational leadership. However in order measure this, it was first necessary to investigate the impact of rater consistency on the results. Rater consistency is an issue in 360 measurement processes as, if original raters leave over time and new raters are added, this can potentially compromise the validity of the study. Table 4 shows the rater consistency over time as well as the number of raters and number of missing data at each time period in this study. Each participant had an average of 9.86, 9.70 and 9.62 rater responses per participant at Time 1, Time 2 and Time 3 respectively. Calculating a ratio for new and original raters at time 2 and Time

3 gives an index of rater consistency of 92.5% and 88.8% respectively. A paired sample t-test of transformational leadership scores with original against new raters at both T2 and T3 showed no significant difference in mean total transformational leadership scores. Consequently the full compliment of raters (original plus new raters) were used for the subsequent analysis.

Table 4

MLQ 360 rater information for both Cohorts across the three time periods

Time Period	Time 1	Time 2	Time 3
No of Participants	(N=37)	(N=31)	(N=24)
Total no. of raters	395	345	265
Missing Data	30	44	34
New Raters	0	26	41
Rater Consistency	100%	92.5%	88.8%

Hypothesis 1: The Impact of strength based leadership coaching on transformational leadership

The first analysis was designed to assess whether there was a significant difference in transformational leadership scores after Cohort 1 completed coaching and before Cohort 2 commenced. This is the only stage where the Waitlist first cohort (C2) could act as a real control group for the Coaching first cohort (C1). In order to assess changes in transformational leadership, a composite mean was calculated for the five elements of transformational leadership using the recommended minimum number of responses by the test author, (A minimum of three-quarters responses for each sub-scale is recommended to calculate a composite mean (Bass & Avolio,

2004)). Table 5 shows the means, standard deviations and significant differences between Time 1 and time 2. Paired sample t-tests were used to look at the differences within the same cohort between T1 and T2. Repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine the relationship between the two cohorts over time.

Table 5

Average and Individual Transformational Leadership scores for Cohort 1 and 2 across Time 1 and 2

	Time 1		Time 2					
MLQ	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Partial</i>
Scores								η^2
Cohort 1 Coaching First (N=14)								
MLQ5I	2.63	0.30	2.85	0.35	27.054	1,29	.000	.483
IIA	2.70	0.29	2.95	0.41	18.855	1,29	.000	.394
IIB	2.68	0.39	2.88	0.48	15.765	1,29	.000	.352
IM	2.63	0.31	2.81	0.29	6.423	1,29	.017	.181
IS	2.60	0.28	2.81	0.29	16.703	1,29	.000	.365
IC	2.58	0.43	2.80	0.41	13.847	1,29	.001	.323
Cohort 2 Waitlist First (N=17)								
MLQ5I	2.77	0.34	2.85	0.37	4.807	1,29	.037	.142
IA	2.97	0.37	3.05	0.38	2.457	1,29	.039	.139
IIB	2.69	0.41	2.88	0.44	17.393	1,29	.000	.375
IM	2.72	0.44	2.79	0.45	1.420	1,29	.243	.047
IS	2.75	0.35	2.82	0.35	2.456	1,29	.128	.078
IC	2.71	0.39	2.80	0.41	2.641	1,29	.115	.083

Note. Repeated measures ANOVA within Group comparison of means between Waitlist first group and Coaching first group at Time1 & Time 2. MLQ5I= average of the five transformational leadership scores, IIA= Idealised Influence Attributes, IIB=Idealised Influence Behaviour, IM=Inspirational Motivation, IS=Intellectual Stimulation, IC=Individualised Consideration.

Table 5 shows that all the elements of transformational leadership improved significantly for Cohort 1 after they had received strength based leadership coaching although inspirational motivation showed a lower effect size than the other four elements of transformational leadership. The change in the MLQ5I score, which is a composite of the five elements of transformational leadership, was highly significant, $t(14) = 4.88, p < 0.001$, two tailed. Interestingly in the Waitlist first cohort (C2), two of the subscales and the composite 5I mean score also reported significant changes in transformational leadership. However the change was less significant for MLQ5I score than the Coaching first group, $t(17) = 2.35, p < 0.032$, two tailed.

In order to further investigate the relative difference in the two cohorts between T1 and T2, a one way repeated measure ANOVA of the MLQ 5I composite means was calculated. This showed that the size of the significant difference for Cohort 1 was significantly greater than for Cohort 2, (C1 Wilks' Lambda = 0.52, $F(1,29) = 27.05, p < 0.001$; C2 Wilks' Lambda = 0.86, $F = (1,29) = 4.81, p < 0.037$). The partial Eta Squared scores for C1 and C2 were 0.483 and 0.142 respectively. Thus the effect size for the change in transformational leadership scores in coaching first group was more than three times greater than the effect size for the Waitlist first group. In effect, Cohort 1, despite starting at a lower level on the MLQ 5I mean score than the Waitlist cohort, caught up at time 2. Figure 2 illustrates this change. A one-way ANCOVA using mean MLQ scores at Time 2 as the dependent variable and MLQ mean scores at Time1 as the covariate again showed a significant difference between the two cohorts $F(1,28) = 5.22, p = .030$, partial eta squared = 0.157.

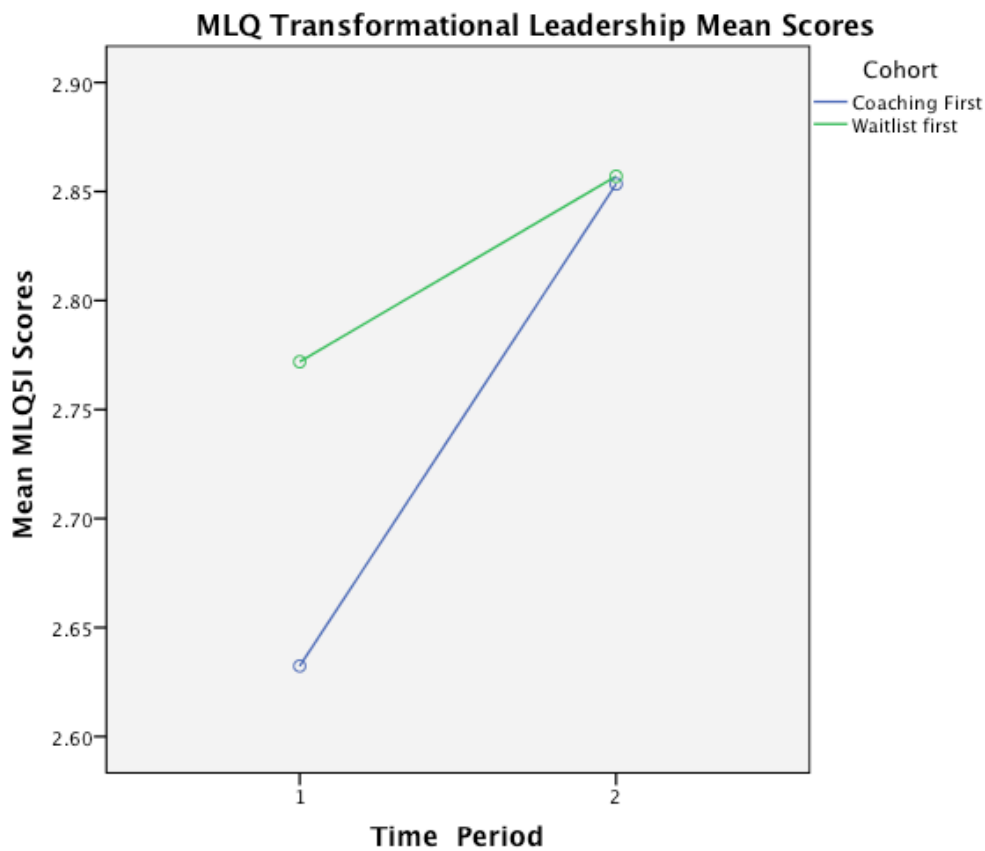


Figure 3. Mean Transformational Leadership scores for Waitlist and Control Cohorts at Time 1 and Time 2.

At Time 2, the waitlist first group (C2) began their coaching and C1 continued to be monitored to see if their gains were maintained or increased over time. Table 6 shows the results. The results show that both groups changed significantly on the mean transformational leadership scores at Time 3 so Hypothesis 1 was only partially supported. Thus Cohort 1 continued to enhance their transformational leadership after their coaching stopped at Time 2 and Cohort 2 showed a significant difference in transformational leadership after their coaching completed at Time 3. The effect sizes for the mean composite transformational leadership scores were very similar

(C1=0.329, C2=0.343) and not surprisingly, there was no significant difference in the rate of change between the two groups.

Table 6

Individual and Mean Transformational Leadership scores for Cohort 1 and 2 across Time 2 and Time 3

	Time 2		Time 3					
MLQ	M	SD	M	SD	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Partial η²</i>
Scores								
Cohort 1 Coaching First (<i>N</i> =10)								
MLQ5I	2.75	0.30	2.96	0.26	10.808	1,22	.003	.329
IIA	2.88	0.40	3.07	0.30	7.392	1,22	.013	.252
IIB	2.70	0.39	2.97	0.32	14.931	1,22	.001	.404
IM	2.67	0.41	2.94	0.36	9.942	1,22	.005	.311
IS	2.77	0.25	2.94	0.20	5.831	1,22	.025	.210
IC	2.72	0.42	2.91	0.28	4.267	1,22	.051	.162
Cohort 2 Waitlist First (<i>N</i> =14)								
MLQ5I	2.94	0.28	3.12	0.24	11.476	1,22	.003	.343
IA	3.16	0.30	3.31	0.28	6.477	1,22	.018	.227
IIB	2.95	0.39	3.08	0.28	4.813	1,22	.039	.180
IM	2.86	0.41	3.07	0.33	8.676	1,22	.007	.283
IS	2.92	0.30	3.08	0.26	7.276	1,22	.013	.249
IC	2.89	0.31	3.08	0.25	6.373	1,22	.019	.225

Note. Repeated Measure ANOVA Within Group Comparison of means between Waitlist first group and Coaching first group at Time 2 & Time 3. MLQ5I=combined average transformational leadership score, IIA= Idealised Influence Attributes, IIB=Idealised Influence Behaviour, IM=Inspirational Motivation, IS=Intellectual Stimulation, IC=Individualised Consideration.

It is of note here that unlike in the first time period, both cohorts are experiencing similar rates of positive change in transformational leadership scores. This may be a function of both Cohort 1 enhancing their gains after coaching and Cohort 2 starting with a higher transformational leadership score and increasing while on the waitlist. Thus C2 may have approached a ceiling in their transformational leadership scores. A one way ANCOVA found no significant differences between groups at this stage ($F(1,21) = .30, p = .588$, partial eta squared = .014).

The Impact of strength based leadership coaching on transactional and laissez-faire leadership

As a further test of the impact of strength based leadership coaching, the impact on the transactional and management by exception elements of the FRLM was also examined. Transactional leadership is still an effective form of leadership that involves setting goals and expectations so this would be predicted to also increase after the leadership coaching. The passive and avoidant scales by contrast, would be predicted to decrease as a function of the leadership coaching. Finally the leadership outcomes would be expected to increase as more effective leadership is correlated with others providing greater effort and reporting greater satisfaction and perceived effectiveness (Avolio & Bass, 2004). Table 7 again shows that these changes for Cohort 1 are all in the expected direction and all the changes are significant apart from MBEA. It is also important to note that the outcomes of leadership are all significantly improved, especially in terms of leadership effectiveness. By contrast the Waitlist has only two significant reductions in management by exception active and

passive (MBEA and MBEP). There were no significant increases in leadership outcomes in the Waitlist first Cohort.

Table 7

Transaction, Passive and Avoidant Leadership Styles and Leadership Outcomes for Cohort 1 and 2 across Time 1 and 2

	Time 1		Time 2					
MLQ Scores	M	SD	M	SD	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Partial η²</i>
Cohort 1 Coaching First (N=14)								
CR	2.66	0.38	2.89	0.35	9.122	1,29	.005	.239
MBEA	1.50	0.29	1.43	0.37	0.876	1,29	.357	.029
MBEP	1.11	0.48	0.89	0.48	16.166	1,29	.000	.358
LF	0.85	0.43	0.62	0.35	11.954	1,29	.002	.292
Effectiveness	2.73	0.33	3.01	0.39	17.646	1,29	.000	.378
Satisfaction	2.92	0.32	3.15	0.38	10.551	1,29	.003	.267
Extra Effort	2.41	0.34	2.70	0.48	11.415	1,29	.002	.282
Cohort 2 Waitlist First (N=17)								
CR	2.78	0.32	2.85	0.42	1.326	1,29	.259	.044
MBEA	1.58	0.38	1.39	0.41	8.708	1,29	.006	.231
MBEP	0.93	0.36	0.79	0.36	7.798	1,29	.009	.212
LF	0.63	0.29	0.57	0.30	0.740	1,29	.397	.025
Effectiveness	2.98	0.35	3.04	0.40	0.894	1,29	.352	.030
Satisfaction	3.10	0.43	3.11	0.40	0.041	1,29	.906	.000
Extra Effort	2.61	0.45	2.66	0.35	0.474	1,29	.497	.016

Note. Within Group Comparison of means between Waitlist first group and Coaching first group at Time 1 & Time 2. CR=Contingent Reinforcement, MBEA=management by Exception Active, MBEP=Management by Exception Passive, LF=Laissez-faire.

The results of the transactional, passive and avoidant sub-scales of the MLQ were largely consistent with the hypothesis that whilst transformational leadership would increase as a result of coaching for Cohort 1, the less functional elements of the full range leadership model would display an inverse effect. Of note is that the contingent reward (CR) element of the model increased significantly in the Coaching first group but there was almost no change in the waitlist group. CR is about setting goals and expectations and is positively impacted by the leadership coaching intervention. The one anomaly is that there was almost no change in the monitoring mistakes (MBEA) element in the coaching group whereas this reduced significantly in the Waitlist group. This may be a function of having awareness raised about these constructs during the leadership assessment process although it is unclear as to why this did not generalize to the other elements of the model. Another substantive and supportive finding is that all the outcomes of leadership namely Extra Effort, Effectiveness and Satisfaction all significantly improved in the coaching group whereas there was no change at all in the waitlist group. This demonstrates that C1 participants were rated as more effective and more satisfying leaders and raters were willing to give greater discretionary effort to them after they had received the strength based leadership coaching.

Table 8

Transaction, Passive and Avoidant Leadership Styles and Leadership Outcomes for Cohort 1 and 2 across Time 2 and Time 3

	Time 2		Time 3					
MLQ	M	SD	M	SD	F	df	p	Partial
Scores								η^2
Cohort 1 Coaching First (N=10)								
CR	2.86	0.35	3.02	0.39	2.947	1,22	.100	.118
MBEA	1.49	0.38	1.45	0.44	0.076	1,22	.785	.003
MBEP	0.80	0.38	0.68	0.27	3.701	1,22	.067	.144
LF	0.57	0.36	0.55	0.25	0.075	1,22	.787	.003
Effectiveness	2.99	0.44	3.16	0.22	2.787	1,22	.109	.112
Satisfaction	3.11	0.38	3.18	0.24	0.455	1,22	.507	.020
Extra Effort	2.54	0.37	2.78	0.27	7.387	1,22	.013	.251
Cohort 2 Waitlist First (N=14)								
CR	2.96	0.31	3.03	0.24	0.913	1,22	.350	.040
MBEA	1.38	0.36	1.38	0.53	0.004	1,22	.949	.000
MBEP	0.73	0.32	0.65	0.27	1.889	1,22	.183	.079
LF	0.51	0.27	0.33	0.11	9.167	1,22	.006	.294
Effectiveness	3.14	0.36	3.39	0.31	9.490	1,22	.005	.301
Satisfaction	3.23	0.29	3.42	0.27	4.961	1,22	.036	.184
Extra Effort	2.77	0.27	3.04	0.33	14.283	1,22	.001	.394

Note. Within Group Comparison of means between Waitlist first group and Coaching first group at Time 2 & Time3. CR=Contingent Reinforcement, MBEA=management by Exception Active, MBEP=Management by Exception Passive, LF=Laissez-faire.

Given that at Time 2, the Waitlist first group began their coaching, it was expected that they would show the greater reduction in their passive and avoidant leadership behaviour and the greater increase in their leadership outcomes over this time period. However possibly due to the drop out of three members of this cohort, the mean score increased at time 2 and this reduced the significance of the size of the increase in CR (rewards achievement) at T3. Table 8 illustrates these results. Surprisingly there was also no significant reduction in monitoring mistakes (MBEA) or fighting fires (MBEP) in Cohort 2. There was however a significant decrease in avoiding involvement (LF) and all the three leadership outcomes (Effectiveness, Satisfaction and Extra Effort) increased significantly in C2. Overall C2 were a higher scoring group before the leadership coaching so they may have been approaching a ceiling in terms of some of the scores.

Hypothesis 2: Transformational Leadership Scores over Time

The longitudinal MLQ scores were also analysed to track the trends in both Cohorts over time. Figure 4 shows that Cohort 1 responded positively and significantly immediately after the coaching but also kept increasing at 3 month follow up. Cohort 2 showed a smaller but still significant increase in transformational leadership scores whilst on the waitlist for their leadership coaching. This is more difficult to explain and could be a function of simply being on the program, having their MLQ scores measured and having their attention focused on the forthcoming leadership coaching.

