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WAPPAR

Campus

Carmarthen

Student Number

2021120

Programme of Study

MA in Coaching and Mentoring

Indicative Title

Middle Managers at supervisory levels working in corporations in South Africa have little to no knowledge of the formal coaching process and its efficacy hence the limited representation of this group in formal coaching

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

TCC	The Coaching Centre
MD	Managing Director
HCP	Human Capital Practitioners
GM	Governing Municipality
WM & I	Wealth Management & Investments Sector
Media	Media & Advertising Agencies
Fin.Serve	Financial Services Sector
HR	Human Resource
ROI	Return on Investment
QA	Questionnaire
P	Participant
EQ	Emotional Intelligence

1. Project Proposal

1.1 Background

As an independent, accredited integral coach, the researcher operates as an Owner Coach in a registered coaching company, while also serving as the contractually employed Managing Director (MD) of The Coaching Centre (TCC), a larger established coaching company. This work-based project focuses on organisations in South Africa, examining their spend policies and practices regarding formal coaching for middle manager development. With 35 years of experience working in various organisations, the researcher has observed a trend of bias towards human development spending on executives over middle management across multiple organisations. This observation is further validated by the researcher's access to information as MD of TCC, the oldest coaching company in South Africa. An interview with Dr Paddy Pampallis, CEO of The Coaching Centre, revealed that since its establishment 21 years ago, TCC has consistently focused on developing all levels of management and leadership, cultivating critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and deeper learning. Although executives were not the sole target market, large corporations historically allocated their coaching budgets disproportionately in favour of executives. Historically, coaching has prioritised executives, who have benefited from significant investments due to their perceived importance over middle management (Field, Hancock, Smallets & Weddle, 2023). Coaching was also perceived as a perk of executive positions. However, over time, there has been a shift towards inclusive coaching practices, incorporating middle managers to a greater extent than previously (Rand, 2024).

1.2 Rationale

The primary objective of this research is to gather subjective evidence to support coaching companies in promoting their coaching and human development services to organisational leaders and Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) for the benefit of middle managers. Successfully targeting coaching interventions for middle managers is expected to influence organisational spending trends and enhance performance outcomes. (This hypothesis will be tested in this work-based study.) The performance metrics to be applied post-coaching sessions will include:

1. Intrapersonal skills: Self-awareness, emotional intelligence, adaptability and resilience

2. Leadership skills: Strategic thinking, problem-solving, team leadership and decision-making.
3. Managerial skills: Planning, decision making, organising and delegating.
4. Cognitive skills: Introspection, logical, analytical and critical thinking, creativity.
5. Interpersonal skills: Emotional intelligence, ability to listen and communicate well, conflict resolution and the ability to interact and engage well with people.

Furthermore, some middle managers may be promoted into more senior leadership positions into the future, acknowledging the positive impact of coaching interventions on their development. This heightened awareness may, in turn, contribute to a greater appreciation of formal coaching's value for middle managers, ultimately cementing its position as a sustainable leadership development strategy.

1.3 Anticipated Result

This research project has been undertaken to highlight the current trend within organisations that overlook the importance of the role played by its middle management. In recent years, more resources (ratio of spend), has been allocated to the development of middle managers (Hancock and Field, 2023). As organisations come to realise the critical role that middle managers have in operational success and leading teams, has resulted in a greater focus on their development (Hancock and Field, 2023). Boyett and Currie (2004) accentuates the need for organisations to see middle managers as more than mere implementors of their organisation's fixed strategy. They believe that middle managers should be a part of the strategic thinking, design, resource recruitment, implementation and the monitoring of the strategy should the organisation wish to achieve its strategic vision (Boyett and Currie, 2004, p.51-66).

One of the outputs of this work-based project, is to gain feedback from the candidates chosen to be coached, as to whether they had derived benefit for themselves. Should this be in the affirmative, the research will offer the researcher data to formulate an approach with organisations utilizing a marketing presentation that promotes formal coaching for middle managers. As the coaching industry grows in South Africa, organisations, utilizing coaching services, are more and more insisting on accredited data by accredited service providers. The findings of this study could be used to validate the efficacy of a coaching intervention within their organisation, in this case, middle managers.

1.4 Stated Objective

This study aims to address the research question: *"Does formal coaching, as opposed to on-the-job training alone, enhance middle managers' life and leadership skills, leading to tangible performance improvements?"* In addressing this question, the study seeks to either affirm or refute this proposition by evaluating the impact of formal coaching on a purposive sample of middle managers working in the same factory/role. The sample will be divided into two groups: one receiving a series of coaching sessions, while the other does not.

The purpose of this study is to gather data via interviews and questionnaires administered at the beginning and end of the coaching programme, and to report on the findings from both the coached and non-coached groups. Although only middle managers will be selected for coaching, the study will also incorporate interviews and questionnaire feedback from senior management, executives, and human capital professionals (HCPs). This research aims to raise awareness among these stakeholders regarding the efficacy of formal coaching for middle managers in the workplace.

The questionnaires to be administered to the selected middle managers undergoing coaching, their counterparts (i.e., those in similar positions and with comparable years of service), and the human capital professionals (HCPs) will be designed to minimize subjectivity and ensure measurable responses. Other performance metrics, such as intrapersonal, leadership, managerial, cognitive and interpersonal skills will also be measured and presented alongside the subjective data that the researcher will interpret and analyse in the findings section of this study.

This report's findings will benefit not only the researcher as an individual coach but also The Coaching Centre (TCC) and other coaching companies in promoting coaching services for middle managers. The interventions resulting from this research will have raised awareness among coached participants, their uncoached counterparts, leadership, and human capital professionals (HCPs). This initial study employs a small sample group, which is expected to have a limited impact in the short term. However, as coaching service providers increasingly incorporate middle management coaching into their offerings for organisational leaders and HCPs, this is anticipated to catalyse a movement towards establishing coaching as an industry norm/standard in South

Africa, where middle managers are encouraged to engage in formal coaching. Notably, TCC has a network of 50 affiliated coaches and over 600 alumni.

1.5 Learning Objectives

This research is grounded in a hypothetical question: “Does formal coaching, as opposed to on-the-job training alone, enhance middle managers’ life and leadership skills, leading to tangible performance improvements?” The researcher aims to prove or disprove this hypothesis through an unbiased investigation. If the hypothesis is disproven, the findings will be reported accordingly. The outcome of this research will provide empirical evidence on the efficacy of formal coaching for the selected subjects, offering the researcher an opportunity to advocate for greater inclusion of middle managers in formal coaching. If the hypothesis is proven true, the researcher, as an independent coach and Managing Director of The Coaching Centre, will develop a marketing strategy to promote formal coaching for middle managers to organisational executives. This strategy will be supported by a presentation showcasing statistics and findings from this project, highlighting the return on investment (ROI) for the organisation. The marketing strategy and accompanying PowerPoint presentation will form part of this study's outputs, contingent upon the hypothesis being proven true.

1.6 Ethical Implications of Insider Research

The researcher acknowledges a potential bias due to 15 years of personal experience in middle management positions. However, as an accredited Integral Coach, the researcher has been trained to manage dualities, judgments, and presencing, thereby minimizing the risk of bias. This, together with the use of reflexivity, which cautions the researcher to retain academic distance so as not to become emotionally involved, will be applied in the coaching sessions with middle managers. This will offer the researcher the capacity to recognise any incongruities in the participants’ narratives and ensure an objective interpretation is made from the data collected (Palaganas, Sanchez, Molintas, Caricativo, 2017). Method triangulation, involving data collection from multiple approaches, such as coaching, interviews, and questionnaires relating to the same topic, will further support the validation of findings and minimise insider research bias (Carter, 2014).

Prior to the coaching interventions, the researcher will conduct an information briefing to inform participants about the study's scope, timelines, confidentiality, and other essential aspects of their participation. The research question and purpose, as outlined in the approved Ethics Form, will also be shared. Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the research process at any time, without penalty or consequence, notwithstanding their provision of informed consent. This includes the freedom to withdraw if they perceive the coaching relationship between the researcher (acting as coach) and the participant (coachee) as ineffective.

The researcher commits to adhere to the university's minimum basic ethical principles as laid out in the student handbook and to conduct this work-based project with the utmost integrity.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background

This work-based study aims to investigate the impact of formal coaching on middle managers within South African organisations. The research purpose is to examine whether formal coaching, as opposed to on-the-job training alone, enhances middle managers' life and leadership skills, leading to improved job performance and overall efficacy. The evaluation metrics for assessing post-coaching performance will comprise intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, management and leadership skills, and cognitive skills.

The candidates are selected using a purposive sampling process. The historical position is that formal coaching was primarily marketed for use by Executives of organisations as it was thought that middle management only executed the strategic plan of the Executives. John L Bennet and Mary Bush, co-authors of "Coaching for Change", writes, "Coaching is no longer seen as a perquisite exclusively for executives—it is used throughout an organization, with individuals and teams" (Bennet & Bush, 2009, p.2). This affirms the trend that the researcher is witnessing in South Africa, where the gap in spending between Executives versus middle to senior management is narrowing. Bennet and Mary adds further, "Many companies now train managers in coaching skills, or employ internal coaches, to create a coaching culture." (Bennet & Bush, 2009, p.2).

The research approach is qualitative as it will draw from the candidates chosen, their changed behavior once they have been formally coached, should that be observed. Their feedback through

the coaching sessions, positive or negative, their experience and observed shift in their way of being or lack of shift, will be captured and reported upon. Furthermore, any changes observed by their superiors and/or subordinates, will also be tabulated. No observable changes will also be recorded. The research method applied will be constructivism which will be facilitated through one-on-one coaching sessions. By design, the researcher has constructed this research study. The researcher has designed this research study in respect of cultivating a partnership with participants of the coaching sessions. This will offer these middle managers a platform of equality and freedom to be able to express their stories that will be captured in this grounded constructivism theory approach (Mills, Bonner, Francis, 2006, p.8-13). The study thus aims to determine what, if any, shift has taken place in the coached candidate versus their counterparts who works in a similar level/position as them, but who was not formally coached.

2.2 Rationale

This work-based project aims to use a small purposive sample to determine the impact of formal coaching on middle managers selected. The results from this study will inform the researcher of next steps to be taken. It is envisaged, should the hypothesis prove to be true, i.e. that formal coaching of middle managers does have a tangible and positive impact on their performance, the researcher will, as a next step, produce a marketing presentation. This will highlight this study's findings and it will be distributed to all affiliated Coaches of TCC for presentation to Senior Executives of organisations, with the objective in mind of promoting coaching in particular for middle managers in organisations.