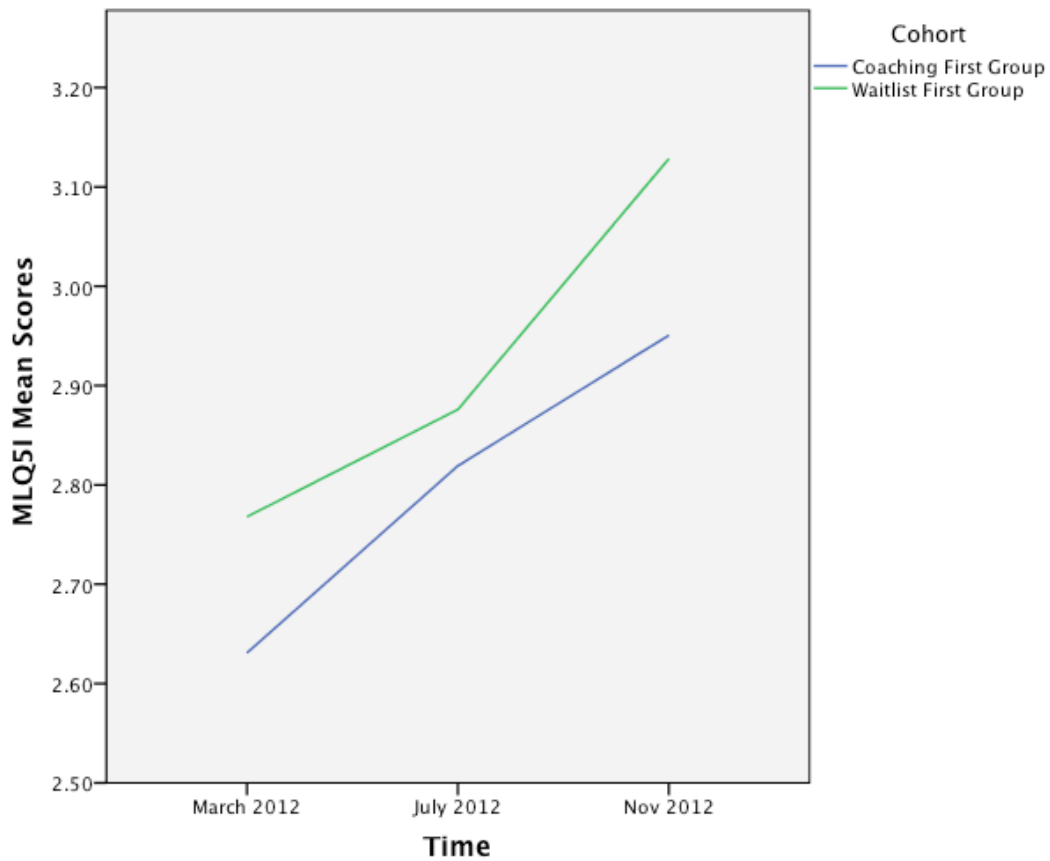


Figure 4. Longitudinal changes in Mean Transformational leadership for both Cohorts

A three way repeated measures ANOVA showed that both groups increased their scores on transformational leadership at a very similar rate between Time 1 and Time 3, (C1 $F(2, 21) = 10.51, p = .001$; C2 $F(2, 21) = 8.92, p = .002$) and both showed very similar overall effect sizes of partial eta squared .50 and .46 respectively. These would be considered very significant effect sizes in terms of increasing transformational leadership ratings.

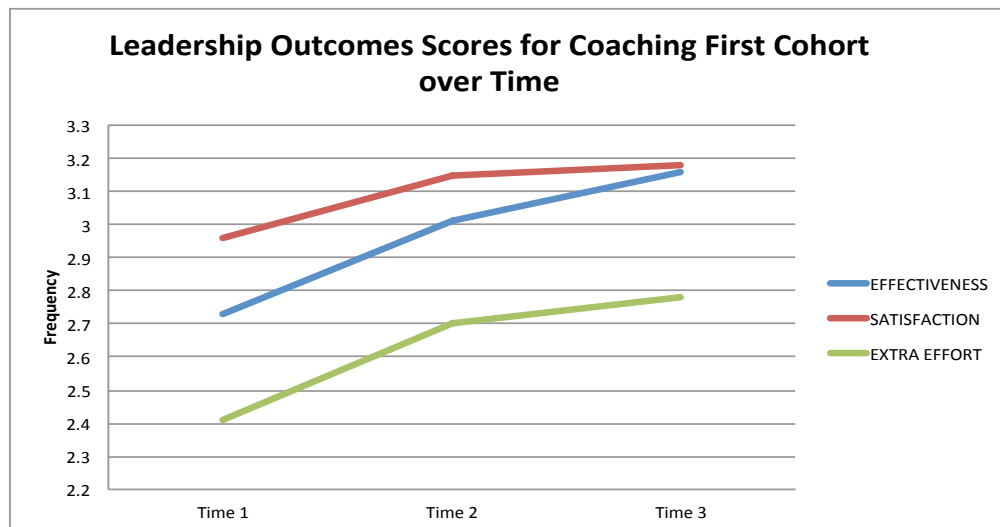


Figure 5. Longitudinal changes in MLQ Leadership outcomes in Coaching first Cohort over Time (Scores 0=not at all to 4= Frequently if not always).

The changes in MLQ outcome scores are represented in Figure 5 and 6. Figure 5 shows that the most significant changes occur immediately after the coaching at Time 2. Coachees are seen as significantly more effective, more satisfying and more inspiring in terms of influencing followers to donate their extra discretionary effort. The same trend is found in Figure 6 for the Waitlist first group at Time 3 immediately after their coaching.

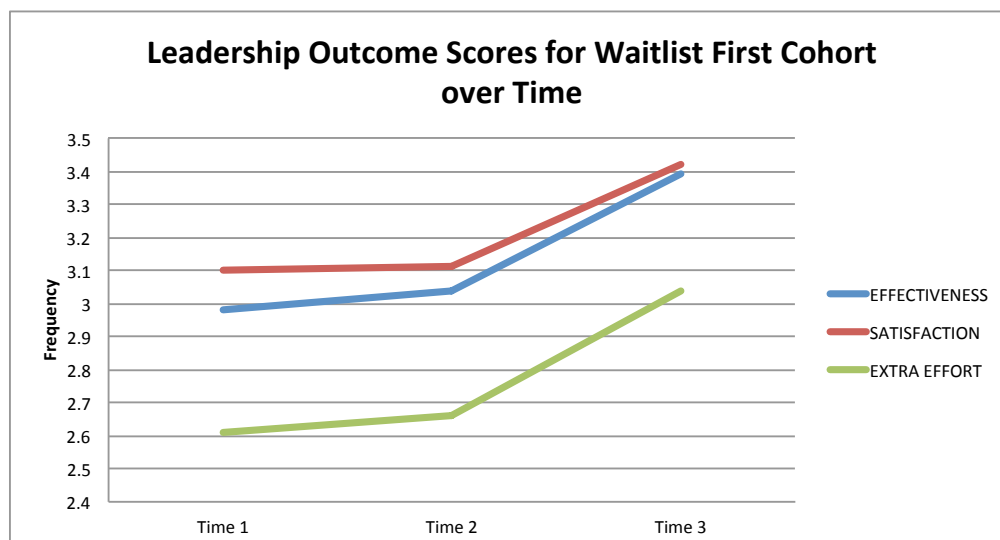


Figure 6. Longitudinal changes in MLQ Leadership outcomes in Waitlist first Cohort over Time (Scores 0=not at all to 4= Frequently if not always).

Hypothesis 3: Changes in Transformational Leadership Scores by Rater Level

The second component of this hypothesis was that changes in transformational leadership would be observed beyond the level of self-report. Consequently a further analysis by level of rater was conducted to see who observes the changes in participant leadership behaviour and whether the organisational level of the observing rater is a significant factor in observing changes in leadership behaviour.

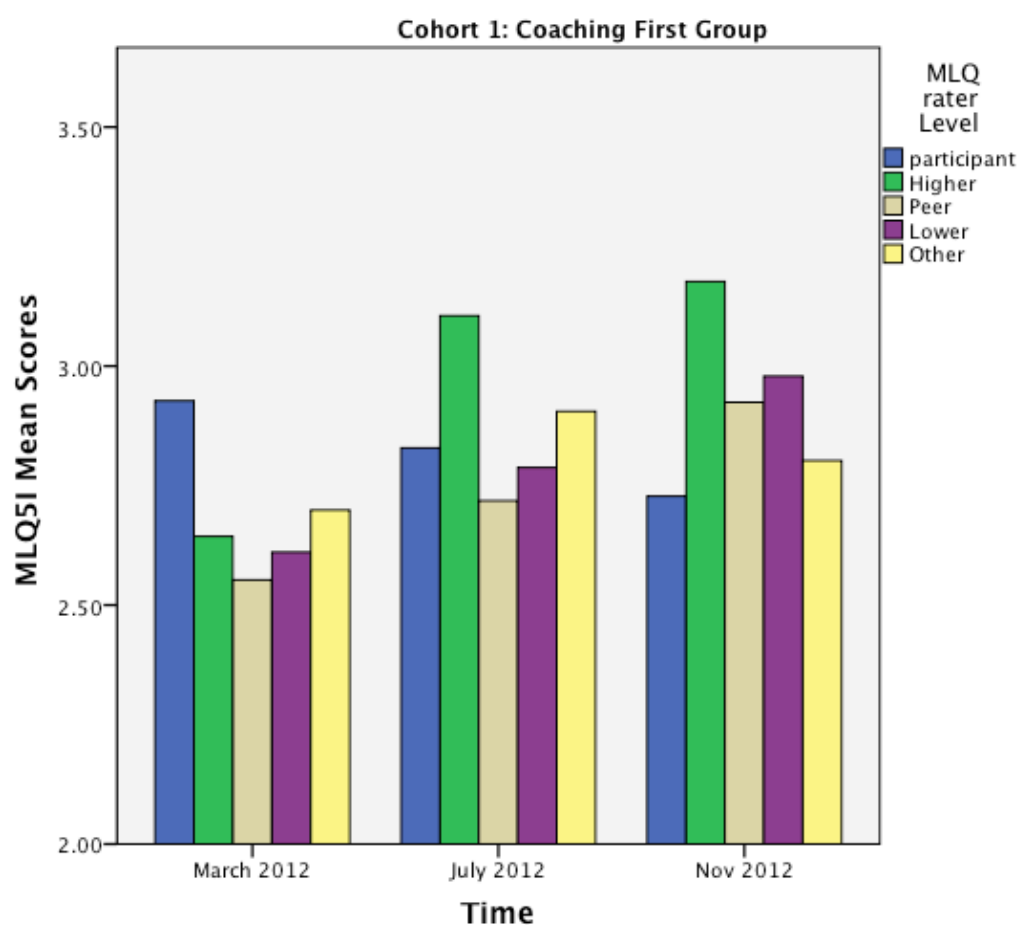


Figure 7. Mean MLQ Transformational Leadership scores by rater levels over time for Cohort 1

Figure 7 shows that C1 participants began with a significantly higher rating than all other groups. This discrepancy then disappeared at time 2 possibly as a function of increased awareness of the discrepancy during the feedback process. This may explain why the participant scores have come down after coaching while all other raters level scores have come up. This elevated self-rating was only apparent in C1 and was not apparent in C2. Receiving the feedback at T1, that all other raters view their MLQ scores at a lower level, appears to have driven down the subsequent MLQ self-ratings even during the coaching process where all other rater levels are reporting an increase in transformational leadership behaviour. The other most notable trend is that the line manager appears to be most appreciative of positive change in MLQ scores over time.

Figure 8 shows that in contrast to the C1, C2 began with participant MLQ ratings much more aligned to all other raters. Their ratings do not visibly change between T1 and T2 as they have not yet had the MLQ feedback that is embedded in the coaching. At time 3 after the completion of the coaching, their MLQ scores are significantly higher as rated by all raters. Again the trend for the line manager (the green bar) to perceive the largest positive change in the transformational leadership ratings is apparent.

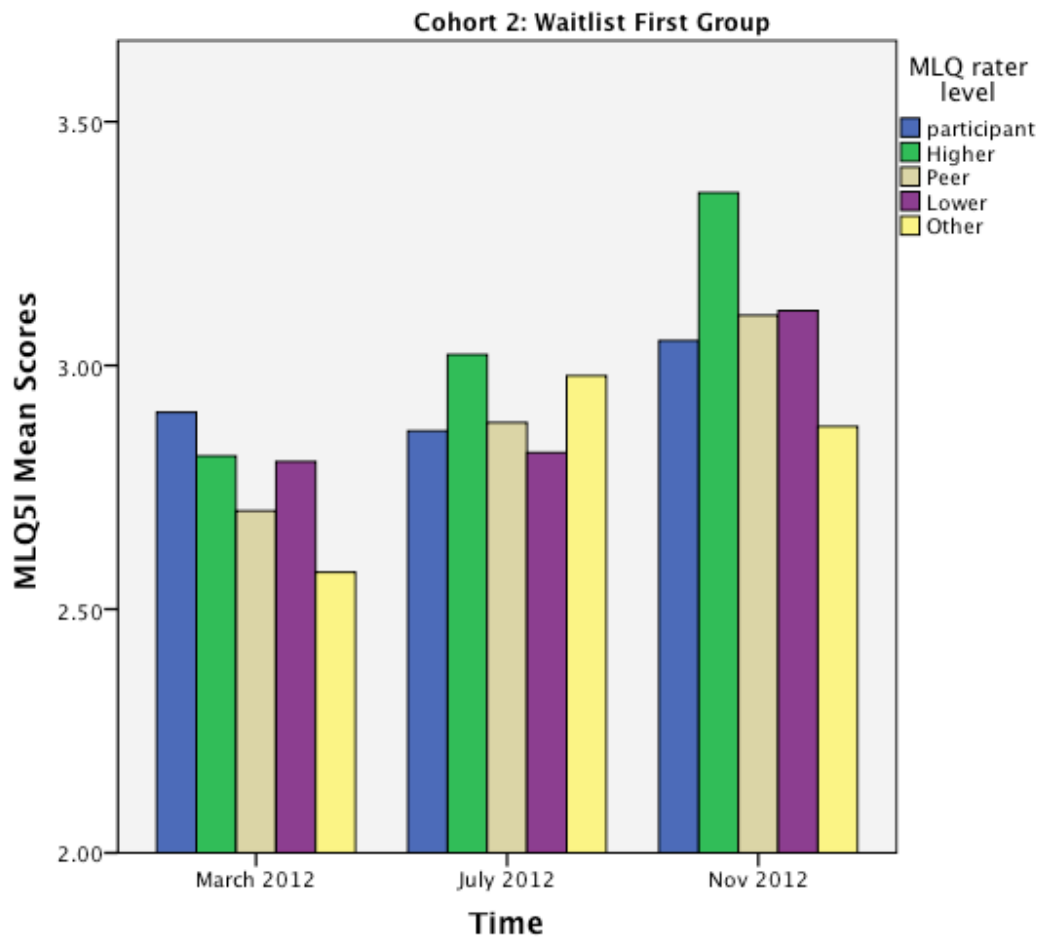


Figure 8. Mean MLQ Transformational Leadership scores by rater levels over time for Cohort 2

Table 9 clearly illustrates that in both cohorts the greatest effect size was achieved by the higher level. This suggests that those above the participant in the organisation were seeing the greatest change in the participants in terms of transformational leadership behaviour after their leadership coaching. It is interesting to note that there were no significant changes over time in the participants own perceptions of their transformational leadership behaviour although there was a positive non-significant trend in C2.

Table 9

Changes in Mean Transformational MLQ rater Scores Cohort 1 and 2 across Time 1 and 3

	Time 1		Time 3					
MLQ Rater	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>Partial</i>
level								η^2
Cohort 1 Coaching First								
Self	2.92	0.37	2.72	0.41	0.712	1,34	.498	.040
Higher	2.64	0.72	3.17	0.60	3.201	1,43	.050	.130
Peer	2.55	0.66	2.92	0.63	3.023	1,111	.053	.052
Lower	2.61	0.75	2.97	0.48	3.385	1,137	.037	.047
Other	2.69	0.94	2.80	0.61	0.165	1,22	.849	.015
Cohort 2 Waitlist First								
Self	2.90	0.46	3.05	0.46	0.614	1,45	.546	.027
Higher	2.81	0.55	3.35	0.54	3.950	1,53	.025	.130
Peer	2.70	0.62	3.10	0.47	6.067	1,151	.003	.074
Lower	2.80	0.78	3.11	0.54	3.036	1,180	.050	.033
Other	2.57	0.93	2.87		0.518	1,16	.606	.061

Note. Within Group Comparison of MLQ5I means between Waitlist first group and Coaching first group at Time 1 & Time 3 by rater level. Higher = line manger and lower = direct reports.

Hypothesis 4a: The Impact of strength based leadership coaching on coachee variables: coaching and developmental readiness and core self-evaluations.

Change and developmental readiness and core self-evaluations can be both predictor and outcome variables in this study. To investigate the impact of strength based leadership coaching on these variables, an ANOVA was conducted to look at change over time. There were no significant differences in these variables between the two cohorts at T1. Table 10 shows the means and standard deviations for BCRS, DRS and CSES over time.

There was no significant change in developmental readiness for C1 between T1 and T2 after they received the leadership coaching. However C2 did significantly drop on DR during the same period, ($F(1, 28) = 10.48, p = .003$). Both Cohorts then increased in developmental readiness from T2 to T3, (C1 $F(1, 23) = 7.65, p = .011$; C2 $F(1, 23) = 21.64, p > .000$). In terms of the brief coaching readiness scale (BCRS) there was a significant decline in readiness for C2 between T1 and T2, ($F(1, 28) = 6.32, p = .018$) while C1 experienced a small non-significant increase over the same time period. Between Time 2 and 3, C2 experienced a significant increase in coaching readiness after the leadership coaching, ($F(1, 23) = 16.90, p > .000$). For core self-evaluations (CSES) only C1 experienced a significant increase between T1 and T2, ($F(1, 26) = 5.65, p = .025$). Both cohorts increased in core self-evaluations from T2 to T3, but the differences were non-significant.