2.3 Learning Objectives

All levels of management lead employees, with middle managers, by far, having the bulk of the employees working within their structure. This enables them to more easily identify those employees with talent. In their book, "Power to the middle", Schaninger, Hancock and Field (2023) underscore the crucial role that middle managers play in "winning the war on talent" through their people skills in attracting and retaining top talent (Schaninger, Hancock and Field, 2023).

The researcher wishes to determine through the study that, should focus and coaching spend shift more evenly towards the development of middle managers, will organizations benefit hugely from a strong middle (core)?

The researcher wishes to determine through the study what the project stakeholders' understanding is of formal coaching; are all coachees that are selected coachable; will data be able to be extracted from the subjective feedback received during the one-on-one coaching sessions; will all the responses via questionnaires, interviews be free of bias; is there perceived psychological safety for truthful responses by all?

2.4 Anticipated Result

Huy (2001), in his study "In Praise of Middle Managers", highlights the strong theoretical foundation for the significance of middle managers. He identifies four key roles that enable them to influence culture, drive innovation, and enhance performance: translating, synthesizing, championing, and facilitating. This study aims to explore the impact of skills development, specifically formal coaching, on the role of middle management in organisations. The researcher seeks to investigate the effect of formal coaching on middle managers, comparing those who received coaching with those who did not (the control group). The study will incorporate feedback from various stakeholders, including coached middle managers, their superiors, and subordinates, via questionnaires and HCPs interview comments. This will provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic and its findings, which may either affirm or refute the research question: "Does formal coaching, as opposed to on-the-job training only, offer middle managers greater life and leadership skills that can translate into tangible improved performance?"

This study aims to investigate the causal relationship between formal coaching for middle managers and improved team and organisational performance. If a positive correlation is established, it may inform policy changes and expenditure patterns, leading to increased investment in formal coaching for middle managers. To enhance the validity of the findings, this study will employ data triangulation, combining subjective feedback from coaching sessions, interviews, and questionnaire responses with objective performance metrics. Should the data indicate a positive relationship between external professional coaching and improved middle management performance, this will provide the coaching industry with a valuable reference point for marketing professional coaching services to middle managers. Consequently, coaching companies may reassess their marketing strategies, shifting their focus from exclusively targeting

executives to catering to middle managers, thereby initiating an emerging trend in the South African market and potentially beyond.

3. Literature Review

3.1 Introduction

This literature review explores the origins and history of coaching, critically examining the extent to which the topic has been researched and identifying potential gaps in existing studies. This analysis will provide the foundation for the present study. As a relatively new industry, coaching is in a state of flux, with only partial regulation. This study aims to investigate the extent to which this phenomenon, along with other dynamics, contributes to the limited participation of middle managers in formal coaching.

3.2. Definitions

By definition, coaching is a broad concept. This section provides an overview of coaching, encompassing both business and integral coaching. However, it does not distinguish between internal line managers who coach their subordinates and the use of external professional coaches. This study aims to provide this distinction.

3.2.1 Coaching

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines coaching as being the process of a coach that instructs, prompts or directs individuals and teams in the context of sport, also in areas of individual development or professional skills (Merriam-webster, 2002).

3.2.2 Business Coaching

While Merriam-Webster Dictionary is not able to provide a specific definition for Business Coaching, it states generally speaking, that it is a process by which a coach guides a business person in achieving their work related goals.

3.2.3 Integral Coaching

Similarly, no definition is provided for Integral Coaching, only that it is generally understood as coaching the whole person using a comprehensive methodology. It further states that the approach is aimed at building an individual's level of competence to manage the challenges that they are confronted with. Communication skills, self-awareness, awareness of the environment and their personal behavior are attributes they are invited to consider (London, Sessa & Shelley, 2023).

3.3 History of Coaching

3.3.1 The origins of Coaching

The practice of coaching can be observed in our everyday activity, often executed unconsciously upon others. We are all coaches and are familiar with many coaching tools that we apply daily (Porché & Niederer, 2010). Stout-Rostron (2012) asserts more definitively, that coaching as a concept is not new, it originated in the world of sport. Coaches working as practitioners within the field of business, consider themselves as being part of a distinctly unique emerging profession (Stout-Rostron, 2012). They see their field of work very different to that of a sports coach or teacher, trainer, counsellor or mentor. In reference to this, Stout-Rostron (2012) defines business coaching relationship between the coach and their client as an intervention that aims to improve individual and organization performance.

This is further supported by Spaten and Flensburg (2013) who conducted further research that determined that despite coaching being a large and growing industry, there is an inadequate amount of research in this field. The coaching profession, as an industry worldwide, is fluid and is, to varied degrees, regulated. Many new candidates from diverse backgrounds are entering this field (De Haan, Duckworth, Birch, & Jones, 2013). This is further supported by Feldman & Lankau (2005) who asserts that as a result of the increase in demand for coaching, individuals from a wide array of backgrounds have added coaching to their repertoire of services (Feldman & Lankau, 2005).

Harvard Business Review of 2004 described the business coaching landscape in USA as untamed and disorganized, much like the Wild West of olden days (Sherman & Freas, 2004).

Amidst this chaos and risk there was also great opportunity (Sherman & Freas, 2004). Einzig (2017) compares global coaching trends to that of South Africa and stresses the importance of awareness to cultural aspects within the context of South Africa's divisive race classification history and its legacy of Apartheid. She emphasizes the importance of inclusivity and diversity within the context of age, woman in leadership, millennials versus older professionals as well as regional cultural differences (Einzig, 2017).

3.4 Coaching Research and Application

3.4.1 Limited research - manager as coach

Research on employees being coached by their manager is limited and this results in there being a large gap in literature and relevant findings on this topic (Crabb, 2011). Viera (2021) states that organisations, in their quest to improve the outputs of individuals, can access both mentoring and coaching as effective interventions. Both are developmental tools used to improve individuals' personal performance that is further enhanced through organisational opportunities and own initiative. Too often, however, the specific attributes that characterises these two different approaches are misunderstood and in some cases seen as being interchangeable (Viera, 2021). Many self-proclaimed coaches enter the business coaching arena after having worked in various industries as part of their professional career, declaring themselves as coaching consultants (Hamlin, Ellinger, & Beattie, 2008).

According to Stout-Rostron (2020), employees of organisations around the globe are not to be seen merely as workers hired to perform a certain duty. She states further that all employees, (both leaders and followers) are to be recognized as a whole being with multiple layers of emotions and feelings which are hidden from the other person/s (Stout-Rostron, 2020).

What employees are dealing with in their personal lives and how it impacts them emotionally, physically and mentally, will ultimately show up in their work performance (Abrahams, 2012). The converse is true when there is a coaching intervention by an accredited, professional coach that focusses on all the aspects of the person through the process of a coaching series (de Haan & Nieb, 2015). The resultant positive change thus takes place at an internal and external level of a client. Referencing the Onion Peel Model, the author advocates that the process of coaching aids the peeling away of layers of the individual's lived experience, their behavior and beliefs (de Haan

& Nieb, 2015). Just like the peeling of an onion, the conversation between coach and client allows for the client to access greater levels of self-awareness that leads to personal transformation.

3.4.2 Business Coaching at the Executive Level

A fourfold increase in productivity was evident in those who had executive coaching and who were exposed to aspects of problem-solving, goal setting, evaluation and feedback as opposed to those who only received training and education (Olivero, Bane & Kopelman, 1997). Managers working with an executive coach are able to formulate specific goals and demonstrate improved performance over the peers who were not coached (Smither, London, Flautt, Vargas, & Kucine, 2003).

Coaching for Executives in the business world has taken on an increasingly important role as a form of technique for training and developing Executives (MacKie, 2014). There is much research and focus around the coaching of 'Executives', less for middle managers whom the bulk of shop floor employees report into (MacKie, 2014). The main purpose of this method of executive training and development is therefore to encourage change in the way executives behave in their work (Lewis-Duarte & Bligh, 2012).

3.4.3 Business Coaching for Middle Managers

For many, the term "Middle manager" may appear outdated like something from a former, bygone industrial era. It is a fact that in recent years, middle management roles was seen to be redundant and the incumbents superfluous to the needs of a modern, lean organization (Field, E., Hancock, B. & Schaninger, B., 2023). In their book, *Power to the Middle*, Field, Hancock and Schaninger (2023) refutes this outdated view point and calls for a fresh take on the relevant and unique position of middle managers. Working closely to the ground and their ability to guide their teams on company strategies, makes middle managers unexpendable, they are organisations' hidden gems (Field et al., 2023).

There is very little research conducted around the efficacy of middle managers being coached by an external coach versus by their line manager (Wang, Lai, Xu & McDowall, 2021). While some similarities exist, there are still significant differences between external coaching and internal line manager coaching that can be listed. External coaches are accredited with qualifications from registered coaching institutions and bodies, while managers might have some training, the most

have zero formal coach training (Wang et al., 2021). A survey from a research project conducted amongst line managers who coach middle managers, revealed that more than 23% of them had less than a full day's coaching training (Wang et al., 2021).

3.5 The aim of this study

The primary aim of this study is to investigate and report on the impact of formal coaching on a purposive sampling group, namely middle managers in various organisations, over a series of four to six sessions. Additionally, this study seeks to identify the factors contributing to the underrepresentation of middle managers in formal coaching. This research will engage multiple stakeholders, exploring their perspectives, roles, and potential shifts that could facilitate greater middle management participation in coaching.

3.5.1. The Research Question and scope

The question the researcher seeks to answer through the study is a hypothesis, "Does formal coaching, as opposed to on the job training only, offer middle managers greater life and leadership skills that can translate into tangible improved performance?" The research will take place in organisations using a purposive, qualitative research approach. The participants will be middle managers, their direct line managers and subordinates, HCPs and the CEO of a Coaching company. Data will be gathered in the form of interviews, feedback forms and coaching sessions.