Table 10

Means and Standard Deviations for developmental readiness, coaching readiness and core self-evaluations at three Time points

	Time 1				Time 2				Time 3			
	C1		C2		C1		C2		C1		C2	
	(N=13)		(N=17)		(N=13)		(N=17)		(N=11)		(N=14)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
DRS	3.81	0.33	3.79	0.38	3.79	0.38	3.54**	0.36	3.96**	0.39	3.90**	0.33
BCRS	75.56	8.79	74.50	8.73	78.39	8.71	69.16*	11.07	81.18	9.31	80.69**	13.68
CSES	3.59	0.48	3.54	0.36	3.78*	0.37	3.49	0.48	4.00	0.86	3.76	0.42

Note. Within Group Comparison of means between Coaching First Group (C1) and Waitlist first group (C2) at Time 1, Time 2 & Time 3. DRS= developmental readiness scale, BCRS= brief coaching readiness scale, CSES= core self-evaluation scale.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.005$.

Hypothesis 4b: The ability of change and developmental readiness to predict subsequent change in transformational leadership.

Hypothesis 4 predicted that elements of coachee capability, namely readiness for change and developmental readiness, would predict subsequent change on the participants' transformational leadership scores. Regression analysis was used to investigate whether scores on change and developmental readiness at T1 could predict transformational leadership scores at T3. Both cohorts were combined for this analysis. The regression analysis was calculated in 2 ways. Firstly MLQ5IT3 mean was entered as the dependent variable and MLQ5IT1 as the independent variable followed by the developmental readiness and readiness for change variables.

Secondly a change statistic was calculated $MLQ5IChange = (MLQ5IT3 - MLQ5IT1)$ and the change variable was used as the dependent variable. The results showed that neither method resulted in any significant prediction by developmental or change readiness of MLQ transformational leadership scores at Time 3.

Table 11

The Unstandardised and Standardised Regression Coefficients for DRS, BCRS and CSES as predictors of final MLQ5IT3 Scores

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>p</i>
DRMeanT1	.064	.146	.084	.664
BCRSMeanT1	.006	.007	.187	.412
CSESMeanT1	.065	.098	.112	.515

Note. DRS= developmental readiness scale, BCRS= brief coaching readiness scale, CSES= core self-evaluation scale.

Hypothesis 5: Leadership change as a Function of adherence to strengths protocol

Hypothesis 5 predicted that those who adhere more closely to the strength-based methodology would show greater change in their transformational leadership scores. This hypothesis attempts to test the active ingredients of leadership coaching and to establish that the focus on strengths is a mediator or moderator of positive leadership change. In order to test this hypothesis, two indices of adherence were calculated. Firstly, each coach was asked to complete a short questionnaire (Appendix G) indicating how much they and the coachee had adhered to the strength-based approach during the coaching process. Secondly the participant manuals were scored according to how much of the strength based criteria had been completed, (See

Appendix H for scoring criteria). Thus the perspective of both coach and coachee were used to measure protocol and manual adherence respectively. Analysis was by way of linear regression analysis. Table 12 shows the results.

Table 12

The Unstandardised and Standardised Regression Coefficients for Manual Adherence and Coach adherence to the Strengths Protocol as predictors of final MLQ5IT3 Score

Variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>p</i>
Manual Adherence	.004	.002	.387	.026
Coach Adherence	.017	.007	.415	.018

The data in table 12 indicate that both Manual Adherence and Coach adherence to the strength-based protocol are significant predictors of final transformational leadership scores at Time 3. This suggests that adherence to the strengths based component of the leadership coaching played a significant role in increasing the transformational leadership scores of participants. Thus for each change in the SD of the predictor variables of manual and coach adherence, 39% and 41% change would be expected in the criterion variable, that is final transformational leadership scores. Given that only the unique variance explained by the predictor is used in the significance calculation, this is likely to be an underestimate.

Analysis of emergent variables during the research

Several trends in the data emerged during the course of the analysis that were not part of the original hypotheses but nonetheless, provided interesting propositions to explore further. Coach capability as a variable emerged as a contender for further investigation despite attempts to hold this variable relatively constant by selecting coaches with similar experience and background (almost all coaches came pre-accredited from a local business school). Despite this, the effects sizes or magnitude of transformational leadership changes in the subgroup of participants coached by individual coaches, varied significantly (from .006 to .109 partial eta squared). Of course this does not just reflect the coach's capability but also picks up on coachees capacity for change. However when the individual coach was added as a covariate into an analysis of variance, it was barely significant in affecting the average transformational leadership score over time, $F(1,789) = 4.043, p = 0.045$, partial eta squared = 0.05.

Discussion

In this study, the effects of strength-based leadership coaching on transformational leadership were explored using a quasi-experimental between-subjects controlled design. It is a major strength of the study that it received almost total participation from the top two layers of management within the participating organisation. In the first instance, a controlled experimental design was utilised to see if leaders in the coaching first Cohort (C1) who received strength based executive coaching first, received higher ratings in transformational leadership than leaders in Cohort 2 who acted as their control group. At the midway point, the 2 groups swapped roles and the second cohort (waitlist first) received their leadership coaching while the first group was monitored to see if their gains were maintained at follow up. The study also monitored aspects of coachee readiness at all three time points to see if readiness for change and development at Time 1 could predicted positive changes in transformational leadership at Time 3. The results clearly demonstrated a significant increase in the other-rater feedback on transformational leadership behaviours after strength-based executive coaching with an effect size more than three times greater in the intervention group versus the control group and the midpoint of the study. Subsequently, both groups significantly increased on transformational leadership between Time 2 and Time 3 and demonstrated very similar effect sizes. This may be a function of Cohort approaching a ceiling in the scoring as they began the study with higher scores and still managed significant differences. It may also be a function of Cohort 1 maintaining and enhancing the gains they made after coaching through the continued application of skills and techniques acquired through the coaching process.

It is also apparent that other elements of the full range leadership model changed as a function of the coaching process. In cohort 1, participants significantly increased their transactional leadership after their coaching intervention and significantly reduced their management by exception and laissez faire styles of leadership. Cohort 1 also significantly increased their leadership outcomes indicating that others perceived them to be more effective, reported greater satisfaction with their leadership and were willing to provide extra discretionary effort as a consequence. Cohort 2 showed a somewhat different pattern after receiving their coaching intervention. There was no significant increase in their levels of transactional leadership but they did significantly reduce their levels of laissez-faire leadership style and demonstrated significant increases on the three outcomes of leadership, effectiveness, satisfaction and extra effort. Thus it is apparent that leadership coaching reduces the dysfunctional elements of leadership as well as enhances the more functional elements by increasing both transactional and transformational leadership behaviours.

Despite some turnover of raters during the study, there was no significant difference on the ratings of transformational leadership from original and new raters. Rater turnover is a rarely reported issue in the literature and yet it is often assumed that rater consistency is key to successfully and reliably mapping changes in leadership behaviour over time (Grant et al., 2010). The results in this study suggest that leader behaviour is consistent, independent of individual raters and that moderate turnover in raters over time does not adversely impact the reliability of the mean ratings. This represents important confirmation of the validity of a multi-rater methodology in assessing outcomes in executive coaching.

However, there were significant differences in how raters at different levels viewed the changes in coachee leadership behaviour over time. There were also some between cohort differences of note that are worth exploring. Cohort 1 (Coaching first) began with a higher self-rating compared with their manager, peers, direct reports and other raters. Interestingly the self-ratings of transformational leadership behaviour came down after the coaching whilst all other levels of raters increased their ratings. This was especially apparent in the line manager category. There is related evidence to suggest that 360 feedback can have the effect of lowering subsequent levels of self-rating as the participant's awareness is raised about how others view them but only if participants initially overrate their leadership abilities (Atwater, Waldman, Atwater, & Cartier, 2000). Other researchers have confirmed that when individuals over-rate their leadership behaviour, subsequent ratings can decrease as a function of greater insight and feedback (Luthans et al., 2003). It is of note that had this study used self-assessment only as many coaching studies do, there would have been no significant differences in transformational leadership. The other finding of note in Cohort 1 was that the change in rater's responses over time was most apparent at the higher level. Both peers and direct reports saw significant positive changes over time in the levels of participant transformational leadership but the effect size was lower than in the higher level. This is an unusual finding as previous research has suggested that direct reports are the most sensitive to change both for their proximity to the participant and because their data is based on multiple rather than single observations (Atkins & Wood, 2002).

The second cohort (waitlist first) did not have such an obvious discrepancy between self and other raters on the MLQ at Time 1. Their self-ratings on transformational leadership remained very consistent between time one and two while

they were acting as the control group for Cohort 1. After the coaching had been received at time 3, their self-ratings did increase in line with all other levels rating their behaviour apart from their line manager. Again in Cohort 2, the line manager ratings increased beyond all other levels of raters. Given that both Cohorts demonstrated that the line manager raters saw the greatest amount of change over time, this seems to be a reliable finding. As almost all the managers were also participants in the coaching research, they could be especially attuned to the type of changes in transformational leadership behaviour that the participants were being rated on. Given that self-ratings are prone to a variety of self-serving biases that can both promote an inflated sense of self-performance and restrict access to corrective feedback (Dunning et al., 2003), this further emphasises the importance of the trends in the other rater data.

In terms of coachee variables, developmental readiness did increase over the total timeline of the study but not immediately after the coaching intervention. In terms of coaching readiness, only cohort 2 experienced a significant increase after their coaching intervention but that was partly a function of their decline between Time 1 and Time 2. For cohort 1 core self-evaluations did increase after the coaching intervention but this increase was non-significant for cohort 2. However, none of the three coachee variables at Time 1 were significant predictors of transformational leadership scores at time 3. This result did not support the hypothesis that identifying key coachee variables prior to coaching could predict who would benefit most from a leadership coaching intervention. This is a surprising finding given that developmental readiness seeks to identify the ability and motivation to develop as a leader and suggests either that the psychometric construction may not have had sufficient reliability and validity to appropriately assess and track the underlying

construct or the construct itself is not predictive of who benefits from leadership coaching.

Finally the importance of the strength-based methodology in mediating increases in transformational leadership was assessed. Both perspectives of methodological adherence, that is manual and coach adherence, showed a significantly positive prediction of transformational leadership scores at time 3. This confirms that adherence to a strength-based protocol predicts leadership performance but it cannot tell us whether a strength-based approach is superior to other structured methodologies or indeed which elements of the strength based protocol (strengths identification, goal setting, strengths development etc.). This results sits at the nexus of calls for more randomized controlled trials to conclusively demonstrate the effectiveness of coaching (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011) versus suggestions that effectiveness has been sufficiently demonstrated and it is now time to compare conditions and methodologies to find the optimum blend of critical components of effective coaching (De Haan & Duckworth, 2013). However the comparative methodologies approach currently tends to focus on coach and coachee variables rather than theoretical distinctions due to the adoption of the common factors approach. This asserts that there are common factors like the quality of the coaching relationship between coach and coachee that are much more predictive of outcomes than theoretical orientation. This contentious concept originally derived from psychotherapy outcome studies, has been adopted somewhat uncritically into the coaching research literature and has significant implications for the direction of coaching research especially in the delineation and testing of different coaching methodologies (MacKie, 2007).

Theoretical Implications

A number of theoretical implications can be derived from the present study. In terms of transformational leadership and the full range leadership model, this research supports the augmentation effect (Bass, Avolio, Jung & Berson, 2003) that transformational leadership amplifies transactional leadership or at least is correlated with it. This is important empirical support for a perspective that sees these two elements of leadership as complimentary rather than competing and that the management by exception and laissez faire elements are inversely related to transformational and transactional elements of the model. The results also provide indirect support for the integrity of the five elements of transformational leadership in that all elements increase after coaching but they did so differentially with the biggest impact on building trust, encouraging innovation and coaching others. Inspiring others in particular seems to demonstrate less malleability than the other dimensions. Finally, this data confirms the trainability of transformational leadership (Kelloway & Barling, 2000; Walumba & Wernsing, 2013) supporting the notion that significant elements of leadership are an acquired behaviour that can be developed with the right context, method and opportunity.

In terms of the limited reliability of self-report (Dunning et al., 2003) one of the key observations on the self-ratings of the MLQ scores was that those participants who over-estimated their leadership scores at the start of the leadership coaching when compared to all others, were subsequently likely to reduce their self-assessments even as the scores of others raters rose. This is an important finding as it suggests the changes in self-assessment as a result of increasing self-awareness may override the positive changes achieved as a function of the leadership development and coaching. It also emphasizes the importance of other ratings in leadership

assessment, as that is where the majority of the change was perceived in this study. The results also confirm that managers can demonstrate significant changes in their perceptions of the leadership capability of their reports follow a coaching intervention. Heslin and VandeWalle (2008) found these observations to be predicated on the implicit assumptions managers had about the malleability of leadership attributes. The results do suggest that this cohort of managers had a growth mindset and believed in and were receptive to, indicators of positive leadership behavioural change. These findings together confirm the crucial importance of measuring change beyond the level of self-report in leadership development research and support the utilization of the multi-rater methodology in assessing leadership outcomes.

Practical Implications

This study has a number of practical implications for both researchers and practitioners in the leadership coaching arena. Firstly, it supports the notion that leadership can be significantly enhanced in a relatively short period of time through a structured multi-rater feedback and executive coaching process (Kelloway & Barling, 2000). Secondly it supports the utility of the full range leadership model (FRLM) as a sensitive and discriminating mechanism for tracking changes in perceived leadership effectiveness over time. This gives executive coaching a reliable and valid outcome criterion that can be used both to demonstrate increasing leadership expertise and connect with performance criterion that may be more challenging to measure and attribute to individual performance. This utilization of multi-rater feedback that is grounded in leadership theory is a critical extension of the coaching outcomes typically assessed and addresses the overreliance of self-reports measures in assessing leadership coaching outcomes (Grant et al., 2010).

The data does not yet support the use of developmental readiness or coaching readiness as models to prescreen potential coaching candidates and identify who will benefit most from a leadership coaching intervention. Whilst there is no doubt that individual differences in readiness for change in the coachee play a role in determining the effectiveness or otherwise of the intervention, the exact nature of these key predictive coachee variables remains a focus for future research. There is more support for the utilization of core self-evaluations in the assessment of coaching outcomes in that these individual variables do increase as a function of leadership coaching but they are not apparently predictive of who will benefit from a coaching intervention.

In terms of gathering objective outcome data to demonstrate coaching effectiveness, this study supports the use of the multi-rater methodology in providing feedback on behavioural change from a variety of levels with the organization. This study has also shown that minor rater turnover did not influence the results in any significant way suggesting that behaviours were consistently observed, independent of raters. This is an important finding as many research approaches do not employ a multi-rater methodology and rely of self-report instead, partly due to the challenge of maintaining rater consistency over time (Grant et al., 2010).

Finally the results do support the notion that a structured methodology is beneficial to the leadership coaching process. There was a strong predictive effect of methodological adherence to final changes in leadership behaviour. As this methodology was primarily focused around the identification and development of strengths and talents, it is reasonable to assume in this case that the strength-based methodological adherence was a significant moderator of the improvement in transformational leadership. However until this is contrasted with another equally

coherent and structured methodology in a between subjects design, the relative efficacy of the strengths based component will be unknown.

Limitations of the Study

The study employed a quasi-experimental between-subjects design that utilized a control group to assess the impact of a leadership coaching intervention on transformational leadership behaviours. It was not possible to randomly assign subjects to each cohort as the availability of participants as the logistical needs of the organization took precedence. Despite this non-randomisation however, there was no significant difference between the two cohorts at Time 1 suggesting the allocation of participants did not unduly influence the study. However the between subjects design only allowed the first Cohort to be fully controlled as at Time 2 when the two cohorts crossed over, cohort one had already had the intervention and could no longer function as an independent control group. Ideally a third group would have been utilised as a control group throughout the study and only offered the intervention at the end of the research process. However the number of eligible participants and the requirements of the organization to urgently offer leadership development to their senior managers prevented this.

Secondly, the utilization of only one methodology prevented conclusions being drawn about the differential effectiveness of two contrasting interventions. Ideally the strength-based methodology would have been contrasted with another equally coherent methodology to delineate the relative efficacy of the specific factors in the intervention. Solution focused approaches (Spence et al., 2008) or interventions based on acceptance and commitment theory (Bond & Hayes, 2006) could offer such comparisons. This would also allow further delineation of the relative importance of

common versus specific factors in leadership coaching outcomes (De Haan & Duckworth, 2013)

Finally, using transformational leadership as the dependent variable is only one possible measure of leadership effectiveness. However it is the most researched theory over the last 30 years and has established significant correlations between increases in transformational leadership and objective performance outcomes including financial performance, job satisfaction, follower satisfaction and organisational commitment (Avolio, 2011). The concept of transformational leadership has recently been extended with the development of a model of authentic leadership (Avolio & Gardner, 2005). Authenticity was added to differentiate between socialized and pseudo transformational leaders (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). However using authenticity as the dependent variable would not have given the breadth of change that the full range leadership models provides and the connection between authenticity and performance is yet to be empirically established. While the emphasis on “heroic” leadership within the transformational leadership model has been criticised (Alimo-Metcalfe et al., 2008) it still remains one of the most validated and researched tools available.

Further Research

This study embraced a positivist, nomothetic and inductive approach to the investigation of the effectiveness of leadership coaching as a means to enhance transformational leadership behaviour. There are significant assumptions in such an approach that need to be made explicit. A core assumption is that there is sufficient communality amongst participants that warrants a common methodology and assessment process. Such assumptions promote the use of cross-research comparisons but may ignore or omit the more idiographic elements of individual coachee

characteristics. Coaching research is proceeding down both idiographic and nomothetic approaches and clearly both are required to fully comprehend the process of effective coaching. The exact point of transition from one approach to the other and how the two interact is the cause of some healthy tension within the profession (De Haan & Duckworth, 2013).

In addition this research highlights the need for more comparative coaching research where different theoretical methodologies are compared in a between-subjects design. Contrasting different theory based methodologies would provide comparative data on the relative effectiveness of coaching models primarily focused around strengths, solutions or other key potential mediators of leadership effectiveness. Finally, the concepts of change and developmental readiness require further investigation. The underlying constructs require to be operationalized into reliable and valid psychometrics so that their predictive utility can be formally tested in a leadership coaching context.

Conclusion

This research is one of the first controlled studies using a between subjects design to show significant changes in transformational leadership behaviour following workplace executive coaching, that are perceived beyond the level of self-report. It confirms the trainability of transformational leadership and emphasizes the efficacy of individual executive coaching as an effective leadership development methodology. This research sits in the context of promoting a more balanced and constructive perspective on positive leadership development that supports the identification and development of strengths as a core element in developing leadership capability. Secondly it supports the notion that methodology matters and that a structured and systematic approach to the provision of executive coaching significantly predicts the

enhancement of leadership behaviours. There is as yet inconclusive evidence for the moderating influence of key coachee variables including developmental and coaching readiness. Further research is required to help identify both the key individual variables that predict positive outcomes in leadership development and identify the relative importance of common versus specific factors in leadership coaching methodology. This will help refine and enhance what are already effectiveness mechanisms for developing leaders capable of navigating the complexity of contemporary organisations.

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Service Evaluation of Oxfam Leadership Coaching Program

May 2013

Executive Summary and recommendations

This evaluation survey was conducted following a leadership coaching program in which 37 senior leaders and managers participated. The survey aimed to examine the impact of the leadership coaching program in terms of both formative evaluation or how the program was delivered and summative evaluation or the broader impact of the program. A total of 105/250 individuals responded to the survey giving a response rate of 42%. Quantitative and qualitative analysis showed that respondents were extremely positive about the relevance of the program to developing leaders at Oxfam and the level of the intervention. In terms of effective elements of the program, the coaching relationship received the highest scoring responses. Respondents reported perceiving significant positive change at the individual, team and organisational level and these changes were attributed to the coaching program. For changes at the individual and team level, there was a significant trend for participants and raters to perceive greater changes than other employees. This trend was also apparent when the results were analysed by level with those higher in the organisation perceiving the greatest change. A conservative calculation on the return on the investment (ROI) gave a figure of 856%. Specific recommendations from the program in relation to how the program could be run more effectively and how the leadership coaching could be more effectively integrated into the organisation are outlined below.

Recommendations

- 1) Participants need more time to reflect and prepare for leadership coaching sessions. This was a common experience across the coaching and inevitably restricted the effectiveness of the coaching program. This should be built in to the design of future programs.
- 2) Participants also suggested that there were significant levels of personal stress around that may have impeded the coaching process. A separate intervention to address this would allow participants more focus on their leadership development.
- 3) Respondents suggested that more could be done to integrate the coaching into the existing learning and development framework. This would facilitate skills transfer and could be done in the form of group follow up and peer coaching groups.
- 4) It was apparent that not everyone knew who was involved in the coaching program or what the ultimate goals of the program were. It is worth considering what else could have been communicated to the broader organisation about the leadership coaching program including identifying participants where they provide their consent to do so.
- 5) There was some constructive feedback for the leadership team about how they supported the program and in particular, their demonstration of a growth mindset that displays a belief in the capacity for change. Respondents saw an opportunity for the leadership to focus more on the strengths of individuals and link that to their development.

- 6) Respondents, who were not eligible for the program due to their level in the organisation, nonetheless expressed an interest in participating in future programs. This suggests an appetite for leadership development at all levels in the organisation and perhaps the development of specific programs for frontline, high potential and emerging leaders for example.
- 7) There were also two important results in terms of perceived change. Participants were seen as more effective in both building sustainable change and empowering others as a result of the leadership coaching program. This suggests an increase in the organisational capability of these two key leadership competencies. There is an opportunity here for the organisation to capitalize on this improvement by providing opportunities to participants in those areas.

Introduction

Evaluating the impact of a leadership coaching program offers the opportunity to look beyond the immediate target of enhancing leadership behaviour to include both how the program was received by the client organisation and where the program has impacted throughout that organisation. As the coaching market matures, there has been increasing interest on calculating the overall effectiveness and return on investment (ROI) of executive coaching (Grant, 2012). However, evaluating the effectiveness of leadership coaching is a challenging and complex process. Firstly there is simply no consensus on what should be evaluated or measured after leadership coaching. The potential domains of measurement are vast (Lee, 2005) and the idiographic nature of coaching potentially precludes any domain specificity in outcome assessment. Secondly it is unclear whom to ask in terms of evaluating the effectiveness of a leadership coaching program. There are multiple stakeholders in each coaching engagement including the coach, coachee, sponsor, direct reports and peers of the coachee. Most evaluations focus on the participants and their responses but self-report can be an unreliable indicator of change (Kruger & Dunning, 1999). Occasionally research into evaluation employs a multi-rater methodology where people at different levels in the organisation comment on individual change over time. However this approach gives data primarily on specific leadership behaviours and not on the broader impact on the organisation. Finally there is the question of timing. Evaluating too soon after the intervention risks assessing before any impact has rippled out from the coaching process but assessing too late may mean respondents could struggle to recall the participant's behavior prior to the intervention. Reactions to the leadership program can be assessed immediately but the organisational and

business impact may take time to work its way through the various levels of evaluation (MacKie, 2007).

The evaluation of training interventions in organisations has traditionally been dominated by the Kirkpatrick model that suggested change could be monitored and evaluated at four discrete stages or levels (Kirkpatrick, 1959,1977). Level 1 captured the reaction of the participant to the program and usually involved ratings of client satisfaction. Level 2 involved assessing what the participant learned from the training program. This attempted to measure changes in specific knowledge, skills or attitudes that could be attributed to the program. Level 3 focused on behavioural change and improved job performance. Finally, Level 4 related the results of the training program to the attainment of organisational objectives. Training models of evaluation have evolved since Kirkpatrick first suggested his criteria and additional levels looking specifically at ROI have been added (Hamblin, 1974). However, these stage models have not converged on a single outcome criterion, again due to the breadth of domains that are targeted under the training process. The benefits of the Kirkpatrick model are that it offers a framework for the evaluation to occur within and emphasizes that subjective assessment alone is insufficient for effective evaluation. Kirkpatrick has been criticised for not meeting the traditional criteria of a scientific model (Holton, 1996) namely definition of constructs, articulating assumptions about their relationships, and offering propositions, hypotheses and predictions. Holton instead suggested that Kirkpatrick's four-stage process be viewed as a "taxonomy of outcomes". Other researchers have also built on the four-stage foundation with Kraiger, Ford and Salas (1993) suggesting that Level 2 could be expanded to differentiate between knowledge skills and attitudes.

Another crucial debate that has influenced the evaluation of training and coaching literature is that of common versus specific factors (McKenna & Davies, 2009). The common factors position asserts that there are common processes at play across coaching engagements and that these alone can form the basis of effective evaluation. Common factors are seen as mainly occurring in the coaching relationship and involve qualities like empathy, rapport and positive regard. These are hypothesized to be significantly more influential than any specific technique and therefore tend to minimise the importance of specialist training in the coach (MacKie, 2007). The specific factors position reverses the relative importance placing the specific coaching technique as the key orchestrator of change and the relationship factors as necessary but not sufficient for sustained behavioural change. This debate and its consequences continue to influence contemporary research in the coaching profession (De Haan & Duckworth, 2013).

Evaluating leadership coaching presents some additional challenges as the idiographic nature of the coaching process potentially mitigates against a standardised evaluation methodology. Consequently two types of evaluation have emerged in the literature. Summative evaluation, which looks at the completed outcomes of the leadership intervention and formative evaluation, which are process orientated questions that focuses on program improvement (Ely et al, 2010). This is a useful distinction as it ensures that the method of delivery is evaluated alongside the traditional Kirkpatrick taxonomy. Ely et al (2010) suggest the summative evaluation framework can incorporate much of the Kirkpatrick taxonomy with Level one being expanded to include the client's perception of the coach's competence and their satisfaction with the client-coaching relationship. Level 2 is expanded to include self-awareness as well as increased flexibility. Level 3 remains focused on leadership

behaviours and is ideally incorporated into a pre and post coaching 360-degree feedback process. Finally Level 4 remains focused on results but includes the impact on peers, direct reports and other stakeholders as well as the total return on investment, (ROI).

In addition to the traditional summative process, Ely et al (2010) stress the need for a formative evaluation to improve the quality of the training intervention. This focuses on process rather than outcome criteria and helps to identify any barriers to attaining the coaching objectives. They include coachee expectations, the competence of the coach, the quality of the client-coach relationship and the coaching process itself. It also provides the coachee the opportunity to provide feedback on the elements of the process and method they found most effective. The coaching method can be divided into specific and non-specific factors depending on the preferences of the coachee and the theoretical orientation of the coach. Client variables can include both organisational and coachee factors given that the organisation provides the context in which the coaching will occur. It is unlikely that any coaching gains will transfer effectively if the host organisation is not supportive of the developmental activities.

Rationale and Aims

The aims of this evaluation were to provide some data on the broader impact of the leadership coaching program on the host organisation. Data on both formative and summative elements of evaluation were collected. This allowed options for program improvement to be collected and estimates of the broader organisational impact to be calculated.

The specific aims were to conduct;

1. Formative evaluation - collecting data on coach, coachee, program and organisational variables.
2. Summative evaluation - collecting data on individual, team and organisational impact.
3. Calculation the return on investment of the leadership coaching program
4. Analyse the responses by role in the program and level in the organisation.
5. Undertake some thematic analysis of the qualitative data and comments provided.

Method

Participants

A total of 105 individuals (39 males, 66 females) completed the survey out of 250 employees and coaches who were invited to respond giving a response rate of 42%. All respondents were either members of the client organisation or coaches who had provided the leadership coaching. The participant age bands ranged from under 30 years old to over 60 years old with the majority of respondents falling in the 30-39 years old category.

Measures

All respondents completed a bespoke evaluation survey created for the purposes of evaluating this leadership coaching program (The specific questions asked are outlined in tables 1-9). The survey was divided into nine major domains. The first domain looked at the delivery of the leadership program and was answered by all respondents, (eg. Would you recommend this program to others?). The next three domains included the coaching process (eg. Did the coach encourage your participation in setting the agenda?), effective components of the program (eg. The coaching relationship) and the coachees approach to coaching (eg reflecting on the contents of the coaching session). These sections were answered only by the coaching participants. The next section looked at the organisations approach to coaching (eg Does the organisation support your development in the workplace?) and was answered by all respondents. The next two sections looked at individual (eg. Did the participant display new leadership skills?) and team outcomes (eg. Did the participant motivate team members to contribute more to the team?) from the leadership coaching and were again answered by all respondents. The final two sections looked

at the impact of the leadership coaching on the client organisation's principles and approaches (eg. Change the ideas and beliefs which underpin poverty and injustice) and their change goals (eg. To enable and support our people effectively). There were also qualitative questions at the end that asked about the most and least effective elements of the program. All questions used a 5 point Likert rating scale measuring frequency from "not at all" to "almost always".

Procedure

Participants were sent an email inviting their participation in the evaluation process. The context of the survey was to assist in the evaluation of the leadership coaching program and to see where the program had had impact and where it might be improved. The survey was sent out two months after the end of the coaching program. Participation was voluntary and both anonymity and confidentiality were assured. Analysis was by way of descriptive statistics on each of the domains of the evaluation survey. It was also important to investigate how the evaluation of impact varied by both level and role in the program. The analyses are included where numbers permitted. Figure 1 shows a logic model of the evaluation process including program inputs, outputs and short, medium, and long-term program outcomes. The organisation also provided their own evaluation of the program (See Appendix H).

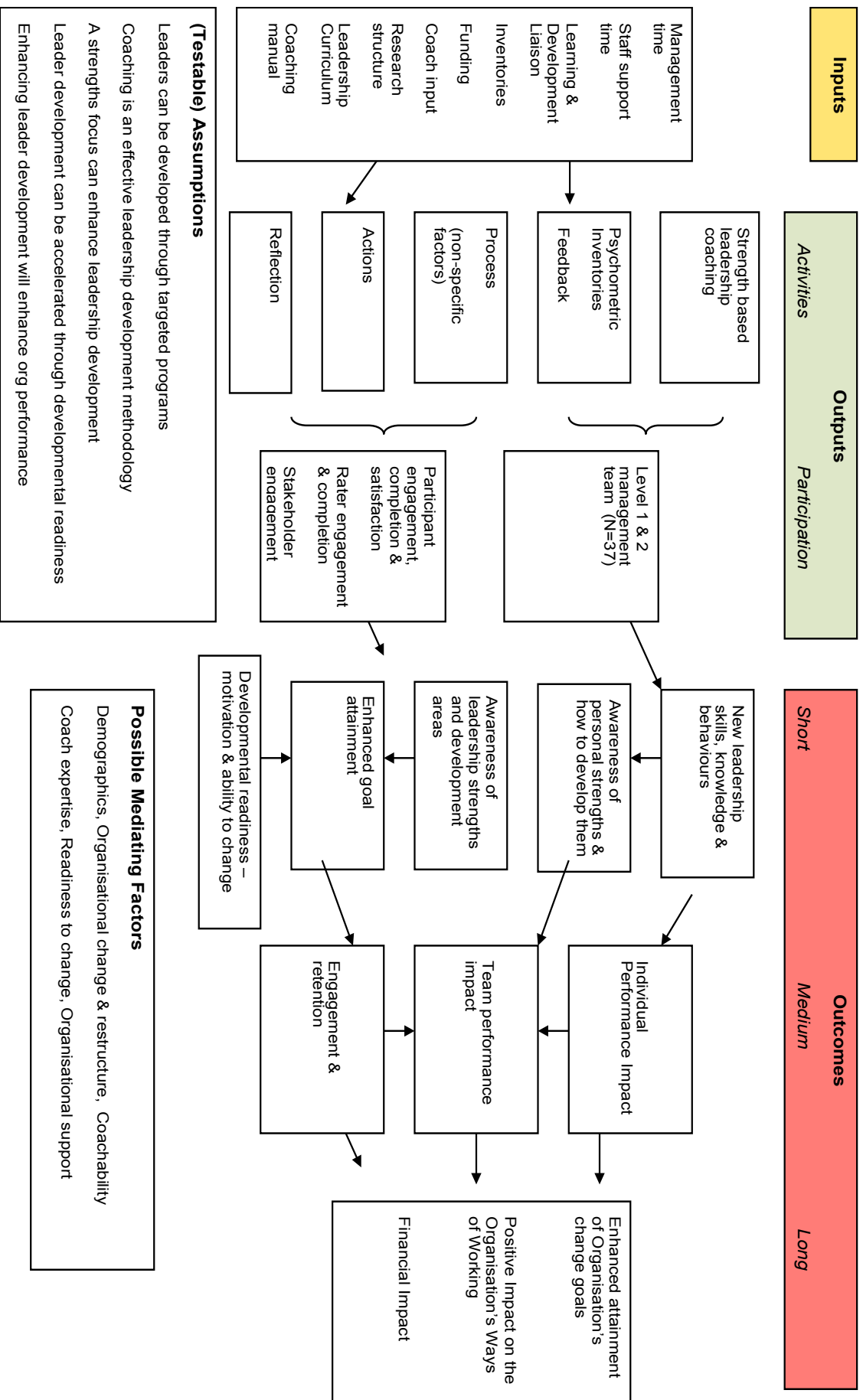


Figure 1 Logic Model of the Leadership Program Evaluation

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Role in organisation. Respondents were asked to report the level at which they worked in Oxfam from 1 (leadership team) to 5 (entry level employee). All coachees in the program came from band 1-2. Figure 2 illustrates the number of respondents in each category in the evaluation survey. The majority of respondents came from levels 3 and below. These could have been raters in the coaching process but not participants.

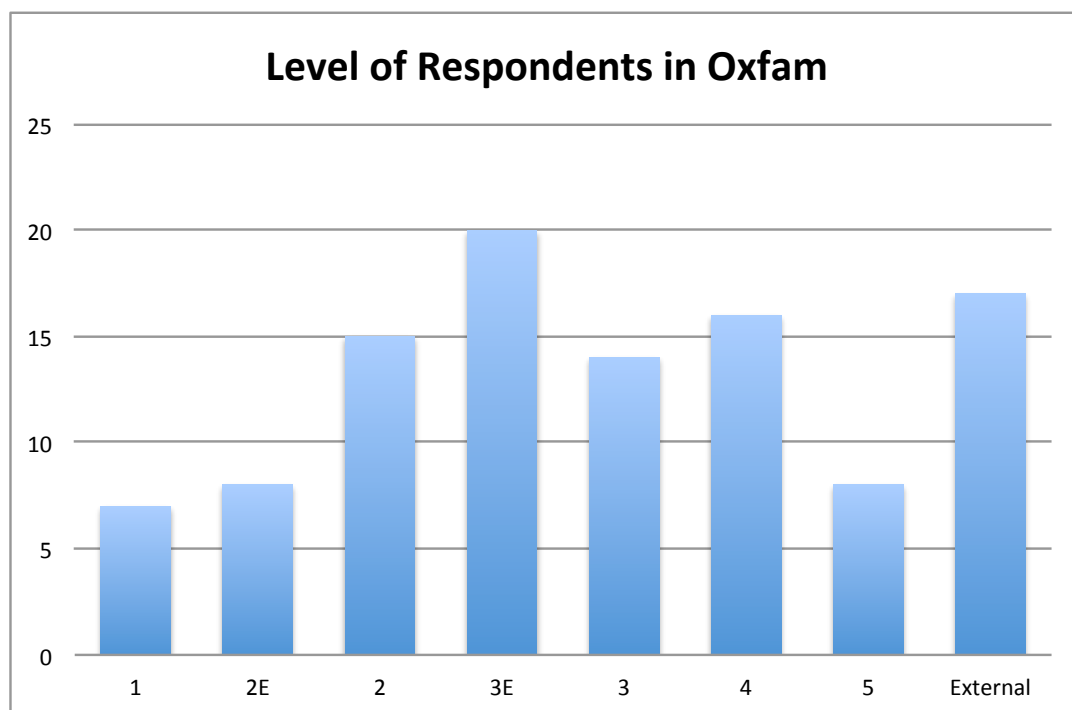


Figure 2: Number of survey respondents by Level in Oxfam

Role in program. In evaluating the effectiveness of the leadership program, it was important to see if perspectives differed as a function of the individual's role in the program. Employees were those who were neither coachees nor 360 raters. As the categories were mutually exclusive, Fig. 3 shows that many of the survey respondents

were neither participants nor raters but nonetheless had a view on the effectiveness of the leadership coaching.