3.5.2 The debate - Internal coach (line manager) versus external coach (an accredited, professional coach)

Previous studies undertaken have shown that coaching in the work environment is different to professional coaching practices (Anderson, 2013). Age, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, level of work, qualification or experience of the different managers are unlikely to change their predisposition to engage in management coaching (Anderson, 2013). The research findings from a study affirmed that internal middle management coaching was limited and in comparison to external coaching, it produces less than desired results (Wang et al., 2021). It is also clear to see that the coaching skills and methods used by professional external coaches are far more defined than that of managers who coach subordinates within organisations (Digirolamo & Tkach, 2019). Professional coaches have also developed a well-honed process that they apply when coaching

their clients. (Digirolamo & Tkach, 2019). Trust plays a pivotal role in the coach/client relationship and confidentiality is the cornerstone thereof (Passmore & Sinclair, 2020). This is enshrined in the International Coaching Federation (ICF) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct in Coaching and it encourages self-reflection for the coach and client (Passmore & Sinclair, 2020). As trust plays a critical part in human relationships, both the manager and the subordinate need to work at it to earn the trust of each other. (Forbes Expert Panel®, 2022). Managers have power through positional authority while their subordinates that they coach may have reservations in confiding in the manager for various reasons (French & Raven, 1959). This can pose a challenge in the coach/client relationship. This challenge can be averted should managers be given coach training to equip them with the methodology that will help them build a two-way relationship between them and their subordinates. (Forbes Expert Panel®, 2022).

“Partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential”, is the definition for coaching as endorsed by the ICF (Laurie Fitzpatrick, 2014, p.161-171). *A professional coach sees the client as an equal partner and co-creates the session with the client, allowing the client to determine the direction of the conversation. The client therefore takes the lead. This is in contrast to hierarchical structure within an organisation that would be in conflict with the concept of equal partnering as the manager inherently has greater authority over the subordinate* (Laurie Fitzpatrick, 2014, p.161-171). Employees have a lower degree of confidence that confidentiality will be maintained in a coaching process when the coach is a direct line manager of the client (subordinate). This results in the client being less transparent during the coaching sessions. To avert this, the services of a professional (external) coach could be enlisted to ensure that the level of confidence regarding confidentiality increases (Clutterbuck, 2009). The professional coach can include the client’s line manager at any time during the coaching series for alignment of the objectives for the client to achieve (Clutterbuck, 2009).

A conflict of interest may arise for managers as coaches as they have to wear both the hat of the coach as well as that of the manager employed by the organisation. A situation could unfold where the manager feels obligated to share important information gathered during the confidential coaching session with the organisation as it relates to its ongoing success (Wheeler, 2011).

3.5.3 Trends observed in respect of the middle manager’s role

Over the last decade there has been a major trend observed in the shift from the traditional role of the manager to that of a manager/leader as coach (Ibarra, & Scoular, 2019). This shift is validated through ongoing research being conducted with organisations gearing up for the new digital age. To bear testimony of this, there has been an increase in the number students enrolled in executive coaching programmes as well as increased demand for coaching leadership skills from the many organisations (Ibarra, & Scoular, 2019). Coaching as a skill, is fast becoming an essential part of the ongoing development of managers at all levels within the organisation.

Based on the literature review, the researcher sees a clear gap in the research relating to the effective application of formal external coaching for middle management versus internal line manager coaching. This study aims to contribute towards closing this gap.

4. Methods

4.1 Introduction

This study will employ an epistemological perspective, adopting a constructivist approach to qualitative research. This involves using interviews, questionnaires, and coaching conversations to gather data (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, & Bezuidenhout, 2021). The research design will be underpinned by an ontological perspective of relativism, which posits that reality is subjective and relative to individual perspectives (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2021). This approach will inform the researcher's methodology, including research design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and the co-construction of meaning with participants (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2021). The researcher acknowledges the potential for insider bias due to their own experience as a middle manager.

The following research methodology components will be addressed:

1. Research paradigm
2. Approach to the study
3. Sampling strategy
4. Questionnaire design
5. Data collection methods
6. Data analysis techniques
7. Ethical considerations
8. Summary

4.2 Research paradigm

Initially, three to five participants from the middle management section were targeted for coaching sessions. Ultimately, 7 participants took part, which was accepted by the researcher as it provided a broader dataset for analysis. This study adopts a constructivist hypothesis, positing that individuals' lived experiences and connections with others shape their reality (Du Plooy-Cilliers et al., 2021). Reality is subjective and influenced by personal experiences and acquired knowledge. A qualitative research approach will be employed to explore the impact of coaching sessions on individuals' experiences, outlooks, and realities. This study supposes that opportunities can ignite new possibilities. This notion is linked to the study's hypothesis, which posits that formal coaching can enhance middle managers' opportunities for personal growth, success, and managerial efficacy, as measured by organisational metrics. Conversely, the absence of such opportunities may lead to decreased employee well-being and reduced success in middle management skills development. Wang (2021) argues that line managers lack the necessary qualifications and expertise to provide holistic coaching to their subordinates (Wang, Lai, Xu & McDowall, 2021).

This research aims to prove or disprove the hypothesis by gathering data through coaching conversations, interviews, and questionnaires on the impact of formal coaching on middle managers. The study will compare the impact on middle managers who have participated in coaching conversations with their uncoached colleagues in similar roles. Additionally, the study will include interviews with Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) to gather their perspectives and insights into organisational policies related to middle manager development. Furthermore, an interview with the CEO of a large consulting coaching business that offers formal coaching to clients will also contribute to the data collection and analysis.

Opportunity and possibility are crucial components in this context, while inequality is another significant concept that warrants consideration, particularly in the post-apartheid South African landscape. Historically, many individuals from diverse racial backgrounds have been hindered in their career advancement, becoming 'stuck' at middle management level (Hendricks, 2003). This phenomenon is not attributed to a lack of potential, but rather to the persistence of inherent prejudice within some senior leadership structures. During the apartheid era, a systemic superiority complex prevailed, resulting in preferential treatment of white individuals in employment and promotional opportunities. Although the advent of democracy in 1994 introduced transformation policies, which organisations were obligated to implement, the Commission for

Employment Equity reports that these initiatives have not adequately addressed inequality over the past three decades. Formal Apartheid is dead, but its structural inequalities and systematic discrimination lives on (Hendricks, 2003).

Data from the 22nd Commission for Employment Equity annual Report 2021 – 2022.

Table 29.2						
CATEGORIES	Barriers			Affirmative Action Measures		
	Yes	No	Total	Yes	No	TOTAL
Job assignments	853	26164	27017	697	26320	27017
	3,2%	96,8%	100,0%	2,6%	97,4%	100,0%
Work environment and facilities	4308	22709	27017	3821	23196	27017
	15,9%	84,1%	100,0%	14,1%	85,9%	100,0%
Training and development	6933	20084	27017	6570	20447	27017
	25,7%	74,3%	100,0%	24,3%	75,7%	100,0%
Performance and evaluation systems	4029	22988	27017	3722	23295	27017
	14,9%	85,1%	100,0%	13,8%	86,2%	100,0%
Promotions	2085	24932	27017	1862	25155	27017
	7,7%	92,3%	100,0%	6,9%	93,1%	100,0%
Transfers	504	26513	27017	413	26604	27017
	1,9%	98,1%	100,0%	1,5%	98,5%	100,0%
Succession and experience planning	5968	21049	27017	5591	21426	27017
	22,1%	77,9%	100,0%	20,7%	79,3%	100,0%

Table 29.2 suggests that companies are not conducting proper workplace analysis and as a result, failing to capture barriers, or not consulting on barrier analysis conducted before developing their EE Plans and submission of EE Reports.

Of great concern to the CEE is that 25.7% of employers reported that they still have barriers on training and development; and 22,1% of employers still have barriers on Succession and experience planning. This confirms the lack of transformation at the three upper echelons (Top, Senior and Middle management levels) of the workforce.

Figure 1: COMMISSION FOR EMPLOYMENT EQUITY, barriers on training & development, South Africa, 2019-2021 (Source: Department of Labour, 2022).

9.1 Workforce Profile, Workforce Movement and Skills Development at the Top Management Level by population group, gender and disability

National EAP by Population and Gender Group* (*Source: Statistics South Africa, (QLFS, Quarter 3, 2021)						
MALE			FEMALE			Total
AM	African Male	43.6%	AF	African Female	35.8%	79.4%
CM	Coloured Male	5.0%	CF	Coloured Female	4.1%	9.1%
IM	Indian Male	1.8%	IF	Indian Female	0.9%	2.7%
WM	White Male	4.9%	WF	White Female	3.9%	8.8%
TOTAL		55.3%			44.7%	100.0%

9.1.1 Top management by population group (all employers) - 2019 to 2021

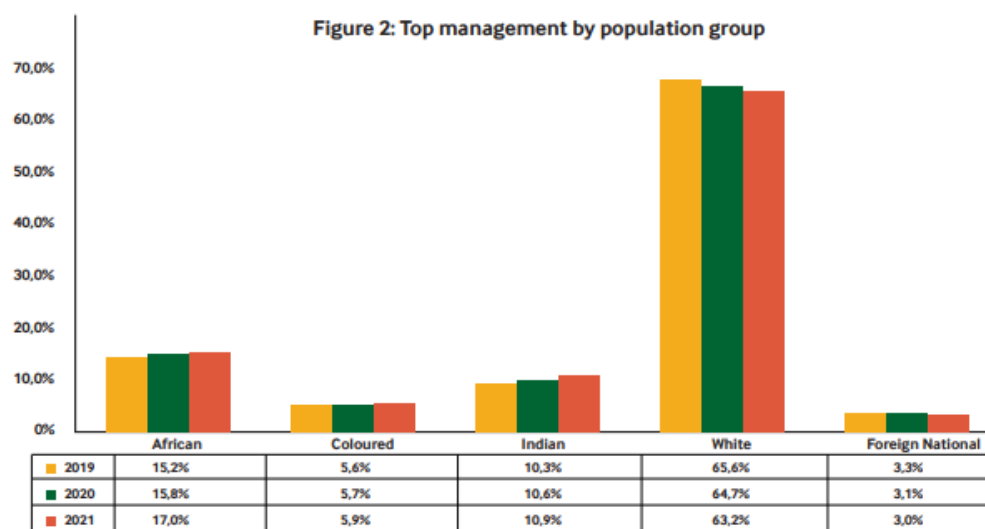


Figure 2 shows that from 2019 to 2021 the White and Indian population groups remain over represented and the African and Coloured population groups remain underrepresented against their EAP at Top Management. The White population exhibits a gradual decline in representation, with an average 1% decline at this occupational level. Foreign National representation is declining at a slow pace, which may be as a result of slow skills transfer at the Top Management level.

Figure 2: COMMISSION FOR EMPLOYMENT EQUITY, skills development, South Africa, 2019-2021 (Source: Department of Labour, 2022).