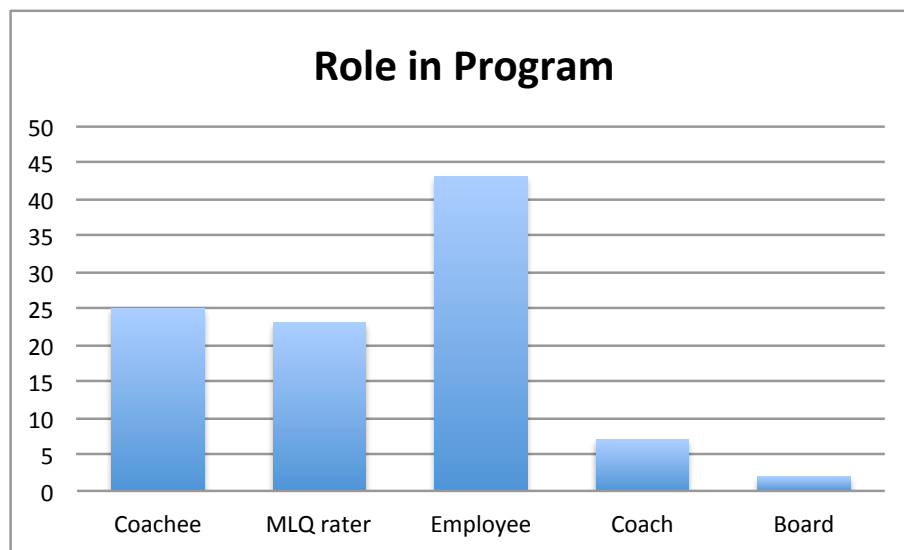


Figure 3. Number of Survey respondents by role in Program

It would seem reasonable to suppose for example that those closest to the program would report greater perceived change than those more distant. Figure 3 illustrates that the majority of respondents came from the employee category

Formative Evaluation

The delivery of the leadership program. The initial formative evaluation looked at how the delivery of the program had been received. Specifically respondents were asked if the intervention was targeted at the right level, if they would recommend the program and if the process was relevant to developing leadership capacity in their organisation. Table 1 shows the results from the coachees who participated in the program. Answers were given on a 5 point Likert scale from “not at all” to “almost always” suggesting participants were very supportive of the program delivery.

Table 1

Delivery of the Leadership Program

Program Delivery Questions	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Was the Program targeted at the right level?	24	3.95	0.62
Would you recommend the program to others?	24	4.20	0.83
Was the process relevant to developing leaders?	24	3.95	0.62

The Coaching Process. This section of the evaluation asked participants only about their experience of the process of leadership coaching. Questions were focused around participants' experience of the coach and the coaching process. Answers were again given on a 5-point Likert scale from "not at all" to "almost always".

Table 2

Coachee's descriptions of the coaching process

Coaching Process Question	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Time to understand needs & preferences	23	4.35	0.65
Time building rapport with you	23	4.39	0.50
Inspire confidence they could assist you	23	4.34	0.57
Engaged and Focused on your challenges	23	4.43	0.51
Understood your role & industry	23	3.83	0.83
Encouraged participation in setting agenda	23	4.48	0.51
Commitment to your development	23	4.47	0.51
Balanced research & coachee needs	23	4.26	0.54
Balance of challenge & support	23	4.39	0.58
Responsive to emergent issues	23	4.56	0.51
Hold accountable for actions	23	4.13	0.81
Review development plan/goals	23	4.22	0.79

From the above Table 2, it can be seen that the element of the coaching process that was most commonly experienced by the coachee was the coach's responsiveness to emergent issues. This is important given that this was conducted in the context of a research protocol with certain fixed parameters and suggests the coaches' demonstrated significant flexibility within the research parameters. The least experienced element of the process was the sense that the coach had a good understanding of the not-for-profit (NFP) sector.

Components of the leadership program. This section of the evaluation attempted to assess which aspects of the strength-based leadership coaching program the coachees found most effective. Again only coachees completed this element of the survey.

Table 3

Effective Components of the leadership program

Components of the Leadership Program	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
MLQ leadership 360 inventory feedback	23	4.00	0.67
Realise 2 Strengths inventory feedback	23	4.00	0.67
Coaching relationship	23	4.43	0.66
Reflective space pre and post sessions	23	3.74	0.68
The goal setting process	23	3.74	0.91
The strengths identification process	23	3.96	0.88
The strengths tracking process	23	3.56	0.79
Leveraging realized and unrealized strengths	23	3.82	0.77
Development planning process	23	3.61	0.84
Actions between sessions	23	3.87	0.76
Completing coaching manual	23	3.17	1.03

From Table 3 above, it can be seen that participants rated the coaching relationship as the most effective element of the process. The feedback from the various inventories was also rated highly. Coachees found the manual completion element the least effective element of the process and yet manual completion was a strong predictor of participant changes in leadership ratings after receiving coaching. Fig 4 illustrates the mean scores for each component.



Figure 4. Mean scores for components of the leadership coaching

The coachee's approach to coaching. This section of the evaluation attempted to assess how the coachee had engaged with the program. Given that coachee engagement is a crucial element of the leadership coaching process, questions focused on what qualities the coachee had displayed in the coaching process.

Table 4

Coachee qualities in the coaching process

Coachee Behaviour Question	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Actively choose to participate	23	4.30	0.70
Commit to the goals and actions agreed	23	4.35	0.57
Actively prepare for each session	23	3.56	0.89
Reflect on contents of each session	23	3.96	0.64
Confidence in making changes	23	3.78	0.60
Collaborate in setting agenda	23	4.04	0.56
Try out new strategies & approaches	23	3.96	0.64
Personal situation support coaching	23	3.39	0.84

From Table 4 above, it is apparent that coachees did actively choose to participate and commit to the goals agreed in the coaching process. However they struggled with finding time or motivation to actively prepare for the coaching session and clearly some of the participant's personal and social situations were not supportive of the coaching change process. This response would be consistent with the significant organisational change process that was underway in Oxfam during the time the leadership coaching took place. Figure 5 illustrates these trends.

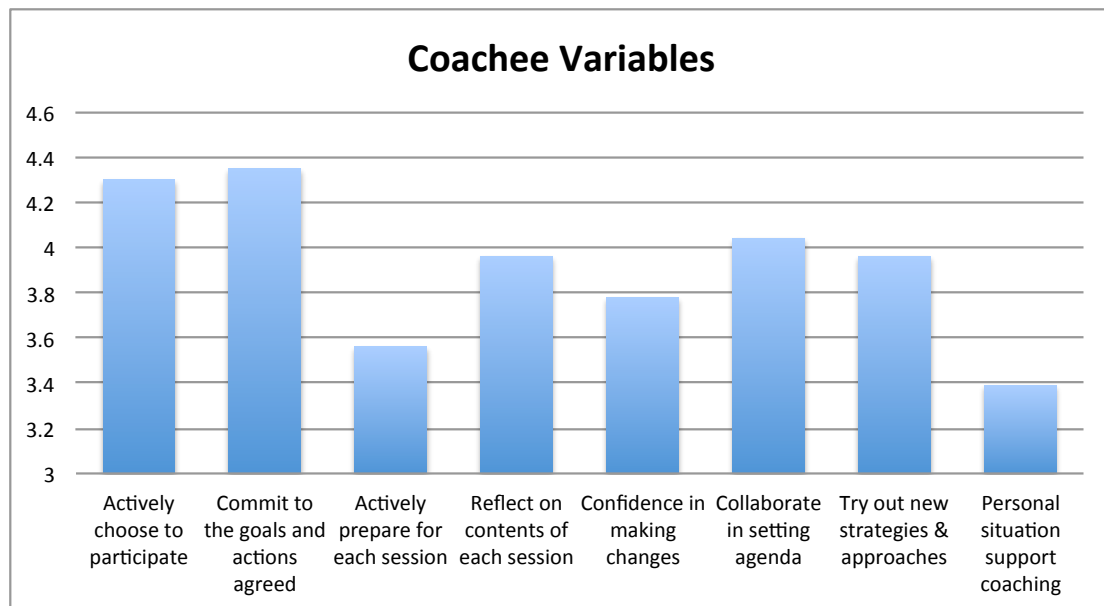


Figure 5. The Coachee's response to coaching.

Organisational Approach to Coaching. This section attempted to understand how the organisation had supported the leadership coaching program. As this was the context in which coachees practiced their leadership skills and applied their actions between sessions, a supportive organisational context was seen as crucial to the success of the program.

Table 5

Means for Organisation approach to coaching by role in program

Organisation Approach to Coaching Questions	Coachee Mean (N=23)	Rater Mean (N=20)	Employee Mean (N=29)	Total Mean (N=79)
Managers support coaching process	3.56	3.40	2.38	2.84
Organisation displays coaching culture	3.04	2.45	2.76	2.56
Business environment supports coaching	3.04	2.10	1.96	2.21
Coaching goals aligned with business objectives	3.56	1.75	1.72	2.22
Org support development in workplace	3.26	3.00	2.86	2.83
Manager provide opportunities	3.21	3.60	3.48	3.18
Manager supports development goals	2.95	3.45	3.48	3.07
Organisation facilitates skill transfer	2.78	3.35	2.82	2.77
Organisation resources coaching	3.39	1.15	1.20	1.77
Organisation integrates coaching to L&D	2.34	1.45	1.41	1.64
Leaders model growth mindset	2.86	2.95	2.62	2.59
Leaders recognise your strengths	3.04	3.45	2.37	2.68

Table 5 shows some interesting differences in the perceptions of the organisation's approach to coaching by role in the program. There is a general trend for those closest to the coaching to report more positively on the organisations support for the coaching process. There is a large discrepancy on the resourcing question where raters and employees are much less positive about the level of resourcing for coaching. This may be because the program was aimed at the top two levels in the organisation. It is also less apparent to the raters and employees that coaching goals were aligned to business objectives or that coaching was integrated into the broader learning and development strategy.

Summative Evaluation

Impact of the leadership coaching on participants. This section examined the perceived individual benefits of the leadership coaching program. It also asked raters to give a confidence rating in the changes being attributable to the leadership coaching program. The responses were broken down by role in the program with Coach's responses omitted due to a low response rate.

Table 6

Mean Scores of individual impact items by role in program

Individual Program Impact Questions	Coachee Mean (N=23)	Rater Mean (N=19)	Employee Mean (N=28)	Total Mean (N=77)
Enhanced knowledge of leadership	3.21	2.47	1.78	2.49
New leadership skills	3.30	2.42	1.89	2.54
New awareness of strengths	3.26	2.31	1.53	2.40
Vigour and energy in goals	3.04	2.42	1.67	2.40
Greater goal attainment	2.78	2.42	1.39	2.23
Greater positivity & optimism	3.30	2.36	1.78	2.50
Greater flexibility & innovation	2.86	2.36	1.71	2.33
Empowering & developing others	3.13	2.47	1.82	2.46
Greater commitment & engagement	2.78	2.31	1.71	2.25
How confident in attribution to coaching	2.95	2.26	1.75	2.36

Table 6 shows some interesting variations by role in the program. As before there is an interesting gradient of response depending on the respondent's proximity to the leadership coaching with those closest being the most positive. This was true also of the coach's response but they were too few to include. Coachees reported the biggest impact on their leadership skills and levels of optimism but those benefits were not as visible to employees who had not rated them as part of the 360 multi-rater evaluation. This suggests that as the benefits of coaching cascade throughout the

organisation, the impact is diluted as a function of the distance from the coaching and the level of awareness of employees about the goals of the program.

Impact of leadership coaching on participant's team members. This section aimed to see if the benefits of coaching were cascading into the participant's team. Again Table 7 illustrates that the gradient that those closest to the coaching perceive most benefit was apparent. Those who rated the coachees are also report team related benefits but not to the same degree whilst employees are the least confident in both perceiving team related changes and attributing them to the coaching process.

Table 7

Mean Scores of team impact items by role in program

Impact on Participant's Team Questions	Coachee Mean (N=23)	Rater Mean (N=19)	Employee Mean (N=26)	Total Mean (N=75)
Generate a positive team climate	3.34	2.42	1.57	2.41
Clearer vision & purpose	3.34	2.26	1.46	2.32
Greater role clarity	3.26	2.47	1.50	2.34
Advocacy v. enquiry ratio	3.52	2.47	1.34	2.36
Effective stakeholder engagement	3.17	2.31	1.53	2.32
Motivate team members	3.08	2.52	1.53	2.36
How confidence in attribution to coaching	3.26	2.26	1.46	2.30

Impact of leadership coaching on Oxfam's principles and approaches.

This section aimed to assess if the impacts of the leadership coaching program had impacted on the organisation's principles and approaches. These were nine aspirational statements about the organisation's desired impact.

Table 8

Mean Scores of principle & approaches impact items by role in program

Impact on Principle & Approaches Questions	Coachee Mean (N=23)	Rater Mean (N=17)	Employee Mean (N=26)	Total Mean (N=73)
Positive change in lives	1.78	2.00	1.65	1.82
Strengthen capacity for change	2.47	2.11	1.69	2.10
Capture lessons at local level	1.47	2.17	1.30	1.63
Change ideas re poverty/injustice	1.17	1.29	1.50	1.31
Change policies & practices of Govt	1.21	1.41	1.34	1.30
Hold Govt to account for change	1.30	1.47	1.30	1.34
Monitor impact of change	1.39	1.47	1.42	1.46
How confident in attribution to coaching	1.69	1.64	1.34	1.54

These principles and approaches are a series of values and behaviours that Oxfam aspires to manifest in its dealings with its partners. They are core to its organisational identity so any positive change in these attributable to the coaching would be a valuable outcome for the client. Whilst the numbers are lower here as we move further away from the coaching source, there is a trend for all groups to be more aligned in their beliefs about the level of change and the degree of confidence that these changes are attributable to the coaching process. Table 8 shows that overall respondents believed that the principle that had most changed as a result of the coaching was strengthening their capacity for change and the least impacted was their capacity to change and influence the policies and practices of Government.

Impact on organisational change goals. The organisational change goals are about building a stronger and sustainable organisation and include financial, leadership and people orientated competencies. Again the results across the three groups are broadly in alignment suggesting there is a trend for greater alignment the further away from the coaching sources the outcomes are. The most significant impact

of the leadership coaching was seen at the capacity to enable and support people. This organisational goal is particularly well aligned with enhancing coaching capability.

The least impacted goal appeared to be their capacity to mobilise their Australian constituency. Table 9 illustrates this trend.

Table 9

Mean Scores of Organisational Change Goals impact items by role in program

Impact on Organisational change goals Questions	Coachee Mean (N=23)	Rater Mean (N=17)	Employee Mean (N=23)	Total Mean (N=70)
Cohesive Global Agency	2.17	2.11	1.91	2.00
Enable & Support People	2.73	2.64	2.13	2.47
Highly accountable agency	2.47	2.11	2.00	2.18
Innovative, flexible and responsive	2.52	2.41	1.95	2.21
Grow Income	1.60	1.94	1.91	1.75
Mobilise Australian constituency	1.39	1.64	1.73	1.51
Live our values in work	2.69	2.41	2.13	2.28
How confident in attribution to coaching	2.34	1.82	1.60	1.91

Combined domain scores by role in program. After checking the reliabilities of each of the evaluated domains, a mean score was computed to allow an overall comparison by role in the program to be performed.

Table 10

Cronbach's alpha for domain scores

Domain	Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Organisational Approach	12	0.896
Individual Program Impact	9	0.978
Team Program Impact	6	0.982
Principles & Approaches	7	0.949
Change Goals	7	0.939

Given that all domains showed strong internal reliability through their Cronbach alphas scores, a mean score was computed for each domain to facilitate a comparison of impact by role in the program. The results showed that coachees not surprisingly report the greatest change at the individual and team level. Employees by contrast report the least change in those two domains. However there is a much better alignment across the three groups when reporting changes in the principles and approaches and the change goals.