Although inequality is not a primary focus of this study, it will be considered as a potential factor that may emerge during data collection and analysis. It is acknowledged that this might not be a common consideration in similar studies conducted in other contexts. Moreover, the researcher is aware of potential insider bias, given their 15-year experience as a middle manager. This reflexivity has prompted the application of greater objectivity when working with the data. Triangulation, involving data collection from multiple sources (coaching, interviews, and questionnaires), will further support the validation of findings. To minimize bias, professional

coaching practices, such as paraphrasing, will be employed during coaching sessions. Participants will complete questionnaires independently, and only accurate and complete statements will be referenced in the findings. As evident from the above considerations, every effort will be made to ensure that this potential anomaly does not compromise the study's overarching purpose, as outlined in the introduction.

4.3 Approach to the study

The approach taken is one of assumption that coaching for executives of organisations in South Africa are prioritized over middle managers by virtue of their position and perceived greater importance relating to organisational strategy (Field, Hancock, Smallets & Weddle, 2023). This preference to coaching opportunities is also largely due to the false paradigm that executives' input to the organisation's success is one of strategy, while middle managers perceived role is that of supervision and operation management. Field (2023) contrasts this view, in that he believes that middle managers have a role to play in strategy, albeit the interpretation, implementation and monitoring thereof (Field, E., Hancock, B. & Schaninger, B., 2023). The researcher will hold this view lightly until empirical data is gathered and the findings affirm or disproves it. It is envisaged that a rich source of data will be sourced via the interviews as well as feedback from questionnaires prior and post the coaching sessions that will secure a measured finding to this study.

4.4 Sampling

A purposive sampling method is proposed for this study, as it involves selecting participants currently occupying middle management positions. Ideally, the sampling pairs should work at the same managerial level, within the same organisation, and report to the same departmental head. Random sampling or other sampling methods would not be suitable for this study. The researcher will approach middle managers and invite them to participate in a study involving a series of coaching sessions. Participants will need to obtain approval from their immediate superior for time off to attend a maximum of four one-hour coaching sessions. Additionally, participants will be required to complete pre- and post-coaching intervention questionnaires and request that their superior and a subordinate (or two) also complete the questionnaires. The researcher will then request that a colleague in a similar role, who will not receive coaching, complete the pre- and post-coaching intervention questionnaires, thus forming a control group for comparison purposes.

4.5 The questionnaire design

The questionnaires will be designed to serve as a guide to the interviews and coaching sessions. It will be constructed around the concepts of leadership, opportunities, personal growth and relationality that contributes to organizational success and people development. The questionnaires can be found in the appendix section.

4.6 Data collection

Primary data for this study will be collected through a series of coaching conversations with participants selected from the purposive sampling group. Three to five middle managers will undergo coaching over two to three 90-minute sessions. With participants' consent, audio recordings of these sessions will be stored in an electronic folder. Interviews or questionnaires will be administered to the superiors of coached middle managers, depending on the preferred communication mode of the targeted sampling group. Coached middle managers and a colleague in a similar position will be asked to complete questionnaires before and after coaching. Additional interviews with a CEO and the head of a coaching school will also be stored in an online electronic folder.

All data will be stored in an orderly repository until such time that the data will be analysed to make meaning of so as to answer the research question as true or false. Much of the data will be subjective in nature and the researcher is aware that all data will need to be re-read and audio reviewed and then following a sequential stepped plan in analyzing the data using a deductive and inductive approach. All data will be saved and stored as portfolio of evidence of this study and will be discarded once the university deems it no longer necessary as evidence.

4.7 Data analysis

The data analysis will be managed in two ways. The first type of data is that from the interviews conducted and the responses from the questionnaires. Both these activities offer a clear scale in response for easy analysis. The coaching sessions are different in that many data points can be observed which needs interpretation and can serve as additional sources of data. This includes the way the participant answers a question, what is being said or what it is that they are not saying

as well as the non-verbal cues. Characteristic of a general interview approach being adopted for this study, participants are asked to respond to a set of predetermined questions while following the application of a conversational approach. A great degree of freedom is given to the participant to express themselves. The researcher will remain vigilant to observe aspects of latent racism and apartheid legacy traits that may form part of the data collected. While the process of extracting this data will be managed sensitively, it will be sorted from other data collected that is considered central to this study and in answering the question that it poses.

4.8 Ethical considerations

As the study primarily involves coaching conversations (in-depth interviews) with employees of an organisation, a coaching agreement will be signed with all the participants being coached. Aspects of confidentiality, non-prejudice or judgement of the participant is included in this agreement as well as non-disclosure of company information shared during the coaching conversations. The researcher also commits to comply fully with the Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA) that is in force in South Africa since 1 July 2021. The act undertakes to protect individuals as well as organisations personal information. Participants are informed that they are free to withdraw from the study at any point during the research process.

As an insider researcher, the researcher's personal experiences with discriminatory laws and institutionalised racism, which hindered his career advancement as a person of colour, provide a unique perspective. Although aspects of discrimination are likely to emerge in the data, careful consideration will be given to distinguishing these aspects, ensuring that the remaining data aligns with the research question. Strategies for mitigating insider bias are discussed in detail in the research paradigm section above.

4.9 Summary

The researcher wishes to answer the question posed by this study using the various methods as noted in the introduction and notation above. It is noteworthy to express, that the researcher is not attached to a specific outcome and will be guided in authenticity of the data as it is presented, interpreted in accordance with the method chosen and analysed. There is always the risk that information received from the participants are filtered through a lens of their own perspective on life, what they deem as is deemed good or bad or other and respond unauthentic which might

distort the findings. It could also be that they do not believe sufficient psychological safety exists within the process and this fear inhibits their freedom of participation. Every effort will be made by the researcher to minimize this by creating a safe space and a place of trust for each participant. For this reason, no AI tools will be used to record the sessions.

5. Findings

5.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings derived from qualitative data analysis and interpretation. The data comprised transcriptions of verbal and written responses from participants during and immediately following coaching conversations and interviews. This data was captured via feedback forms and subsequently interpreted by the researcher to facilitate meaning-making through analysis. To provide a complementary analysis, Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) were also interviewed to gauge their understanding of coaching and mentoring concepts, as well as the distinction between external coaches and line-manager coaching. The researcher noted that all HCPs requested anonymity to ensure open responses, untainted by organizational policies or norms. The researcher appreciates this level of openness, which yielded authentic responses from HCPs who participated in interviews or completed questionnaires. To maintain participant anonymity, HCPs will be referred to using pseudonyms throughout this study. The assigned pseudonyms are as follows:

1. Wealth Management & Investment sector - WM&I
2. Government / Municipality sector - G/M
3. Financial Services – Fin.Serve
4. Media & Advertising - Media

An interview with the CEO of an Integral Coaching and Mentoring company provided valuable insights into the history and evolution of coaching and mentoring in South Africa over the past 21 years, coinciding with the establishment of the company by its CEO and founder.

5.1.1 Profile of Participants

A greater number of middle managers participated in coaching sessions than initially anticipated, with 7 ultimately taking part, exceeding the initial target of 3-5 participants. This increase was

viewed positively by the researcher, as it provided a more comprehensive dataset for analysis. In contrast, the response rate from middle managers' peers and subordinates was poor, with few completing the questionnaire. According to middle managers' feedback during coaching sessions, this reluctance stemmed partly from their hesitation to comment on colleagues' personal development or their immediate line managers. Some Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) reported concerns from middle managers' subordinates, citing insufficient psychological safety to express views about their immediate superiors. The researcher believes this indicates a distressed workplace culture, necessitating a targeted intervention to address its root causes. Line managers cited additional reasons for the poor response rate, including limited daily interaction among peers working in different departments, varying shift patterns, and remote working arrangements, which made it challenging to assess the coached middle managers more broadly. The researcher respected the position of those who declined to participate and applied no pressure to encourage their involvement.

A key objective of this study was to evaluate the extent of transformation among coached individuals, as perceived by their peers and subordinates. Regrettably, the researcher notes that a valuable data point was compromised due to the limited response from peers and subordinates. Nevertheless, detailed feedback was obtained from line managers of coached middle managers, as well as from the coached middle managers themselves, regarding the impact of the coaching intervention. The researcher observed notable optimism and active engagement among coached middle managers, who demonstrated a willingness to adopt alternative leadership approaches. This engagement provided a rich dataset for recursive analysis through successive cycles of interpretation (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, & Bezuidenhout, 2021). This iterative process, known as the constant comparison method, facilitated a deeper understanding of the data. The interconnected processes of data gathering, analysis, and interpretation are inherently non-linear, focusing on meaning-making by coaching participants and presenting multiple variables for multifaceted analysis (Du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis, & Bezuidenhout, 2021).

Table 5.1 below lists the participants that were coached, the number of years in their position as well as the industry they work in. Data collected from these participants were compiled, interpreted and analysed for the purpose of this study and will be presented in this section. All the middle managers that were coached have been in their designated positions for more than one year, reporting to the same line manager.

Table 5.1: Profile of coached participants

Participant details	Number of years in the position	Industry
Participant 1	Since 2019 (5+ years)	Wealth Management & Investment
Participant 2	Since 2019 (5+ years)	Financial Services
Participant 3	Since 2021 (2+ years)	Government Health Services
Participant 4	Since 2022 (1+years)	Financial Services
Participant 5	Since 2022 (2+ years)	Media & Advertising
Participant 6	Since 2022 (1+ years)	Primary Health Care
Participant 7	Since 2021 (2+ years)	Manufacturing / Engineering

5.1.2 Number of coaching participants who actively responded

A total of 17 participants fully engaged in the study, comprising 7 middle managers who received coaching (six individual sessions), four Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) who responded via interviews or questionnaires, and one CEO of a coaching company who was interviewed. All 7 middle managers participated fully in the scheduled individual coaching sessions. As noted earlier, the number of middle managers who received coaching exceeded initial expectations. The primary reason for this increase was that coaching was offered pro bono, sparking interest among numerous individuals. This unforeseen interest in coaching provides an additional data point, indicating that a larger number of middle managers were eager to receive coaching. The researcher proposes that a further independent study could investigate the factors that facilitate or hinder participation in coaching programmes.

5.1.3 Selection criteria of the participants

Individual candidates were purposively selected as they were all members from the middle management section of employees. The first criteria set was that they were in the employ of the organisation for at one year, reporting to the same line manager. The second criteria was that the middle manager was one of at least two middle managers that reported directly to the same line manager. It can be reported that all participants met this criteria.

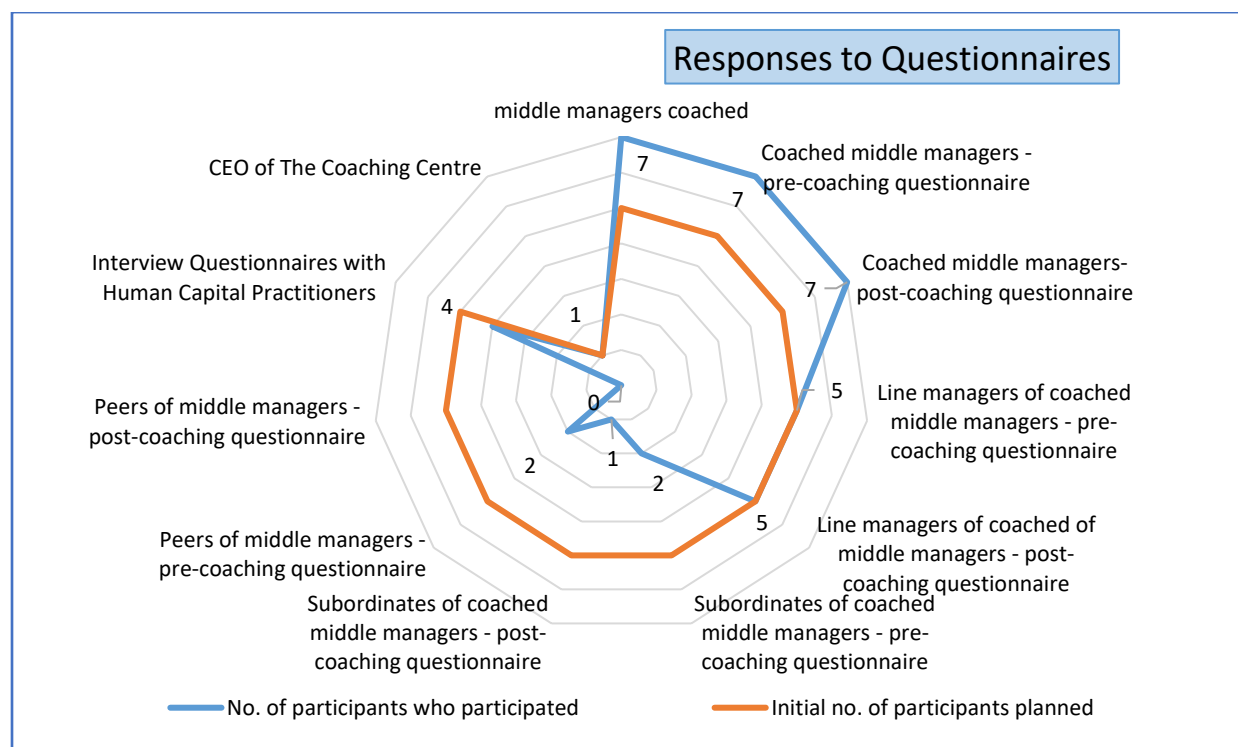
Individual candidates were purposively selected from the middle management section of employees. The selection criteria included: (1) a minimum of one year's employment with the organisation, reporting to the same line manager; and (2) being one of at least two middle

managers reporting directly to the same line manager. It is confirmed that all participants met these criteria.

5.2 Responses to the questionnaires

The response rates varied significantly. Notably, the 7 coached middle managers achieved a 100% completion rate for both the pre- and post-questionnaires. These questionnaires aimed to gather data from the coached middle managers themselves on the impact of coaching, while also soliciting feedback from their line managers, peers, and subordinates. The response rates from the various groups are illustrated in the graph below.

Graph 5.2: Responses to the Questionnaires



5.2.1 Participants and Human Capital Practitioners' questionnaire responses

There was full participation from the 7 coached middle managers and their five line managers, but a poor response from their peers and subordinates. As a reference group, they are underrepresented and data from these two groups were excluded in these findings.

5.2.1.1 Understanding the difference between coaching, mentoring and therapy

The majority of respondents understood therapy as a treatment that helps individuals overcome mental or emotional trauma; however, they struggled to delineate a clear distinction between coaching and mentoring.

*“To my understanding, coaching is when you almost hand hold someone and follow a **“show and tell”** fashion of interaction mainly to assist in someone’s growth within their career path” – P1*

*“My understanding is that Coaching is a partnership between two parties where **the coach provides tools to mentor** the mentee based on his or her experience” – P2*

*Coaching is imparting life skills to someone working together and to **direct them** in improving their performance and skills” – P3*

*“Coaching happens when a **more experienced person helps a more junior one** to navigate situations that are new and tricky to the junior person and mentoring is more long-term when one senior in the company is partnered with a junior to guide them” – P6*

Most participants who responded stated that coaching and mentoring were perceived as a single process. This amalgamation of the two concepts was reinforced by the responses from line managers.

*“**Coaching / mentoring techniques** are used by a manager or experienced worker in the company to teach new employees new skills” (P7 line manager)*

*“The manager’s duty is to **coach his employees by showing them what is required** and providing training and guidance in the long run” (P3 line manager)*

*“Coaching happens when a manager **directs** a new employee or someone who is being introduced to a new task, but mentoring is the ongoing monitoring of his performance” (P5 line manager)*

*“Therapy is different as it relates to therapists helping people work through trauma, but **coaching and mentoring is one and the same thing**. Every manager needs to coach and mentor his subordinates” (P2 line manager)*

It is noteworthy that the same question was posed to coached and uncoached middle managers, as well as their direct line managers. The feedback received indicates that line managers' understanding of coaching and its distinction from other approaches is also unclear, with some using the terms interchangeably. The responses listed above are representative of the overall sentiment, with a similar vein of thought evident in most submissions, except for one respondent who demonstrated a clear understanding of the concepts. The data reveals that only 20% of respondents could distinguish between coaching, mentoring, and therapy. This finding may be attributed to another statistic, which shows that none of the line managers had received coaching during their tenure as middle managers or in their current role. The researcher posits that line managers lack a personal reference point for coaching and its value proposition, which may have led to a lack of appreciation or even resentment towards coaching:

“No, we never had such luxuries as they have today, we had to find our way on our own” (P7)

The researcher highlighted key words to draw attention to the non-coaching language. Notably, one of the Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) interviewed also exhibited a lack of understanding of the concepts of coaching and mentoring:

*“I have had the privilege to **coach** middle managers for the past 2 years. Specifically aimed at organisational needs. i.e. an **employee is struggling with substance abuse** and how the manager will approach such a situation.” (GM)*

The responses from middle managers undergoing coaching, their line managers, and Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) suggest a limited understanding of coaching. This finding highlights a significant knowledge gap regarding the distinction between coaching and mentoring. Notably, the sample represents multiple sectors of industry, underscoring the broader relevance of this knowledge gap. Garvey, Stokes, and Megginson (2014) provide a comprehensive exploration of the differences between coaching and mentoring in their book, *Coaching and Mentoring: Theory*

and Practice, emphasizing the importance of clarity, flexibility, and supervision in effective practice (Garvey, Stokes & Megginson, 2014).

What is heartening is that the post-coaching questionnaire analysis indicated a new and deeper insight to the difference of coaching and mentoring by the participants:

“Coaching focuses on the present and future, providing strategies for specific life/career goals while mentoring focuses on the present and the future between an older, more experienced person and a younger person wanting to learn and grow in their career” (P5)

“A formal coaching programme defines goals and objectives upfront, areas for focus/development and a thought partner who assists with unpacking through reflective questions for the individual to problem solve as needed” (P4)

The researcher conducted an in-depth analysis of participants' understanding of coaching versus mentoring. The results indicate that without a clear understanding of these concepts, there is little likelihood of them being sought as a development tool.

5.2.1.2 Coaching within organisations

The role of Coaching within organisations clarified by HCPs:

“Coaching” as we refer to it within corporates, usually target the improving of specific core skills, achieving performance goals, or enhancing leadership capabilities. Group executives are usually coached around specific objectives using external coaches” (WM&I)

“The HR Department (HCPs) typically design programmes to address organizational challenges, foster personal growth, or develop high-potential employees. The gap within the HCPs environment is a long-term focus on monitoring personal growth to ensure it is transferred effectively.” (Fin.Serve)

“We only coordinate the contract and facilitate the coaching sessions for our executives. Furthermore, coaching and mentoring is left to the various departmental heads to manage their people. HCP provides support and guidance”. (GM)

During multiple conversations with Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs), the researcher inferred that the primary focus remains largely linked to the maintenance and acquisition of core competencies, with formal coaching currently being deemed essential primarily for executives. This perspective is further substantiated by another HCP's response:

“Coaching is seen as a function of the departmental heads of the various sections within the company and a primary coordinating role is to link specific drivers, pulling towards company strategy. Development of individuals within the various departments are identified by the heads of those departments and we provide a facilitation role in sourcing the information and service providers required.” (Media)

Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) reported having limited to no personal experience with coaching, and similarly, they had not facilitated many coaching sessions between their organisation's middle managers and external coaches.

“I am the Project Coordinator who is responsible for scheduling coaching sessions for executives with their various coaches (external and qualified). HR also handles the admin and finance payment part hereof. To date, no middle managers have been part of the programme at our company” (WM&I)

“None, as a standard practise we follow a process where the line manager will engage with the middle manager by means of a monthly one-on-one and from there should any concerns arise, HR will intervene through HR processes, not via a coaching programme”. (Fin.Serve)

‘I have facilitated group coaching a couple of times to understand the organisational cultural struggles. I am not a qualified coach, I simply used my experience in dealing with different people. Should further formal coaching be required, I will request for an external coach to intervene and translate these challenges back to the responsible HCP”. (GM)

The responses above suggest that the Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) in this study have had no personal experience with coaching and have not received training in coaching practices. Although one response implies that coaching has occurred, the researcher questions whether the HCP possesses a comprehensive understanding of formal coaching.

“I have had the privilege to coach middle managers for the past 2 years. Specifically aimed at organisational needs. i.e. an employee is struggling with substance abuse and how the manager will approach such a situation”. (Media)

The Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) were asked whether they conducted follow-ups with externally coached managers or executives to gather feedback and evaluate the long-term impact of coaching on manager performance. One HCP responded:

“No, this is handed over to the manager to perform continuous assessment and impact on the organisation.” (WM&I)

“At times yes, often due to time constraints there is no formal follow-up sessions by myself, rather a feedback report to the line manager who will handle the long-term assessment. This is also often linked to the KPI of the middle manager.” (Fin.Serve)

“No, there is a capacity constraint within the HR space and often group discussions will be conducted to determine the impact which a form of coaching had on the outputs of the teams.” (GM)

“This is left to the executives for their own review. If they are not happy with the person that they are working with, a request is forwarded to HR to arrange a chemistry session with another coach” (Media)

The absence of HCPs from this feedback loop further disadvantages them, excluding them from discussions about the value proposition of coaching. To gauge the HCPs' perspectives on the suitability of external coaching for middle managers and the preferred format, the results showed that 75% favoured group coaching, while 25% preferred individual coaching. The consensus suggests that group coaching is more effective in an organisational setting, as it fosters group synergy while also enabling cost management of external coaching services.