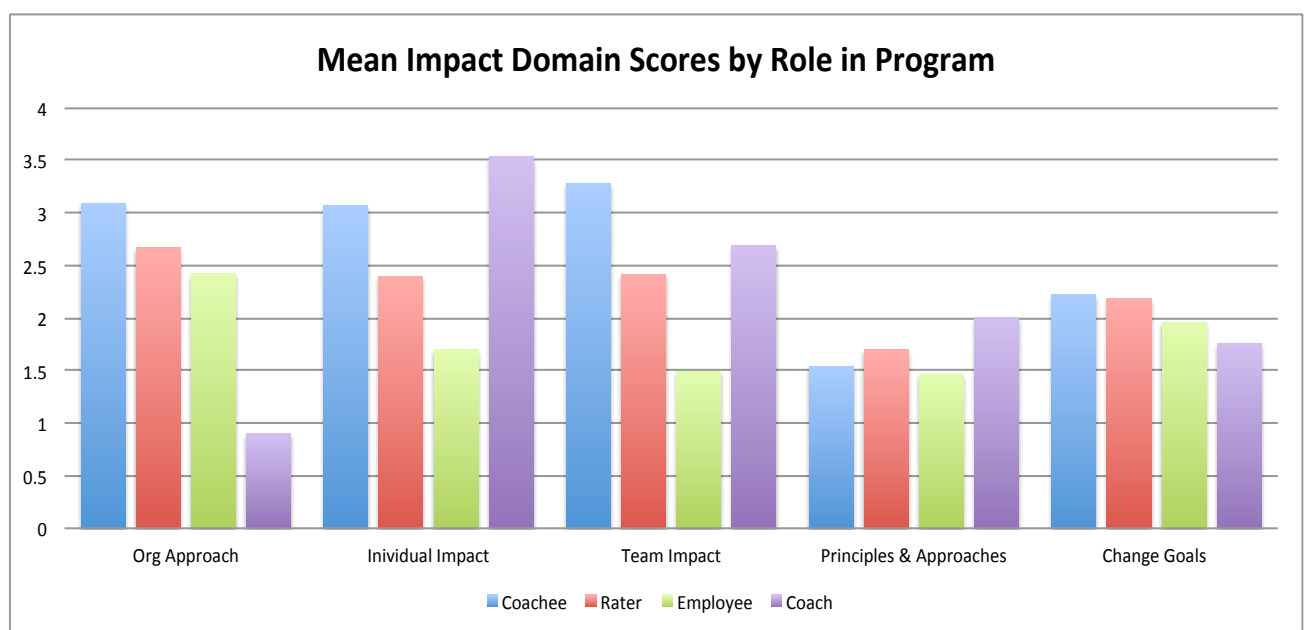


Figure 6. Mean domain Score for the evaluation survey by role in the Leadership Program

It is also of note that the coach's as a group are much less positive about the organisational climate for coaching than the three internal groups. This does suggest an opportunity for external providers of coaching to better understand the environment in which they are coaching to ensure outcomes are transferred and sustained over time.

Table 11

One way ANOVA of Mean Summative Outcomes by Role

	Coachee	Rater	Employee	Coach			
Domain	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
	(<i>SD</i>)	(<i>SD</i>)	(<i>SD</i>)	(<i>SD</i>)			
Individual Impact	3.07 (.94)	2.39 (1.55)	1.70 (1.50)	3.53 (1.83)	4,72	4.8	.002
Team Impact	3.29 (.82)	2.41 (1.45)	1.49 (1.58)	2.69 (2.10)	4,70	5.79	.000
Principles & Approaches	1.54 (1.20)	1.70 (1.08)	1.46 (1.40)	2.00 (1.64)	4,68	.628	.644
Change Goals	2.22 (1.11)	2.18 (.99)	1.96 (1.56)	1.76 (1.56)	4,65	.878	.482

Table 11 indicates there were significant differences on perceived individual and team outcomes when analysed by role in the program. However there were no differences in ratings of principles and approaches and organisational change goals. Given the size of the standard deviations a non-parametric test was run to confirm these findings. A Kruskal-Wallis test confirmed the only significant differences were in the individual and team impact scores (Chi-Square=15.73, $p=.003$ & 16.23, $p=.003$ respectively).

Perceived changes by level in organisation. As well as analyzing the data by role in the program, it was also possible to look at the impact of level in the organisation on the degree to which outcomes were perceived. Figure 7 shows the mean impact domain scores by organisational level and suggests that the most senior individuals in the organisation perceive the greatest amount of change attributable to the coaching program. Given that almost all of the Level 1 individuals were

participants in the program, this may partially explain their positivity and suggests this may be a proxy for role in the program. A one way ANOVA revealed that the only significant difference by level was at the team impact level, $F(7, 67) = 2.95, p = 0.009$. No other significant differences were found.

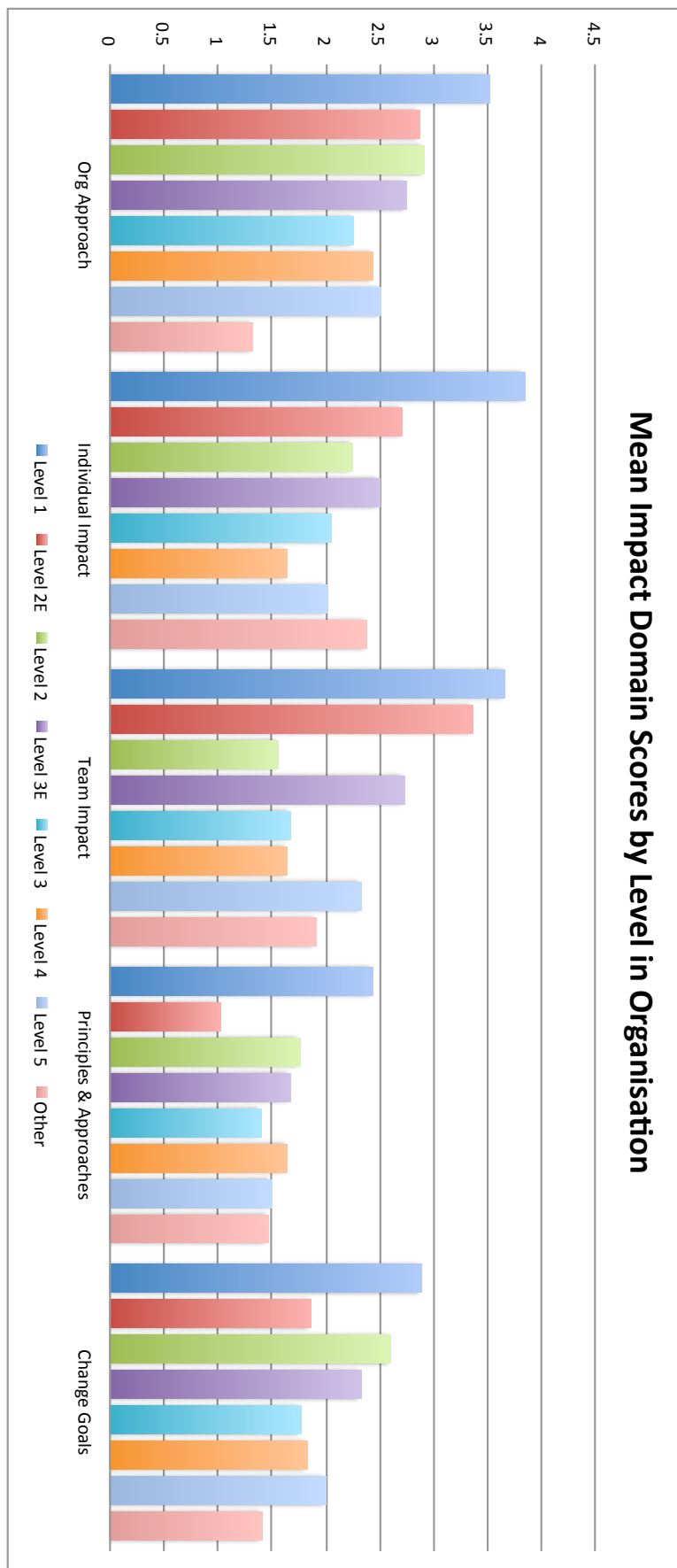


Figure 7. Perceived change by level in Organisation

Qualitative comments. At the end of the survey respondents were invited to offer some qualitative comments on what they found most and least effective about the program and how they would recommend the program be improved. Content analysis showed that certain words appeared with greater frequency in these three qualitative questions.

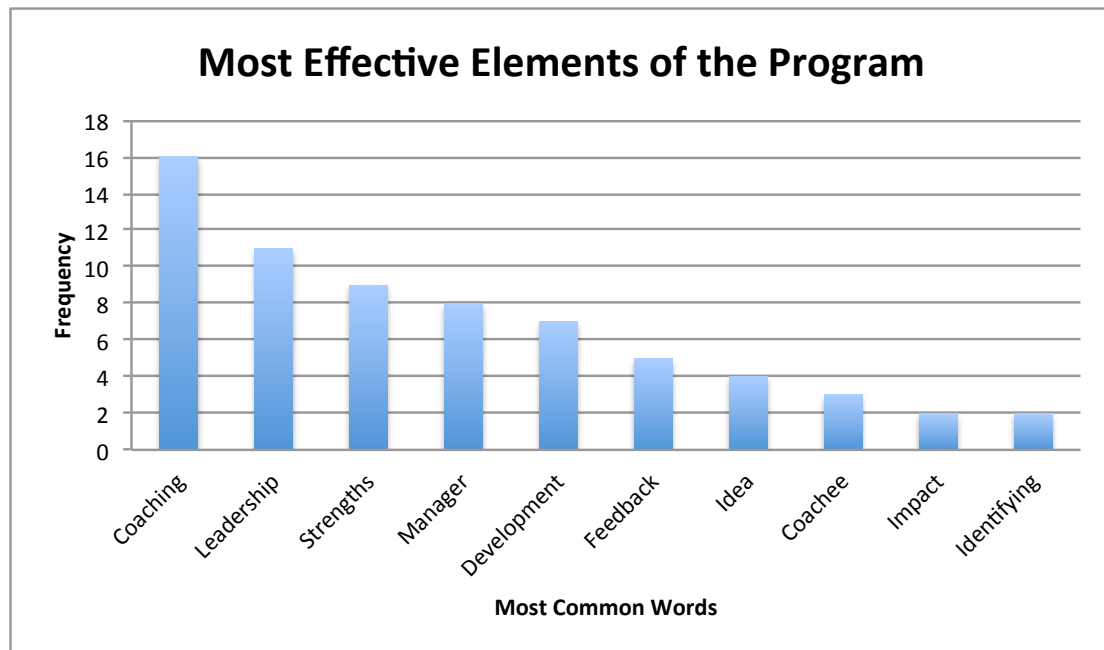


Figure 8. Most Common Words in Effective Elements of the Program

Of the 52 responses, Figure 8 shows the most common words used to describe the effective elements of the program with coaching, leadership and strengths the most common positives. On further analysis, the relevant comments largely referred to the benefits of the coaching relationship and the strengths based approach. Figure 9 also shows the most common words used to describe the least effective elements of the program. The most common terms here were management, leadership and program. The manager comments related to some participants being unclear as to who was a participant in the program and the fact that some managers had changed role during the program. The leadership comments related to the fact that only the top two layers received the coaching and there was a need to role out a similar program for

front line and high potential managers. The program comments related to the need for follow up after the program and again referred to a lack of transparency about who was a participant in the program. Suggestions for improving the program again involved greater access, transparency and follow up.

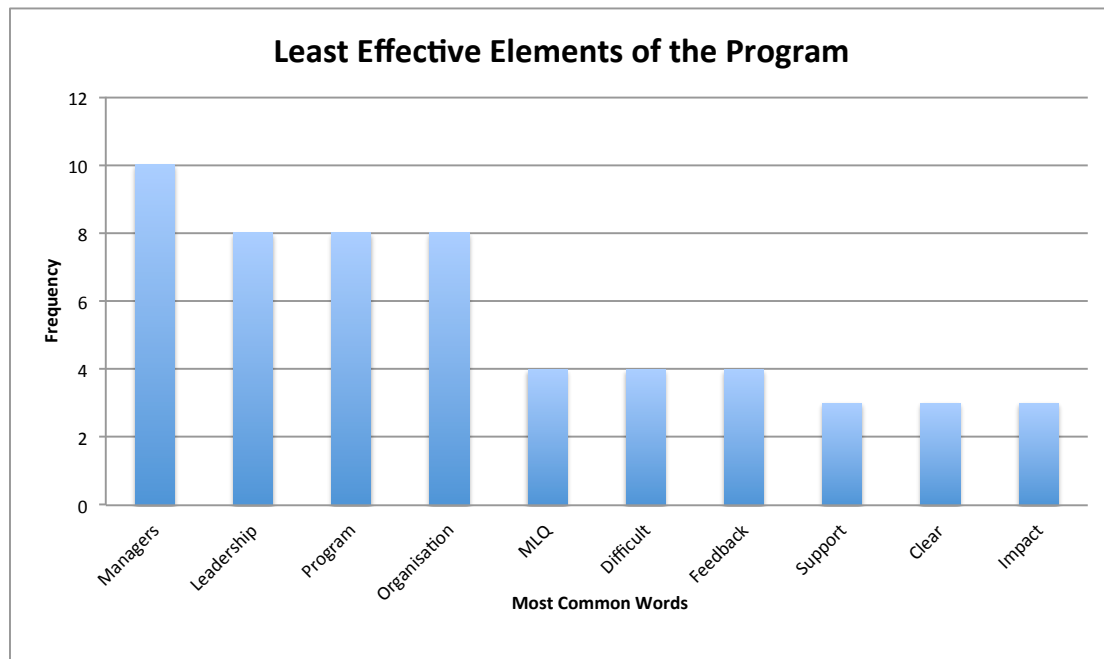


Figure 9. Most Common Words describing least effective elements of the program

Return on investment (ROI). ROI is a popular but problematic index of success in leadership coaching. As the ratings given to financial improvement are usually entirely subjective and financial gains are often along way down the causal path from the coaching engagement, ROI has been criticised as an unreliable and oversimplified indicator of a complex engagement (Grant, 2012, De Meuse et al 2009)). In this evaluation we can provide a rough estimation of the ROI but will rely on the known tangible changes in leadership behaviour rather than asking participant to estimate the financial impact of the coaching.

$$\text{ROI} = (\%) \text{ Adjusted estimate-program costs} / \text{program costs}$$

$$\text{ROI (Benefits)} = \text{Change in mean leadership (MLQ Scores) over time}$$

ROI (Benefits) =(Mean Leadership scores Time3-Mean Leadership Scores Time1)/Mean leadership Scores T1=13% gain in transformational leadership

ROI (Perceived Benefit)=(112000 x 31 x13% x 47%)-22188/22188= 856%

ROI (Average) =(112000 x 31 x13% x 47%)—59388/58,388 = 257%

Program costs are the coachees time out of the business, psychometrics and in the second equation, the typical coaching rate for this organisation. The above ROI assumes that the 13% uplift in leadership effectiveness produces an equivalent uplift in individual productivity. Using the mean salary of \$112,000 for the 31 participants and assuming only 47% of the change is attributable to the coaching (the average figure from the survey responses) and using the average cost of coaching (in this case it was pro bono but that would hugely reduce the costs and inflate the ROI) we still get an ROI of 257%. This also assumes only an individual impact and does not reflect how changes in leadership cascade through organisations. Changes in discretionary effort ratings suggest that direct reports in particular are likely to give significantly more to the organisation as a consequence of being led more effectively. This would lead to a significantly greater total ROI. The actual rating in this survey given the coaching was pro-bono was 856%.

Discussion

Key Points

The purpose of this evaluation was to understand the impact of the leadership coaching program not just on the participants but also on their teams and the wider organisation. It was also aimed at understanding both the formative elements and how they might be improved as well as the summative changes in key criterion such as leadership behaviour. Overall respondents were very positive about the program

which considering it was implemented in a time of significant organisational change, it is a very encouraging result.

In the formative evaluation, one of the key findings was the extent to which participants found different elements of the coaching process effective. Although it is not possible to link these preferences directly to outcomes, it does generate useful hypotheses for future research to test, namely that coach flexibility and engagement could be positively linked to behavioural outcomes in the coachee. This emphasis on the coach's role is further emphasized by the coaching relationship being rated as the most important element of the program. How these level one ratings of satisfaction relate to change in coachee behaviour and impact on results is a crucial question for future investigations. The formative evaluation allows a perspective to be taken across the key elements of coach, coachee, program and organisational elements. Some clear barriers to full effectiveness emerged in the coachee variables in that participants were struggling to find time to prepare for each session and their personal situation did not always support the coaching process. These ratings are entirely consistent with anecdotal feedback received during the course of the coaching where coachees would frequently arrive at a coaching session with little in the way of reflection on the previous session or a proposed agenda. Participants also reported working through significant amounts of personal stress as roles changed and redundancies occurred within the organisation.

The responses regarding the organisational approach to coaching offer some particular opportunities to further enhance the impact of the program. The coachee responses here suggest that more could be done to integrate the coaching into the existing learning and development framework and facilitate the transfer of new skills and insights into the workplace. Equally there is room for the organisational

leadership to demonstrate greater support for development in the organisation including the demonstration of a growth mindset that displays a belief in the capacity for change. Some of the largest perceptual discrepancies between roles in the program were found in this domain of organisational approach to coaching. Whilst participants saw alignment with business goals and felt their coaching was adequately resourced, raters and employees did not. This indicated that communication of the coaching goals and also the opportunity to participate in a similar program would be of value at lower levels in the organisation

In the summative evaluation, one of the key findings was that those closest to the coaching, perceived the greatest impact. This would appear self-evident but does beg the question as to why the participant gains are not being more broadly communicated throughout the organisation. Part of the explanation here is that there was some uncertainty as to who was participating in the program and the goals in the individual's coaching were not formally publicized due to client confidentiality. Consequently while the participant may have been highly focused in monitoring any changes, other stakeholders only had a very general sense of the program's aims and objectives. A second core finding was that change was perceived significantly differently by different levels within the organisation. Participants saw significant change in their team functioning that they attributed to the coaching but this perception was not shared by non-participants. This is a counter-intuitive finding in that it would be expected that individual change would be more apparent as it is closer to the source of the coaching. This difference was only apparent in the coachee and rater groups but it remains a remarkable finding that so much attributable change was perceived at the team level. This corroborates the notion that the traditional ROI

dramatically underestimates the impact of coaching as it usually only incorporates the value of individual change.

The more distal impacts of the program were assessed through examining the impact on the Oxfam ways of working and on their organisational change goals. Not surprisingly here the scores were significantly lower and a function of the distance from the coaching source. At this distance however, the discrepancies in responses by role in the program almost disappeared, suggesting that proximity to the coaching itself did not lead to a perceived difference in levels of change for more distal outcomes. The result that stood out was that all the groups saw the most significant change in the capacity of the individual and the organisation to bring about sustainable change. In the change goals again the discrepancy by role in the program disappeared and all three groups were aligned in that they saw the greatest impact in the capacity to enable and support employees.