Regarding confidentiality, rapid intervention, and unbiased support, Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) expressed a preference for an external coach for one-on-one coaching sessions, citing the benefits of individual coaching:

"Openness, which is more prevalent during individual coaching." (WM&I)

"The response time for change within the middle manager often is quicker. Showing a clear intent to want to grow individually and take his/her team along on the journey."
(Fin.Serve)

"Greater freedom of speech and the suspension of judgment." (GM)

"People respond better when they feel there is a sense of psychological safety as would be the case when they are the only one being coached" (Media)

The aspect of cost as a return on investment (ROI) is a constant consideration for organisations. Consequently, demonstrating the benefits of coaching is imperative. Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) identified the following aspects as potential justifications:

"Middle managers need to have clear awareness of self-action which often results in improvement of person development and new leadership skills." (WM&I)

"Quicker reaction time for change starting with "I" and leading from the front and the back."
(Fin.Serve)

"Individuals who display vulnerability are open to learning. Middle managers can use this as an effective tool to effect change within them which will support improved decision making. (GM)

"Realization of their medium to long-term goals are made easier when they embrace the accountability process that sees leaders more easily reach the organisational targets set for them." (Media)

The responses above indicate that Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) perceive external coaching for middle managers as beneficial, although it may not be formalised as organisational policy. To further understand the HCPs' stance, they were asked how they would address resistance from senior leaders or the organisational culture towards the coaching process or its outcomes. Three of the HCPs responded:

"I will seek the advice of an external coach on how best to navigate the approach and offer new sets of engagement rules." (WM&I)

"I will share previous successes in coaching (use cases) to demonstrate the effectiveness of coaching." (Fin.Serve)

"I am unsure what I will do, but will find away. Each case will be merit based." (Media)

Three responses (75%) favoured a direct challenge of the status quo while one (25%) said they would capitulate and abide by the directive given.

"I accept if there is resistance and follow the status quo." (GM)

The analysis revealed that a significant proportion of Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) lack a comprehensive understanding of the distinctions between coaching and mentoring. Furthermore, most HCPs reported having no personal experience with external professional coaching. Notably, they perceived the coaching process as organic, with no structured follow-ups or evaluations to assess coaching efficacy within the organisation, particularly among senior managers and executives.

Despite this, HCPs recognised the benefits of external coaching for middle managers over line-manager coaching, citing various reasons. Moreover, the majority expressed willingness to challenge resistance to coaching middle managers, should it arise from the organisational culture or senior leadership biases.

This research highlights a significant opportunity to educate, coach, and collaborate with HCPs, ultimately advancing the integration of external coaching for middle managers within organisations.

5.2.1.3 External professional coaching opportunities

Five Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) were invited to participate in the study; however, only four accepted the invitation. All four participants confirmed that, in their respective organisations, external coaching services were exclusively reserved for top management and executives, while middle managers received internal development support from their line managers. This finding aligns with previous research on the topic. A representative from the Government Municipality (GM) corroborated this perspective:

“Coaching is normally offered to senior leadership in our business. I personally believe this to be correct as it is this level that makes all the big decisions in the company” (GM)

“Middle managers have senior managers they report to and get their direction from them. They work in different departments and cross-training takes place amongst the various employees which is managed via a skills matrix in our HR (Human Resources) department.” (Fin.Serve)

The majority of the responses confirmed that a zero budget is allocated for external coaching services for middle managers. Many referred to the HR department who identifies specific training for the different levels and departments. It is safe to say that in this small sample study, zero budget costs are allocated for external coaching to work with middle managers.

5.2.1.4 Middle management involvement with strategy

Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) held divergent views on the involvement of middle managers in organisational strategy, with opinions split evenly (50/50). In contrast, when coached middle managers were asked about their perceived role in strategy, only three believed they played a pivotal part. One manager abstained from responding, while another provided context for their perspective:

“Our group strategy is very far removed from our level of management. This may be due to the sheer size of our organisation, with over 40,000 employees.” (Fin.Serve)

A notable finding reveals that only 42.8% of middle managers in this study perceived themselves as having a role or significant role in strategy formulation. This result warrants further investigation to explore two possible explanations: either middle managers are unaware of their potential strategic influence, or they are content with maintaining the status quo.

All 7 line managers answered 'No' to middle managers being involved in strategy.

“The role of the middle managers in our plants is to manage the day to day activities of the factory/office and do this based upon the standards/targets set by their line manager.”

A 100% response rate confirmed that middle managers in this study are perceived by their line managers as mere strategy executioners, rather than co-creators of strategy for their organisations. Line managers were subsequently asked whether formal coaching for middle managers would contribute to organisational growth and success. However, only 40% (2 out of 5) responded to this question. One respondent noted:

“Any encouragement middle managers can get will help them and the company. The only challenge I think they might have is finding time to sit with a coach, unless it is after hours or on their off-shift days” (Manufacturing).

The poor response rate to this question suggests that line managers may lack the necessary experience to provide informed answers. The researcher attributes this to their earlier responses, which indicated a lack of personal experience with external coaching, overstated confidence in their business acumen, and an inability to respond without prior exposure to partnering with an external coach. The researcher also interprets the participants' decision not to complete this section as meaningful data, suggesting that they may not feel qualified to respond due to their limited exposure to formal coaching.

5.2.1.5 Internal line manager coaches versus external professional coaches

This question posed to coached middle managers yielded the following responses:

“A professional and independent coach provides a sound board that doesn't cross over into performance evaluations and perceptions of an individual. Senior managers typically

prefer the job to get done whereas a professional coach is unlikely to judge you as you work through a problem.” (P4)

“Yes, the difference is that with a formal coach the engagement will be more focused and engaging. Any internal interventions can easily fall by the wayside due to ‘more important’ issues that pops into our day to day” (P2)

“External coaches are better qualified and have dedicated time to coach managers than their line manager has.” (P1)

“Being coached by an external person would allow for more honesty, especially if my goals are not aligned with the business (e.g. finding a new job), and on the flip side it would be more objective as the external coach would not have emotional attachments, good or bad, that may arise from an internal set up.” (P5)

“The difference is that with a formal coach the engagement will be more focused and engaging. Any internal interventions can easily fall by the wayside due to ‘more important’ issues that pops into our day to day.” (P6)

“There is greater freedom of speech and suspension of judgment with an external coach than there is with a line manager.” (P7)

This question posed to the HCPs yielded the following responses:

“The interaction with a formal coach is more focused on the individual as a whole and is never impacted with work related distractions. Formal coaches are also better equipped through their lived experiences of being fully immersed within the coaching discipline.” – Wealth Management & Investments (WM&I)

“Our employees would feel that it is a psychological safe place for them to tell their stories about their work and personal lives. There is always the matter with confidentiality when it comes to internal coaches, not saying that this is always the case, but it does happen and then all measures of integrity is lost.” – Media & Advertising (Media)

“The external coach is a professional and does what she or he does for a living. They understand people, relationships, trust, non-prejudice and judgement, confidentiality etc. I can’t say the same for our line managers because they have not be trained to be coaches” – Financial Services (Fin.Serve)

The responses clearly indicate that trust, confidentiality, and qualifications are significant concerns for both middle managers and HCPs. Furthermore, the power dynamics inherent in the line manager's superior position can create an unequal coaching environment.

5.2.1.6 Benefits derived from the coaching intervention

All 7 participants who had been coached confirmed that they had a positive learning at a personal and professional level. They were asked to list three things that they've changed since having been coached. They were also invited to respond 'nothing has changed' if this was applicable.

Table: 5.2.1.6 Benefits derived from the coaching intervention

Participant	Responses
P1	1. <i>Continual self-reflection</i> 2. <i>Taking charge of my personal & professional vision and future planning</i> 3. <i>Suspension of self-doubt</i>
P2	1. <i>I try to engage more often;</i> 2. <i>I attempt to get my voice into the conversation more frequently</i> 3. <i>I avoided conversations that negatively impacted me, or if I am the venting board. Now, I try not to take any of that on myself, it belongs to another!</i>
P3	1. <i>Active listening without interrupting</i> 2. <i>More Awakened and conscious leader, self-Care and setting boundaries</i> 3. <i>Way I conduct meetings and my agenda(leading questions)</i>
P4	1. <i>I am more focused on delivering my product</i> 2. <i>I have developed patience and maintain a more long term outlook and minimize my immediate frustrations with the organization</i> 3. <i>I am more at ease with myself - what will be, will be, but as long as I have a clear direction, i.e. to follow for myself</i>
P5	1. <i>I seek and accept feedback in a more constructive way would be the major benefit that I have retained from coaching</i> 2. <i>Ask more questions, engage and help someone on their journey of discovery. I may not have the answers, however I could encourage others to find the alternatives that they may not have considered</i> 3. <i>There were other benefits, but not the freshest in my memory</i>
P6	1. <i>I now conduct closing rounds at all meetings, even online ones</i> 2. <i>Reminding myself before each meeting/high-profile engagement about what message I would want to put out there about myself</i> 3. <i>Being clearer about my goals helps me achieve it</i>
P7	1. <i>I would refer to relationship building which has shown improvement</i> 2. <i>Overall I have experienced a shift in my EQ capabilities</i> 3. <i>A clear improvement, I reflect more and pause before responding</i>

5.3 Performance Evaluation Metrics

The metrics that was applied to evaluate improved performance of participants after the series of coaching sessions were 360-degree feedback and self-reflection using Likert scales. The Likert scales was chosen so as to assess the degree to which participants have internalized and applied that which they have been taught during the coaching sessions. The table below provides average scores for the 7 participants.

Table 5.3: Performance Evaluation Metrics

Skills interpreted	Average scores
<i>Intrapersonal skills:</i> <i>Self-awareness, emotional intelligence, adaptability and resilience</i> <u>Statement:</u> <i>"I am more self-aware of my emotions and reactions since the coaching sessions."</i>	Agree
<i>Leadership skills:</i> <i>Strategic thinking, problem-solving, team leadership and decision-making</i> <u>Statement:</u> <i>"I have improved my strategic thinking and problem-solving abilities after the coaching sessions."</i>	Agree
<i>Managerial skills:</i> <i>Planning, decision making, organising and delegating</i> <u>Statement:</u> <i>"I am better at planning and organizing my tasks as a result of the coaching sessions."</i>	Disagree
<i>Cognitive skills:</i> <i>Introspection, logical, analytical and critical thinking, creativity</i> <u>Statement:</u> <i>"I have enhanced my critical thinking and creativity since participating in the coaching sessions."</i>	Agree
<i>Interpersonal skills:</i> <i>Emotional intelligence, ability to listen and communicate well, conflict resolution and the ability to interact and engage well with people</i> <u>Statement:</u> <i>"I am more effective in resolving conflicts and communicating with my team after the coaching sessions."</i>	Strongly Agree

Further analysis of the responses revealed that the majority of middle managers marked, 'disagree' as their response to the statement regarding 'Managerial Skills'. They believed that this was an area they were already familiar with, and the researcher, as coach, also did not emphasize it heavily. This result can be interpreted positively, as it suggests that middle managers are not solely focused on 'managing', but are open to embracing various leadership attributes. The findings indicate that participants had an overall positive experience and have begun applying the skills and knowledge gained during the coaching intervention.

5.4 Findings from the interview with the CEO of a Coaching & Mentoring Company

The interview with Dr Paddy Pampallis gave the researcher much needed insights to the origins of the formal coaching industry in South Africa.

*“This was an exciting time – filled with possibility of what a professional field of coaching could bring to the world. At this time coaching per se – particularly in the American market, had emerged from the performance development field of human potential. It was geared to emulate the conditions of high performing athletes who could be ‘trained’ into doing better. This was a focused form of ‘coaching’, often confused with what we now know to be mentoring or accelerated training (**mentoring and coaching is still confused**).”*

Dr Paddy Pampallis emphasizes that the confusion regarding the distinction between coaching and mentoring was widespread in the pioneering days of coaching and persists to this day. Regarding South Africa's readiness to adopt coaching as a means of adult learning and leadership development, Dr Pampallis offers the following commentary:

“The field was ready – as people needed support and were drowning in predominantly ‘command and control’ forms of organization and telling people what to do, was the norm. As ‘coaching’ began to develop in its thought and application, so too was the welcome inclusion of psychology, philosophy and learning as core to developing people and particularly leaders.”

Given the research findings indicating a preference for executives over middle managers in external professional coaching, the following question was posed to Dr Pampallis: "Were senior

managers and executives the primary target of coaching marketing campaigns in the early years, and what informed this strategic approach?"

"Not necessarily, budget spend on the senior leaders within an organisations was the main spend for the business. Sadly, while TCC has always focussed on management and leadership at all levels of the organisation, including supervisory skills and team leaders, the focus for the organisation has moved significantly to senior and executive leadership and seems to be stuck there."

This confirmation suggests that TCC and other coaching companies were largely responsive to market demands at the time, rather than attempting to shape them. Consequently, there was no deliberate strategy on the part of TCC and others to exclusively market coaching services to organisational executives. Dr Pampallis concludes the interview by issuing a broad challenge that inherently encompasses middle management coaching:

"While we can focus on a narrow field of the coaching industry – the general raising and shifts needed for education at all levels is fundamental. Learning and development needs to be equally viable across all levels of an organisation and of a society at a larger level."

5.5 Overall impact of study

The study offered the researcher deep insights to the origins of coaching globally and within South Africa. It has also shed light on the factors that have shaped it as an industry and the people and institutions that have played an integral part in its development. The study has some surprising revelations and has placed the researcher in an advantageous position on how best to pursue growth within this market. A high degree of awareness of formal coaching was able to be communicated to the persons who accepted the invitation to participate in this study, including those by-standers who gained valuable knowledge pertaining to the two concepts, viz. coaching and mentoring. All who participated gained some benefit from the project.

5.5.1 Coaching impact on Participants and their colleagues

From the shared experience with having coached 7 of the middle management participants over a series of four to six 60-90 minute coaching sessions, the researcher can report that a high level

of optimism was ignited within the participants for their own personal journey of inner development and growth. The study also reveals that these middle managers spoke of their experience to their colleagues which further extended the awareness of the holistic value formal coaching could to the lives of middle managers.

While the sample group could be seen as relative small by comparison, a high degree of positive impact was noted in all who had participated. This was revealed through the post coaching questionnaire responses where coached participants responded to the question 8 and 12 as follows:

5.5.2 Coaching impact on HCPs, interviewees and the researcher

It is clear from the closing remarks of the HCPs that they appreciate the conversations to ignite opportunities:

“Thank you for including me in this discussion, I am left with a lot to think about” (WM&I)

“We are all about good governance, compliance and I guess being a part of this study made me realise that the systems are making me conform and think less for myself. Ouch!” (Fin.Serve)

“It was good to think a little out of the box, we rigid and very much for red tape in government” (GM)

“Media and advertising is going through a massive change and if we do not think about how we can be better tomorrow by doing things differently, I am scared that we not be around for much longer” (Media)

6. Conclusions

The researcher started out in this study to prove the hypothesis true or false that middle managers at supervisory levels working in corporations in South Africa have little to no knowledge of the formal coaching process and its efficacy hence the limited representation of this group in formal coaching training and to answer the research question:

Does formal coaching, as opposed to on the job training only, offer middle managers greater life and leadership skills that can translate into tangible improved performance?

Based on the research done and the evidence presented, the researcher concludes that the hypothesis is true. The reason for the lack of knowledge and exposure to formal coaching by middle managers is complex and multi-layered. Through its introduction as a tool to assist executives exclusively within organisations, the coaching industry has battled to shift this perception that coaching was solely for those who were perceived as strategy makers. Middle managers, who by definition, play a pivotal role as first line leaders of the largest number of employees, also engage in interpreting, implementing, monitoring and reporting on strategy. It was also determined that the current leadership reached their positions without the help of a coaching intervention and a certain bias could exist with them regarding their reluctant support of coaching for middle managers. There is also the outside chance that a remnant of a post-Apartheid era mindset still lingers in the minds of some of the senior leadership of organisations cannot be ruled out. The impact of this could result in the negative influence in the approval of coaching opportunities for middle managers, the majority being of mixed race. Costs and the ROI are also influencing factors.

6.1 Summary of this study

The study has proven valuable and given the researcher much insight into the potential that exist for formal coaching for middle managers. The study revealed a high degree of interest by middle managers to participate in the pro bona coaching sessions that were offered. This keen interest was evident in their presence at every online session as well actively participating in the sessions. Their line-managers testify of small to significant shifts in their (middle managers) way of being and while less feedback was forthcoming from the middle managers peers or subordinates, they reported during the coaching sessions of the positive comments received at home and at work for the changes others started to observe in them. It is the opinion of the researcher that studies like these, if augmented, could be a driving force in shifting the paradigm that middle managers are not ideal candidates for external professional coaching.

One of the objectives of the research activity and its outcome was to enable the researcher to develop a PowerPoint presentation promoting formal coaching for middle managers within organisations.

7. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, middle managers are at risk of being marginalised from participating in formal coaching programmes facilitated by external, professional coaches.

7.1. Broad stakeholder alignment

The current representation of middle managers in external coaching interventions is limited. To address this, coaching service providers should market the efficacy of coaching for middle managers to various industry sectors. Human Capital Practitioners (HCPs) also play a crucial role by incorporating coaching services for middle managers into their annual training programme budgets. Furthermore, it is recommended that HCPs undergo professional coaching to experience its benefits firsthand. Coaching service providers should also advocate for greater inclusion of middle managers in coaching programmes facilitated for executives. The Coaching Centre, a coaching service provider, adopts a formal practice of involving executives' leadership teams, including middle managers, in coaching programmes, thereby exposing them to external coaching. Analysis suggests that current line managers of middle managers lacked exposure to external coaching during their tenure as middle managers, resulting in their underestimation of coaching's significance for their subordinates. It is recommended that HCPs, executives, middle managers with prior coaching experience, and coaching service providers collectively educate stakeholders on the value proposition and return on investment (ROI) of external coaching for middle managers.

7.2. Additional research considerations

Research of this nature on middle management coaching is limited. The results from this study also varies depending on the sector that the research is conducted in. Further research can be considered in the following fields that could lead to more conclusive findings on this topic:

1. *What are the factors supporting interest of participation by middle managers in formal coaching programmes versus those that inhibit participation*
2. *Culture survey to address a culture that is in distress rooted in cultural conflict prohibiting open dialogue in relation to middle management coaching and development*

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Appendices

Appendix A: A Coaching Presentation to promote formal coaching for middle management

The presentation: *“One OBJECTIVE OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY per my ETHICS FORM - A PPT to promote formal coaching for middle managers*

Appendix B: Interview questions and responses from CEO of a Coaching & Mentoring Company

Annexures

Annexure A: Signed and dated Ethics Form

The Ethics Form will be submitted as a separate submission via Turnitin

Annexure B: WBL Project Presentation BMPF7010 David Smith 2021120

Appendix A

A Coaching Presentation to promote formal coaching for middle management.



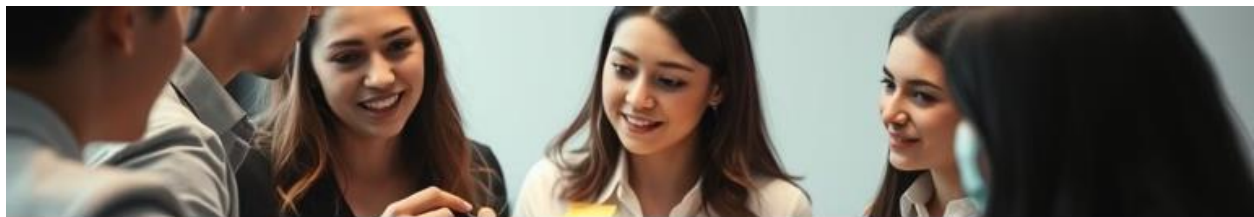
Unleashing the Power of the Middle: A Journey of Ubuntu and Integral Leadership

Empowering middle managers to be strategic partners, not just executors, is essential for organizational success.

by David Smith
Leadership Coach
Member of the ICF

Slide 1 of 7

Integral Africa
The Coaching Centre
Leading Human Development



The Power of the Middle: A Practical Framework

Integral Quadrant Plus Map

This framework allows for a comprehensive understanding of individual and organizational dynamics.

1

Integral Coaching

Coaching programs tailored to the specific needs of middle managers, using the Integral Quadrant Plus Map and U-Curve philosophies.

3

U-Curve Philosophy

This philosophy emphasizes the importance of navigating challenges and embracing growth opportunities.

2

Slide 3 of 7

Integral Africa
The Coaching Centre
Leading Human Development



The Power of the Middle: A Practical Framework

Integral Quadrant Plus Map

This framework allows for a comprehensive understanding of individual and organizational dynamics.