Critical Appraisal

The most immediate limitation of the evaluation is that all the data is based on subjective appraisal. There are no objective measures of performance currently available to correlate the subjective impressions with. However such performance criteria are rarely available in organisations with the notable exception of sales functions. Consequently subjective assessment is often the only data available to assess change. There is also an assumption embedded in this process that whilst individual responses may be unreliable, the group response compensates for this by averaging error on both sides. This is the basic logic behind the validity of the multi-rater methodology (Luthans & Petersen, 2003).

Secondly there is the question of timing. The optimum time to assess the impact of a leadership coaching process is not known. There is clearly a balance

between assessing too soon before change has the opportunity to be enacted and assessing too late where multiple emergent factors can blur the link between the intervention and subsequent change. This survey has captured the perception of significant change two months after the program has been completed at a time when the program had been running for nearly 12 months.

A third concern in the leadership evaluation literature is the differentiation between absolute and improved levels of leadership. In this survey we have tried to make this distinction clear by focusing on the changes in behaviour that have been perceived over the course of the leadership coaching and requiring a confidence rating in attributing that change to the leadership coaching process.

There are also some methodological issues to address in that all of the data was collected retrospectively making perceptions prone to both hindsight and confirmatory bias. A general survey of perceived leadership effectiveness at the beginning of the study with a follow up comparison would be one way to address this. This concern however really only applies to the summative evaluation and the formative analysis requires reflection on the program implementation. The bespoke nature of the survey, whilst greatly adding to the validity of the assessment of effectiveness, makes cross-research comparisons problematic.

Finally there are some challenges with the concept of measuring the return on investment after organisational interventions (Grant et al, 2010). Given the absence of attributable financial metrics for the participants, the assumption that their salary is equivalent to their value to the organisation has been made. While most organisations would expect multiples of an individual's salary to be return in terms of organisational performance, it is simply not possible to calculate this figure in this case. Hence this assumption is a conservative calculation that potentially significantly

underestimates the ROI especially in light of the data that suggests significant changes in team performance as a result of the coaching intervention. These team impacts are not included in standard ROI calculations.

This coaching intervention occurred at a time of significant organisational challenge and change for the participating organisation. Multiple sources of anecdotal feedback suggested that the leadership coaching provided an essential external support in this change process but the change also prevented participants from being able to focus exclusively on their leadership style and how to enhance it. Nonetheless for the program to be so apparently effective in the midst of such organisational flux is testament to the effectiveness of this leadership coaching intervention.

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Reflective Critique of Research

Introduction

This section comprises of a critical reflection of the entire PsyD process. In order to provide some structure, I have viewed this process through a number of developmental lenses. The primary purpose of engaging in the PsyD was to advance my skills as a practitioner and, in particular, to enhance my research skills and awareness of critical elements in the leadership development literature and its application to the organisations within which I work. The drive to engage in practice-based research had been stimulated by attending a surfeit of conferences where practitioner opinion and assertions seemed to be the norm without much recourse to an empirical evidence base. This was and remains a particular issue with coaching research. Whilst this tension between available evidence and how it is applied in practice is a universal of being an applied psychologist, there are times when a sense of being too removed from one or the other compels me to action. Given the goals of my engagement with the PsyD, models of expertise and practitioner development seemed highly relevant in terms of mapping my progress as a research orientated practitioner.

Ericsson (2009) has been deconstructing the constituents of expertise in a variety of domains from chess to medical performance for the last 30 years. He sees skill development as composed of three stages; cognitive, (where the skills and knowledge acquisition are deliberate, conscious and slow), associative (where effort declines and speed increases) and automatic (where there is a loss of conscious control). He also recognises that experience does not necessarily lead to expertise and that experts are distinguishable for everyday performers in predictable ways. The core

of this difference appears to be the engagement in deliberate practice with well-defined goals, regular feedback and a resistance to automaticity by developing increasingly complex representations of their domain area. This approach has been extended into the leadership domain by McCall (2010) who emphasised the domain specificity of expertise with leaders in particular industries and organisations not necessarily being able to transfer effectively across those domains. McCall (2010) also emphasized that the talent in leadership expertise is for deliberate practice and that other elements including motivation, influence and the support of others are key to developing as a leader. Such approaches align well with the five-stage model of Dreyfus and Dreyfus (1986) that charts a progressive path from novice to expert.

Reflecting on my own development throughout the PsyD process, there were times when the expert model seemed to describe my own experience with a fair degree of accuracy. Learning SPSS would be a good example of developing a skill that was certainly deliberate, conscious and slow initially. It was also the case that, without deliberate practice, that particular skill appeared to atrophy remarkably quickly. Reflecting more broadly as a practitioner, I can see that the resistance to automaticity could play a key role in the continuous development of practitioner expertise. Indeed the concern of repeating the same intervention over time in the consulting context was another reason for embarking on the PsyD in the first place. However the expert model seems to apply more to specific skills that underpin various aspects of applied psychology rather than providing a generic description of the competencies required in the expert practitioner. Consequently it is possible to be expert in one domain of practice whilst relatively inexpert in another. For example, my understanding of leadership is increasingly complex partly as a function of the PsyD process. I certainly have greater appreciation for the variables like

developmental readiness that seem to predict how individuals engage with leadership development and also the loci of leadership, that is where leadership resides. However some of my research skills are increasingly competent but could not be described as expert.

Reflecting on the loci of leadership is also a good example of a theory dependent observation (Chalmers, 1982). Thus proponents of traits theories see leadership as residing very much in the leader whilst situational theorists see the loci as the space in-between the leader and the follower. Taking a variety of theoretical perspectives during this process from trait based, through transformational leadership and authentic models has certainly broadened my perspective both on where leadership resides and how it is transmitted. However there are other areas both in terms of knowledge and skill where I could not claim expert status but the recognition of one's differing capacities as a practitioner surely is a consequence of a more mature and reflective perspective. This is consistent with the notion of vertical development where individuals move through stages of moral and intellectual development (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) rather than horizontal development where individuals acquire micro-skills but remain in the same developmental stage (Petrie, 2011). The majority of leadership development occurs in the horizontal domain although concepts of maturity and wisdom are beginning to gain some traction in leadership theory and development (Day et al., 2009).

Another model that has influenced my thinking in pursuit of the PsyD is the scientist –practitioner model. Originally proposed by Raimy (1950) the scientist-practitioner model has oscillated between emphasizing the primacy of scientific and research training (The Boulder model) versus emphasizing the primacy of the

practitioner augmented by the scientific method (The Vail model). Practitioner doctorates seek to combine these but inevitably emphasise the Vail model as they are usually populated by experienced practitioners who seek to acquire or enhance research skills. Whilst not having quite the same linear progression as the novice to expert approach, it nonetheless emphasizes the importance of remaining connected to the empirical evidence base, a base that is dynamic and constantly shifting. Having previously studied philosophy of science, I don't have concerns that my interest in this model is predicated on a naïve interpretation of the scientific method. However it is clear from both the research and the stance taken by many practitioners that there is not a shared epistemology in coaching research and that the approach I have taken in this research in assuming that there are enough variables in common across participants in the research, to make meaningful and predictive statements about future coaching interventions, is not an assumption shared by all in the profession. My approach has been both inductive, in that I've attempted to suggest general laws or theories from making controlled observations around a number of specific instances and deductive, in that those generalisations are subsequently used to predict and explain leadership behaviour in future practitioner contexts.

Thinking more broadly about the potential impact of the PsyD process, it is apparent that I am developing not only as a leadership expert scientist-practitioner but also as an executive coach. Petersen (2011) has extended the application of the literature on expertise to the process of coach development. Building on the work of Lord and Hall (2005), expertise is seen as the capacity to identify and understand the underlying principles rather than the surface heuristics. Paradoxically this can make the articulation of the components of expertise challenging as they have become automated and reflexive. This is at odds with Ericsson who championed the notion of

deliberate or conscious practice and the resistance to automaticity as the path to expertise. The question of where expertise can make the biggest difference inevitably brings in the interaction with the coachee capabilities. There is anecdotal evidence that expertise makes the most difference in the mid-range of client complexity which makes identifying these qualities in the coachee paramount (Petersen, 2011).

Identifying the traits of the more challenging coachee, Goldsmith (2009) suggested denial, strategic misalignment, role misalignment or lack of accountability as the core elements of uncoachability. The paradox is that those most often described as uncoachable are those most in need of insight and change. It is not yet possible to delineate how expertise in the coach may interact with coachee qualities but it is reasonable to assume that experts should be able to engage and assist a greater range of coachees. It therefore feels premature to be formulating inclusion and exclusion criteria for the coachee prior to understanding what the expert coach looks like.

Again, applying this to my own development, two processes emerge. Firstly I am more aware of informally assessing coachee variables like readiness to change at the beginning of potential coaching assignments in order to predict whether the timing is right to begin a developmental process. Secondly, I am increasingly aware of monitoring my attributions about coachees to try and surface implicit assumptions about their readiness, capacity and motivation. These attributions are increasingly situational and systemic rather than simply categorizing decontextualized and self-fulfilling traits like coachability, within the coachee.

One of the factors that may inhibit coach development is the fundamental attribution error – that is coaches blame failures on external factors (including coachee factors like coachability) and see success as a function of their own competence and expertise. A further barrier to expertise is the breadth of knowledge

and diversity of skill set required to attain this status. This requires an ongoing commitment to professional development, openness to new ideas and willingness to focus on what's not working that requires an ongoing tolerance of uncertainty. Peterson (2011) emphasizes the recurring requirement of self-awareness and reflection in the development of mastery. He offers the following four basic directions of reflection. Looking inward or how personal values and their manifestation influence your decisions. Looking outward or the expectations of others has affected your progress. Look back or what have you been trying to learn by undertaking this process. And finally look ahead or what will you do differently as a result of this process. Consequently I have adopted this reflective process for the PsyD critical review.

The four directions of reflection

Looking Inward. In Petersen's model, this deals with how personal values were manifested in the research. My own values that seem relevant here are academic attainment, professional contribution, the argument from empiricism and seeking to make an impact beyond the financial domain. There is no doubt that the design of my research manifests a belief (evidenced-based) that all methods and models are not equivalent and that their relative efficacy can be delineated through a controlled trial design. My thinking here is heavily influenced by my time as a clinical psychologist immersed in the psychotherapy equivalence debate. In my transition to organisational psychology some 14 years ago, I was and remain focused on bringing some of the core skills from psychotherapy across to the organisational domain. These include the focus on the mediators and moderators of psychotherapy outcomes and my experience that specialist training did positively impact on therapeutic outcomes, (contrary to the common factors position where all therapies are seen as equivalent and specific

theory or technique is seen as less importance than the common factors like the therapeutic relationship). This influenced my goal to attempt to define and manualise a strength-based coaching methodology. This approach also makes the assumption that the content and theoretical orientation can be meaningfully separated from the process or how the coaching is delivered. Being clearer about the alignment of my own values and the organisations in which I work has also been a consequence of this research process. Working with highly skilled individuals in the not-for-profit sector whose organisational goal is simply “to end world poverty” was extremely inspiring.

Looking Outward. Looking outward is about engaging with and managing the expectations of key stakeholders in the PsyD. From my perspective they are the client organisation, the coaches, the University (and especially my supervisors) and to some degree, the coaching community. Managing these different entities simultaneously has definitely been an exercise in complex project management.

Managing the client presented both great opportunity and significant challenges. The complexity of coordinating all the moving parts has been a surprise. Having come in to the project with high expectations, I was conscious of my reaction when the reality fell short of this. The challenges to date have largely been around influencing the client to engage in the process in a way that maintains the integrity of the research whilst being flexible and responsive to their organisational needs. A good example of this was having to let go of the idea of randomization of participants when it became clear that other factors including participant availability and organisational challenges were more fundamental to the client. Getting participants to recognize that there were elements of the program like manual completion, that were critical to the research, was also a challenge at times. Encouraging the completion the assessment phase so that participants could begin to experience the benefits of coaching was

another demanding moment and brought home to me the importance of influencing without authority. This was achieved by continual liaison with the internal stakeholders to insure that the connection between rigorous assessment and improved outcome was apparent.

Keeping the coaches interested and engaged whilst respecting that they were providing their services pro bono and have their own practices to run was another demanding element of the process. I was also aware of my perceptions of the individual differences in the coaches in terms of their backgrounds, orientations, training and expertise. It was apparent early on that some would struggle with the concept of manualisation and that coaches varied significantly in their preferences for structure and theory in the coaching process. This variance was in some way addressed by the induction process but there remained a healthy tension around how to integrate the research needs into the coaching process. Having applied for a grant to pay the coaches and been unsuccessful, I felt I had little leverage at times to keep them engaged in the research requirements.

In addition to managing the coaches, managing the association with the University has at times been a challenge. The unplanned change in supervisors after 6 months and again at 12 months, was a complete surprise to me. It simply never occurred to me that my original supervisor would not see the project through to the end. It also created a lot of uncertainty about the appointment of a new supervisor and about their engagement and commitment to the process. A significant element in my choice of Leicester for the PsyD was to work with my first supervisor so to have him depart so early in the process was destabilizing and disappointing. Each supervisor had their own strengths, preferences and style which emerged during the course of the supervision and having never met any of the supervisors face to face, there was at

times, little personal rapport and common understanding to draw upon. The development of a strong supervisory relationship was further compounded by neither side proactively setting out the parameters of the supervisory relationship at the start of the process. This was on my side party due to the immediacy of the needs of the client organisation and the program to get started but despite this, the issue was raised by me from time to time but never really explored. With hindsight I realise I could have been much more directive around this. Consequently, the assumptions on both sides about the parameters of the supervisory process went unchallenged until a specific question or issue would surface a deeper misalignment around expectations.

There were other essential tensions that emerged in the supervisory relationship. These included the degree to which I wanted to be open to feedback and the commentary of others but also advocate my own position and defend my stance. The constructive balance between being open to the perspectives of others and advocating my own position was at times difficult to attain. Another tension was how to manage the necessity of demonstrating independence of thought and action whilst engaging in debate and discussion that developed my understanding and broadened my perspective. This is where the goal or requirements of the University and my own were perhaps misaligned. The outcome of these tensions was a more restricted definition of supervision that I had hoped for and a greater requirement to enhance my autonomy and capacity in a variety of areas, than I had anticipated.

Looking back. This section focuses on what I've been trying to learn throughout the PsyD process and what I will do differently as a consequence. It feels appropriate here that I focus my reflection largely on the research design and methodology. Looking

back there are clearly some key decision points that are worth reviewing. Given that I wanted to test a particular model of coaching, there was an important decision point in deciding what that would be. At the beginning of the project I considered acceptance and commitment training (ACT, Hayes et al., 2006) and positive psychology strength based approaches. However attending an ACT conference highlighted to me that the model lacks coherence and would be very challenging to manualise an approach around the hexaflex. The most relevant components are values clarification, committed action, defusion and the overall concept of psychological flexibility. However none of these concepts are specific to ACT and many are addressed in other approaches. Nor were any of these approaches specifically linked to leadership and it seems to me that they lacked the requisite face validity for application in the corporate setting. The other challenge I considered was that training coaches in the ACT approach would be difficult as there was already some accreditation processes in place in this area.

This decision informed a broader question of the validity of categorization of different types of coaching as leadership, strength-based etc. Given that coaching is essentially a multi-component process, it appeared to me to be another manifestation of the common versus specific factor debate. The equivalence paradox in psychotherapy where multiple therapeutic modalities were found to have similar outcomes is often used as support for an emphasis on common factors but as Bunce (1997) points out, this can be a function of methodological weakness or poor protocol adherence rather than methodological equivalence. My personal concern is that a common factors process seems incompatible with the development of specific (e.g. leadership) expertise and implies organisational and business challenges are most effectively understood at the interpersonal and even intrapersonal level.

Finally there was a decision point about what potential mediators and moderators to include in the study and what to omit. Moderators effect the direction and strength of independent variable (eg. type of coaching) and dependent variable (eg leadership outcomes). Possible moderators included developmental readiness, personality variables, sessional alliance and coach credibility. I made the pragmatic decision to focus on coachee variables that in my own practitioner experience, seemed to have the potential to predict important variations in the response to coaching. These included positive states around change readiness and positive traits from the core self-evaluation literature.

Mediators are the mechanism by which the independent variable (eg. type of coaching) is able to directly influence the dependent variable (eg. leadership capacity). Potential psychological mediators can include mastery, self-efficacy and self-insights. In my own study, I considered the strength based approach to be a major mediator of enhanced leadership effectiveness but also recognised that the mediator-moderator distinction can become blurred when variables can potentially act as both. Testing this required the calculation of both manual and protocol adherence which is why the manualisation process was essential.

Looking Ahead. This section is about what I will do differently as a result of the PsyD process. As soon as I began the research my attention naturally shifted in my own clients, to the variables I was researching in the study. This was a desired consequence of the research. I wanted to think more rigorously about the mediators and moderators of leadership and its development. I also want to contextualize this section within the current research on leadership coaching. My research sits within a particular context and reflecting on where the coaching profession currently resides in

terms of its development as a coherent discipline, provides a broader perspective from which to view my own contribution.

Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011) suggest any new discipline progresses through several stages in its epistemology. Firstly, there is a defining of terms and scoping of the parameters of legitimate study, a process that allows practitioners to share common definitions and assumptions. Secondly, the emphasis shifts to theory building where new methodologies and measures are tried and tested. This phase is often characterized by small qualitative designs and the application of more established streams of research to new environments. The third phase is focused on the focus on exceptions and specificities in the approach that help to identify what works for whom. There is some suggestion that coaching predominantly lies in the second half of stage two with large controlled trials and meta-analyses trying to build effect sizes and draw conclusions across multiple interventions. The authors then suggest some research themes that they think are likely to predominate in the coming decade. These include client readiness for change and critical features of the coaching relationship. It also suggests that underneath this, sits an understanding of how different methodologies impact on coachees and their issues. This is an explicit rejection of the “dodo” effect (Kilburg, 2004) where all approaches are assumed to be equal – a fallacy that comes from a selective reading of the psychotherapy research and an argument by analogy to the coaching literature. I would position my own research very much in this stage.

Conclusion

This is a difficult section to write just prior to submission as it is challenging to evaluate this process whilst still embedded in it. My sense is that my evaluation will change over time and that more and varying benefits will become apparent in the future. However in connecting my research with future research strands and opportunities, some key potential avenues for further exploration emerge. Firstly there is much more to learn about how individual coach and coachee variables interact with the coaching methodology to produce outcomes. I have tried to contribute to this debate by focusing on one method and some key coachee variables but future research needs to compare different methodologies to assess whether strength based approaches are superior to solution focused or other methodologies. This requires estimates of adherence to the chosen methodologies through manualisation or sessional recording as in my own experience, it was clear that both coaches and coachees varied considerably in their capacity to adhere to protocols. This would develop our collective understanding of the relative importance of common eg. the coaching relationship versus specific factors eg. a strength-based methodology.

Secondly the further delineation of coach and coachee factors would assist in the tailoring of coaching interventions to the specific needs of the coachee. Developmental readiness shows real theoretical promise as a construct that could predict who benefits most from leadership coaching interventions. However this construct needs to be developed and operationalized into a reliable and valid psychometric construct in order that the underlying theory can be tested empirically. Change readiness as a broader construct also shows promise in terms of diagnosing the readiness of the coachee to engage in a skill and behavioural acquisition process. Again this construct needs a reliable and valid psychometric so that cross research

comparisons become possible. In addition, the differential effectiveness of coaches in the research suggested that there are variables within the coach that appear to moderate outcomes in the coaching process. Further clarity on key coach variables would have significant implications for coach training and development.

Professional development for me is a life-long process that weaves a synthesis of vertical and horizontal development on the path to developing expertise in applied organisational psychology. The PsyD process has accelerated the acquisition of key knowledge and skills that will enhance my capacity as an evidenced-based leadership practitioner. It is also facilitated the bridging of the research-practitioner divide in coaching and provided convincing evidence for the effectiveness of structured leadership coaching in organisations. Finally it has provided an organisation whose values I support and admire, with the opportunity to effectively develop its leadership capacity at a time of significant organisational challenge. For that alone, it has been a worthwhile endeavour.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical Approval

To: **DOUG MACKIE**

Subject: Ethical Application Ref: **djm71-c40c**

(Please quote this ref on all correspondence)

28/02/2012 14:44:03

Psychology

Project Title: **The Effectiveness of Strength Based Executive Coaching on Individual Leadership Functioning**

Thank you for submitting your application which has been considered.

This study has been given ethical approval, subject to any conditions quoted in the attached notes.

Any significant departure from the programme of research as outlined in the application for research ethics approval (such as changes in methodological approach, large delays in commencement of research, additional forms of data collection or major expansions in sample size) must be reported to your Departmental Research Ethics Officer.

Approval is given on the understanding that the University Research Ethics Code of Practice and other research ethics guidelines and protocols will be compiled with

1. ☐ <http://www2.le.ac.uk/institution/committees/research-ethics/code-of-practice>
2. ☐ <http://www.le.ac.uk/safety/>

Appendix B: Organisation Engagement Letter



22 February 2012

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BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Doug

This letter is to confirm our engagement in your research project investigating the impact of strengths-based leadership coaching on transformational leadership behaviours. As per our discussions, we will invite two cohorts of up to 20 Oxfam senior managers to participate in the 12 month project. We confirm that the participants:

- have the support of our executive leadership to participate
- will engage in the process voluntarily
- are aware of the time commitment, involving six coaching sessions conducted over a few months
- agree to undertake the leadership diagnostic
- understand that there will be data collection as part of the research
- understand that individual scores and notes will remain confidential, but general themes will be fed back to Oxfam management

We also confirm that internal resources will be made available to support this project, led by Lisa Greenfield, Learning and Organisational Development Manager.

Thank you for the opportunity to participate.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tony McKimmie".

Tony McKimmie
Chief Operating Officer

Appendix C: Participant Consent Form

Participant Consent Form

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Title: The Effectiveness of Strength Based Executive Coaching on Individual Leadership Functioning

Researchers: Doug MacKie from the University of Leicester School of Psychology.

Purpose of data collection: Postgraduate Research DPsy

Details of Participation: This study aims to look at the effects of a strengths based approach to leadership coaching on transformational leadership behaviours. You will be required to attend 6 sessions of leadership coaching and complete some questionnaires at the beginning and end of the coaching process. These will take approximately 40 minutes to complete to complete a total of five questionnaires.

CONSENT STATEMENT

1. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw from the research at any time up until you submit your questionnaire without giving any reason.
2. I am aware of what my participation will involve.
3. My data are to be held confidentially and only Doug MacKie will have access to them.
4. My data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet for a period of at least five years after the appearance of any associated publications. Any aggregate data (e.g. spreadsheets) will be kept in electronic form for up to one year after which time they will be deleted.
5. In accordance with the requirements of some scientific journals and organisations, my coded data may be shared with other competent researchers. My coded data may also be used in other related studies. My name and other identifying details will not be shared with anyone.
6. The overall findings may be submitted for publication in a scientific journal, or presented at scientific conferences.
7. This study will take approximately 12 months to complete.
8. I will be able to obtain general information about the results of this research by *email on the following address doug@csaconsulting.biz*

I am giving my consent for data to be used for the outlined purposes of the present study
All questions that I have about the research have been satisfactorily answered.

I agree to participate.

Participant's signature: _____

Participant's name (please print): _____

Date: _____

Please note that this form will be kept separately from your data

Appendix D: Extract from Strength Bases Coaching Protocol

Strength Based Coaching Research Project 2012

Preparation for Action: My Strength Based Goals (Research Critical)

My Identified Realised Strength.

	Outcome statement	Current Rating (out of 10)	Desired Rating (out of 10)
My desired outcome with my identified realized strength....			

My Identified Unrealised Strength.

	Outcome statement	Current Rating (out of 10)	Desired Rating (out of 10)
My desired outcome in my unrealized strength			

My Identified Weakness/Learned Behaviour .

	Outcome statement	Current Rating (out of 10)	Desired Rating (out of 10)
My desired outcome with my weakness/learned behaviour			

Appendix D cont.

Strength Based Coaching Research Project 2012

Session 1 Strengths Development Plan (Research Critical)

My development plan to bring about my desired outcome	Current Rating (out of 10)	Desired Rating (out of 10)
Action plan for my realized strengths outcome		
Action plan for my unrealized strengths outcome		
Action plan for my weakness/learned behaviour outcome		

Appendix D cont.

Strength Based Coaching Research Project 2012

Tracking Progress Session 1

How will I track my progress toward my goals for this session?		By When	Success Rating (0-10)
Reflection Scales: How well have I managed my strengths in the following areas? This data is research critical – please share with your coach.:			
Strength Awareness	Strength Alignment	Strength Pairing	Strength Utilisation
<p>High</p> <p>Applies strengths with situational and systemic awareness</p> <p>Consciously applying my strengths</p> <p>Thinking about how to engage my strengths</p> <p>Performance without reference to strengths</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Strengths fully aligned and integrated with team/business goals</p> <p>Most strengths aligned with business/ team goals</p> <p>Strengths somewhat aligned with team/business goals</p> <p>Strengths independent of team/business goals</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Fully leveraging complimentary behaviours to strengths</p> <p>Linking some strengths to complimentary behaviours</p> <p>Beginning to identify complimentary behaviours</p> <p>Working on individual strengths in isolation</p> <p>Low</p>	<p>High/ Too Much</p> <p>Significant overuse of this strength</p> <p>Too much application on occasions</p> <p>Could still apply a bit more</p> <p>Not applying my strengths enough</p> <p>Low/ Too little</p>
Current Rating (1- 10)	Current Rating (1- 10)	Current Rating (1- 10)	Current Rating (-5 to +5)
Desired Rating (1- 10)	Desired Rating (1- 10)	Desired Rating (1- 10)	Desired Rating (-5 to +5)

Appendix E: Brief Coaching Readiness Scale

Client's name (if applicable):

ID Number:

BRIEF CRS-C © (Client Version)

Please use the rating scale below to indicate how strongly you agree with each statement.
Answer honestly - don't try to give the "right" answer. USE ANY NUMBER FROM 0 TO 100.

Not at all	A Little	Moderately	Strongly	Very Strongly
0	25	50	75	100
Rating				
1. I recognise that I have one or more aspects of my life or situation which I <u>must</u> work on	()	
2. I believe (not just hope) that change is possible	()	
3. I accept that I am primarily responsible for making change happen	()	
4. I am prepared to face my difficulties and fears	()	
5. I am prepared to experience some discomfort in order to learn and change	()	
6. I am able to persist when faced with setbacks or failures	()	
7. I am able and willing to commit the time and effort required to achieve the necessary changes	()	
8. I am able to set specific and realistic goals	()	
9. I focus on what I (rather than others) can do to achieve change (i.e. I don't get caught up in blaming or relying on others).	()	
10. I am solution, not problem focused (i.e. I can focus on my goals and the actions necessary to find solutions rather than just worrying unproductively about my problems & what I don't like or want)	()	
11. I have an accurate insight into the <u>real</u> nature, cause and maintenance of my difficulties (not just my presenting difficulties)	()	
12. I am able to reflect on and make sense of my thoughts	()	
13. I am able to describe and name my feelings and emotions	()	
14. I am able identify other people's emotions	()	
15. I am open to new ideas and possible actions.	()	
16. I have formed a good collaborative working relationship with my therapist /coach	()	
17. I have realistic expectations of the costs, benefits, speed & extent of likely change	()	

I am absolutely determined to make changes in my life because:

Please feel free to write any notes or comments in the space below:

Appendix F: Developmental Readiness Questionnaire



Oxfam Leadership Coaching 2012

		Not applicable	Not at all	To a little extent	Somewhat	To a great extent	Almost always
Your Approach to Leadership Coaching							
To what extent do you							
1.	Believe that your strengths and talents are relatively fixed?	0	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Believe that good leaders are made not born?	0	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Think that effort and practice are essential to leadership development	0	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Feel open to constructive feedback & the perspectives of others?	0	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Feel intimidated by the developmental challenges ahead of you?	0	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Feel ready to make some changes to your leadership style	0	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Believe you can significant improve your leadership effectiveness?	0	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Feel positive about changing aspects of your leadership style?	0	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Prefer to be confident about successfully completing a task before attempting it?	0	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Believe that change is possible as part of the coaching process?	0	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Feel confident that you could make the necessary changes to achieve you goals?	0	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Prefer to focus on the areas that you are already competent in?	0	1	2	3	4	5
13.	Feel confident that you could deal with any setbacks or disappointments?	0	1	2	3	4	5
14.	Enjoy the opportunity to engage in new challenges and approaches?	0	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix G: Adherence to Protocol Scale



Coach..... Coachee.....
 .Date.....

Adherence to the Strengths Protocol Scale

To what extent did your coachee

	Not applicable	Not at all	To a little extent	Somewhat	To a great extent	Almost always
1. Reflect on their peak experiences?	0	1	2	3	4	5
2. Reflect on the strengths in their psychometrics?	0	1	2	3	4	5
3. Prefer to leverage strengths rather than develop weaknesses?	0	1	2	3	4	5
4. Distinguish between realised and unrealised strengths?	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. Focus on strengths in their goal setting?	0	1	2	3	4	5
6. Applied their strengths with situational and systemic awareness?	0	1	2	3	4	5
7. Aligned and integrated their strengths with the business goals?	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. Pair their strengths with complimentary behaviours?	0	1	2	3	4	5
9. Fully utilise their strengths without overuse?	0	1	2	3	4	5
10. Engage in actions that developed their strengths?	0	1	2	3	4	5
11. Complete their reflective learning and preparation for each coaching session?	0	1	2	3	4	5
12. Engage enthusiastically with the coaching process?	0	1	2	3	4	5
13. The strength based approach was a good fit for the coachee?	0	1	2	3	4	5
14. The strength based approach was a good fir for me as a coach?	0	1	2	3	4	5

Thanks you for your time in completing this form.
 Please return in the SAE to: Doug MacKie, Business Psychologist, CSA Consulting,
 PO Box 111, Brisbane QLD 4001.

Appendix H: Evaluation letter from Oxfam



06 June 2013

Doug MacKie
CSA Consulting
L7/320 Adelaide Street
BRISBANE QLD 4000

National

132 Leicester St, Carlton,
Victoria, 3053

Telephone: (03) 9289 9444

Facsimile: (03) 9347 1983

Dear Doug,

On behalf of Oxfam Australia, I offer my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to participate in the Transformational Leadership Program, 2012.

For Oxfam, the timing was perfect. In 2012, we experienced significant change as a result of financial constraints. We needed something to support the emotional resilience and professional effectiveness of our leaders, who were carrying the burden of change. I expected the program to help their psychosocial wellbeing and develop some leadership skills, but it did so much more. Not only was the skill development most welcome, but the customer care the coachees received was above and beyond what I expected; just what we needed.

The results showed significant improvement in transformational leadership behaviours and resultant leadership effectiveness. The coachees gained so much, both professionally and personally. And for me...as a long-term learning and development professional, it has reinvigorated me!

I believe the most effective elements were:

- The coach-coachee matching:
 - The success of this is due to the partnership between the external program manager with subject-matter expertise and familiarity with the coaching service providers, and the internal organisational development manager with knowledge of the corporate culture, and familiarity with the target management group
- The dual approach to psychometrics:
 - The method of using one diagnostic to measure the 'current state' of leadership behaviours and effectiveness, and another to inform the design of the leadership development program, was very comprehensive. I understand it was robust and valid from a scientific point of view; but it was interesting from my point of view to watch a measurable and realistic image of our journey unfold from the front gate to the destination. It was the first time Oxfam has used this dual approach, and it was so successful that we are now adopting it as a preferred method for organisational development.
- The strengths-based approach:
 - The strengths-based approach was new to Oxfam, and I was very impressed by the discipline of the coaches to maintain this focus. The results showed evidence of this approach being highly effective. I have been since introduced to the neuroscience behind this approach, and it makes perfect sense! Simple, logical...and powerful.

On a personal note, I was so impressed by the process that I went out and became trained as a workplace coach! Once I would have recommended workshops as being the best form of training/learning, but I now see the value of an individualised approach; how much more powerful it is to be entirely present to one person's development, and ultimately their success.

I wish to express my gratitude to Doug and his team of coaches for giving Oxfam Australia a gift beyond our expectations. We expected leadership development...and we got magic.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Greenfield
Learning and Organisational Development Manager
Oxfam Australia

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Appendix I: Adherence to Manual Protocol Scale



COHORT 2 August-Dec 2012

Coach..... Coachee.....
Date.....

Adherence to the Manual Protocol Scale

		Not at all	Somewhat	Almost always
1.	S1 Complete the strengths interview p7	1	2	3
2.	S 1 Complete the peak experience section p9	1	2	3
3.	S1 Identify psychometric strengths p20	1	2	3
4.	S1 Identify Realised strength goal p21	1	2	3
5.	S1 Identify Unrealised strength goal p21	1	2	3
6.	S1 Complete strengths Development plan p23	1	2	3
7.	S1 Completed strength tracking current p24	1	2	3
8.	S1 Completed strength tracking desired p24	1	2	3
9.	S2 Completed the strengths reflection p25	1	2	3
10.	S2 Completed strengths application p26	1	2	3
11.	S2 Identify Realised strength goal p29	1	2	3
12.	S2 Identify Unrealised strength goal p29	1	2	3
13.	S2 Complete strengths Development plan p30	1	2	3
14.	S2 Completed strength tracking current p31	1	2	3
15.	S2 Completed strength tracking desired p31	1	2	3
16.	S3 Completed the strengths reflection	1	2	3
17.	S3 Completed strengths application	1	2	3
18.	S3 Identify Realised strength goal	1	2	3
19.	S3 Identify Unrealised strength goal	1	2	3
20.	S3 Complete strengths Development plan	1	2	3
21.	S3 Completed strength tracking current	1	2	3
22.	S3 Completed strength tracking desired	1	2	3

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Appendix I: cont



Coach..... Coachee.....
Date.....

		Not at all	Somewhat	Almost always
23.	S4 Completed the strengths reflection	1	2	3
24.	S4 Completed strengths application	1	2	3
25.	S4 Identify Realised strength goal	1	2	3
26.	S4 Identify Unrealised strength goal	1	2	3
27.	S4 Complete strengths Development plan	1	2	3
28.	S4 Completed strength tracking current	1	2	3
29.	S4 Completed strength tracking desired	1	2	3
30.	S5 Completed the strengths reflection	1	2	3
31.	S5 Completed strengths application	1	2	3
32.	S5 Identify Realised strength goal	1	2	3
33.	S5 Identify Unrealised strength goal	1	2	3
34.	S5 Complete strengths Development plan	1	2	3
35.	S5 Completed strength tracking current	1	2	3
36.	S5 Completed strength tracking desired	1	2	3
37.	S6 Completed the strengths reflection	1	2	3
38.	S6 Completed strengths application	1	2	3
39.	S6 Identify Realised strength goal	1	2	3
40.	S6 Identify Unrealised strength goal	1	2	3
41.	S6 Complete strengths Development plan	1	2	3
42.	S6 Completed strength tracking current	1	2	3
43.	S6 Completed strength tracking desired	1	2	3

Thanks you for your time in completing this form.

Please return in the SAE to: Doug MacKie, Business Psychologist, CSA Consulting,
PO Box 111, Brisbane QLD 4001.

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