Integral Coaching

Coaching programs tailored to the specific needs of middle managers, using the Integral Quadrant Plus Map and U-Curve philosophies.

1

2

3

U-Curve Philosophy

This philosophy emphasizes the importance of navigating challenges and embracing growth opportunities.



Slide 3 of 7

Unlocking the Potential: Investing in Middle Managers

Leadership Development

Invest in programs that develop middle managers' strategic thinking, communication, and leadership skills.

Mentorship and Networking

Connect middle managers with senior leaders and experienced professionals to gain valuable insights and guidance.

Empowerment and Recognition

Create a culture that empowers middle managers and recognizes their contributions to the organization's success.

The Coaching Centre has numerous learning and development programs that serves as a resource for our clients to co-create a coaching intervention specifically tailored for your needs



Slide 4 of 7

Unlocking the Potential: Investing in Middle Managers

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Invest in programs that develop middle managers' strategic thinking, communication, and leadership skills.

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Slide 4 of 7

Integral Africa
The Coaching Centre
Leading Human Development

Success Stories: Evidence of Middle Management Impact



Company	Impact
Google	Increased innovation and employee engagement through middle manager empowerment
Netflix	Enhanced decision-making and agility through middle manager involvement in strategic planning

Slide 5 of 7

Integral Africa
The Coaching Centre
Leading Human Development



Moving Forward: Building a Culture of Strategic Partnership with your middle manager

1

Open Communication and Shared Ownership

Foster open communication channels between executives and middle managers. Encourage middle managers to take ownership of strategic initiatives and contribute to their success.

2

Develop your greatest asset – your middle manager

Create opportunities for learning and development for your middle manager, the ROI will be tenfold. Invest in coaching partnerships and unleash the hidden potential in this great resource.

3

Continuous Improvement

Continuously evaluate and improve the process of involving middle managers in strategic decision-making.

Slide 6 of 7



The Future is Bright: A Collaborative Journey

By embracing Ubuntu and investing in middle managers through integral, holistic coaching programmes with professional accredited coaches, organizations can unleash their collective potential, creating a thriving and sustainable future for all.



Please contact David Smith: Managing Director

davids@thecoachingcentre.co.za

Or admin@thecoachingcentre.co.za

Slide 7 of 7



Annexure: B

Interview with Dr Paddy Pampallis

CEO of *The Coaching Centre*
On topic: *Coaching in South Africa*

Hi Paddy,

Thank you for agreeing to have this interview, your time is appreciated. As you know, I am enrolled in a Masters Programme, MA in Professional Practice with the University of Wales, Trinity Saint David.

The indicative title for my thesis is:

Middle Managers at supervisory levels working in corporations in South Africa have little to no knowledge or experience of formal coaching process and its efficacy hence the limited representation of this group in formal coaching training

The Research Question:

Does formal coaching, as opposed to on the job training only, offer middle managers greater life and leadership skills that can translate into tangible improved performance?

As this study has revealed, very little research has been undertaken that focuses specifically on this topic. The research question seeks to explore reasons why fewer middle managers are invited to partner with an external professional coach, while senior managers and executives are privileged, seemingly automatically by virtue of their role within the organisation. The narrowed focus of this study does not offer the researcher the opportunity to further explore the impact of a conventional coaching intervention versus the integral coaching approach for which your company is widely recognized. This could be the topic of further research.

I have listed a few questions that I would like to ask of you.

1. You are the CEO of *The Coaching Centre*, which has evolved itself through an Integral African approach. It is a 21 year old company that you co-founded and have led as CEO for 15 of these years. Give us a sense of what the coaching terrain was like at that time,
 - a) At a global level
 - b) South African level

ANSWER:

- a) *This was an exciting time – filled with possibility of what a professional field of coaching could bring to the world. At this time coaching per se – particularly in the American market, had emerged from the performance development field of human potential. It was geared to emulate the conditions of high performing athletes who could be ‘trained’ into doing better. This was a focused form of ‘coaching’, often confused with what we now know to be mentoring or accelerated training (mentoring and coaching is still confused). The field was ready – as people needed support and were drowning in predominantly ‘command and control’ forms of organization and telling people what to do, was the norm. As ‘coaching’ began to develop in its thought and application, so too was the welcome inclusion of psychology, philosophy and learning as core to developing people and particularly leaders. Shell, one of the pioneers in the field of introducing coaching as a learning initiative to enhance training programmes. The need for training coaches was soon apparent. TCC was still then called The Learning Centre (2002) and in 2003 my co-founder and I started The Integral Coaching Centre, which later traded as The Coaching Centre. We were instrumental in gathering a group of innovative people, some of whom had consulting backgrounds, others who were engaged with leadership and training and five of us, who were doing the first academic/professional doctorate in executive coaching with Middlesex University to launch Coaches and Mentors of South Africa. These were two firsts. South Africa, because of its connections with the UK and Europe, followed in the steps of the European Mentoring and Coaching Association in preference to the American branch of ICF at that time. The Doctor and Master’s qualification process was also pioneered in South Africa with Dr Mike van Oudsthoorn, an ex-SA, and Dr David Lane (UK). Dr Sunny Stout Rostron (one of our first five globally) became the first chair. I had done ground-breaking research in the supervision for and of executive coaching/coaches and set up the first supervision portfolio COMENSA. In 2004 to 2006, this group of European (and UK) and South African pioneers met in Dublin to discuss the training,*

ethics, supervision, and professionalism of coaching as a particularly distinctive offering from that of mentoring.

TCC was first coach training organisation in Southern Africa and the first to bring integral coaching to the African market as an organisation.

- b) *South Africa was ripe for the coaching world. TCC and one other training facility, both in Cape Town, were distinguishable by direction of the Europe and of the USA market focus. The styles of both were distinguishable and to some degree still have influence as the focus on academics and professional excellence was the focus of the former, while the development of skills, was the focus of the USA.*

This saw the two bodies moving away from each but, together with the explosion of coaching in the world, including the east, these have come closer together.

2. Was the South African professional coaching market (and other service offerings), developed by you and other pioneers in this field or was your company responding to the new phenomena of coaching as introduced by international companies trading in SA? Please provide context in your response.

ANSWER:

In addition to the above – as the partners of TCC were both qualified in learning and leadership development, and Paddy was particularly qualified in psychology and philosophy as well as adult leadership maturity, TCC developed leadership development programmes as well as many focussed skills development such as EQ, team coaching, management skills, conflict management, courageous conversations, action learning, the enneagram, insights, group relationships, systems thinking, and organisational development and change.

3. Central to my thesis is how coaching has become the privileged offering of the elite within the business world. By this I mean executive and senior management were primarily the client base. Were senior managers and executives the main target of a coaching marketing campaign in those earlier years and what informed this strategy?

ANSWER:

Not necessarily, but the budgeting spend on the senior leaders within an organisation was the main spend for business. Coaching, as shifted in focus over the years, from mentoring, to

cultivating actual learning skills, of how to think and process emotion and beyond. Sadly, while TCC has always focussed on management and leadership at all levels of the organisation, including supervisory skills and team leaders, the focus for the organisation has moved significantly to senior and executive leadership and seems to be stuck there. This has shifted the field and there are a number of ramifications and shifts in thinking and approach around this.

A longer discussion is on the impact of knowledge systems particularly as a result of Covid pandemic, on the world, and the shift in approaching learning. This does not necessarily mean people have a deep understanding of knowledge systems, however, the needs of leaders have shifted exponentially over the years and this applies equally to the management level –who are often caught in between competing demands of shareholder demands and the organisational and people needs through implementation and application of resources – including those of the human being.

4. If you agree with the above statement as it relates to who was being coached during those earlier years in SA, would you say that this is still the case today? Please substantiate with average percentages for e.g. In early 2000, the split executives to middle managers invited to be coached was 90/10, in 2010? And currently today?

ANSWER:

I can't really say in percentages, but I can say that this focus has changed significantly. Coaching has shifted to being seen

- as a leadership advantage.*
- the cost of coaching has been based on consulting models and this surfaces another huge debate regarding the cost and value of consulting: an expert **telling** the person or organisation what the solution is, versus that of someone like an IU coach who has been developed in highly sophisticated and wisdom approaches to understanding what the spectrum of human consciousness is and what is required for learning, that of guiding another – to think for themselves.*
- The capitalist system of money and shareholder gain at the expense of the people*
- A focus on individualist approaches rather than on team or coaching*

5. Do you believe this projectory could change organically or would it require a shift in educating big and small businesses that investing equally in middle management formal coaching has proven advantages? How would you propose this shift happen, give an example of a first step?

ANSWER:

This is essential – and the fight of profit over people and purpose is key.

6. Does the legacy of Apartheid still play a role perpetuating an unequalled society and hence the business environment? As a consequence, is South Africa unique in this and may it require a unique approach or do you believe it has shifted and is mirroring a global trend?

ANSWER:

Yes to your first question - (much for discussion here as it's not a simple 'black and white' problem) or yes/no answer: this is not a uniquely South African condition: I think it is a hangover of capitalism overall. In any country – access to benefit is part of 'privilege' a by-product of both economies, politics, and worldviews. I think the 'middle classes' are at risk in carrying a particular burden – serving up and down – and I use those words reluctantly

7. What in your estimation needs to happen to see a shift in spend more equitably in favour of middle managers? Who do you see as being the main influences?

ANSWER:

- *Economies*
- *Worldviews*
- *Belief systems*
- *Real learning – that enables thinking for an independent mind – not only training or passing on information*
- *Insightful leadership*

- *Education of L&D and HR and leadership*
- *Redistribution of finances*
- *Team and group coaching at all levels*
- *Cross level exploration and coaching and education*

ANSWER:

8. Are there any other considerations that you may wish to add that talks to the indicative title and/or research question?

ANSWER:

While we can focus on a narrow field of the coaching industry – the general raising and shifts needed for education at all levels is fundamental. Learning and development needs to be equally viable across all levels of an organisation and of a society at a larger level.

Once more, I wish to express my utmost appreciation for you making time to meet/answer these questions. It will shed light on the origins of formal coaching in South Africa and how it is developing in the modern context as viewed by you. Your vision for TCC to remain at the forefront with new and innovative approaches, I trust what will also be captured here, is your passion and that of your team of building a coaching culture that has its roots in African wisdom supporting a healthier and more cohesive world.

Yours in appreciation,

David Smith

Researcher

Disclaimer: Be assured that the content as shared by you in this response will only be used for the purpose of this study and its content will be discarded once the study is deemed complete by relevant academic authority from the University of Wales, Trinity St David.