



**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL**

**COACHING AS AN ENABLING INTERVENTION FOR THE  
SYSTEMIC DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP IN  
ORGANISATIONS**

**By**

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**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Master of Commerce in Leadership Studies (MCLS)**

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## DECLARATION

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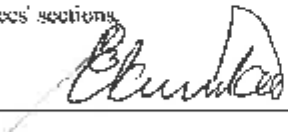
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All the interview respondents who directly and selflessly contributed to making this dissertation a reality.

## **ABSTRACT**

Coaching can become a strategic enabling vehicle for leadership development in organisations if it can be offered within and across diverse levels of the organisational leadership. In other words, when it can be conducted in a systemic way, where leadership development is treated as an organisational capacity rather than as an individual trait. This study aimed at exploring the uses of coaching within the Development Aid Agency (DAA). It sought to propose an alternative and complementary systemic coaching approach to dyadic coaching which jointly can awaken the organisation to the untapped leadership talent that otherwise is overlooked due to leadership development being confused as leader's development. The study made use of the qualitative research method. This research method was accompanied by the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews conducted with 15 respondents at DAA. Subsequently, a thematic analysis approach was used to analyse and synthesise research data. Various themes emerging from the interviews were identified as being pivotal for the implementation of both dyadic and enterprise-wide coaching within organisations. Some of the themes identified include: decision-making relating to sourcing of coaching by organisations; the context of leadership development within organisations; leadership development as an organisational phenomenon; the role of coaching in DAA; and opportunities for coaching in the workplace. Factors constituting barriers to the effective implementation of coaching within an organisation were identified. These include, among other factors: absence or lack of executive sponsorship; poor coordination; confusion of what coaching intends to achieve; lack of strategic integration of coaching into other organisational programmes; and finally, poor execution of coaching within the organisation. The major finding was that coaching can indeed be an enabling intervention for the systemic development of strategic leaders within organisations; and that dyadic coaching as a single approach to leadership development across organisational levels is of limited benefit in the context of complex challenges facing organisational leadership. Therefore, a systemic coaching approach to systemic organisational challenges is proposed, so as to augment and capacitate the leadership bench-strength beyond the individual capabilities towards the collective.



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## GLOSSARY

- DAA-Development Aid Agency. DAA was chosen as the case study for this research. This is entity established in 2004 comprising four legacy organisations so as for government to have a united collaborative front in building and responding to small-enterprise-developmental needs.
- CPPP-Community Public Private Partnership Programme
- CEO-Chief Executive Officer
- COMENSA –Coaches and Mentors South Africa
- COACHING-refers to a strategic intervention designed to invoke excellence in organisational leadership and to strengthen capabilities better to respond to market complexities.
- DTI-Department of Trade and Industry, which is a South African government department, of which DAA is part, hosts of other agencies included.
- DYADIC COACHING-refers to one-on-one coaching, as opposed to systemic coaching which refers to an enterprise-wide coaching intervention.
- EDD-Enterprise Development Division
- EXCO-Executive Committee
- HR-Human Resources
- ICF-International Coaching Federation
- LEADERSHIP-In this study leadership is used in an inclusive sense regardless of rank and position as the research believe that, leadership should relate to role than to rank. This then makes leaders to be found anywhere in the organisational hierarchy playing an equal strategic role that a CEO might play. Therefore leaders in organisation should be cognisant of this emerging phenomenon and invest accordingly.
- NAMAC- National Manufacturing Advisory Centre
- MANCO-Management Committee
- OD-Organisational Development
- PFMA-Public-Finance Management Act

- SMMEs-Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs)
- DTP-DAA Technology Programme. This is a division of DAA.
- SYSTEMIC COACHING-refers to coaching prioritising the system. Its purpose is to address systemic challenges within organisations. It encompasses both internal organisational teams, individual, and external stakeholders. It represents a holistic approach to coaching within organisations, for organisational effectiveness.

## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background and study context**

Coaching can become a strategic enabling vehicle for leadership development in organisations if it can be offered within and across diverse levels of the organisational leadership (Cavanagh, 2006; Clutterbuck & Megginson, 2005). In other words, when it can be introduced in a systemic way, where leadership development is treated as an organisational capacity rather than as an individual trait (Dalakoura, 2010; Brown & Grant, 2010). This study aims to investigate the uses of coaching within the Development Aid Agency (DAA). Given the political sensitivities of the project the researcher was instructed by the top authorities not to use the real name of the organisation under study hence a pseudo name was adopted called DAA. This study seeks to propose an alternative and complementary systemic coaching approach to dyadic coaching which jointly can awaken the organisation to the untapped leadership talent that otherwise is overlooked because leadership development is largely treated as the privilege of a few top leaders.

According to Cacioppe (1998), Collier (2000), and Harris (2005), this isolated development of leaders has proved limiting, unhelpful, and un-strategic in the context of the complex environmental challenges which the DAA and other organisations face and operate within. In growing and developing necessary human capital for organisational effectiveness, coaching can be used a strategic enabling intervention.

### **1.2 Background**

#### **1.2.1 Description of research site**

DAA is a national entity and a state agency. In 2013 the DAA offices were situated in Pretoria in which the head office may be found. All divisions of the DAA are headquartered in the Pretoria office in which the executives and the CEO reside. DAA has a board of directors who account to the Minister of Trade and Industry. DAA is centralised, although it has a national footprint in all nine South African provinces. The hierarchy of the DAA is sacred: position power is wielded even in the corridors of the organisation. DAA has an employee community close to 340. DAA's nine provinces are run by provincial managers, to

whom specialists account to. In the field one finds business advisors at coal face, daily interacting with small businesses. DAA's designation is to assist the growth of small enterprises as a government mandate, through the Department of Trade and Industry ([www.dti.gov.za](http://www.dti.gov.za)). The interviews for this study took place in the national office, the place used by all those who participated to some form of coaching.

Small, medium and micro enterprises constitute a significant group of business enterprises in the South African economy. The South African government has identified the SMME sector as one of the potential enablers by which its objectives of improving job creation opportunities, reducing poverty, and creating a more equitable distribution of wealth, can be realised. As a result of this national goal, the South African government has established a vehicle, referred to as the DAA ([www.dti.gov.za](http://www.dti.gov.za))

### **1.2.2. About the DAA**

DAA was established in December 2004, as an agency under the Department of Trade and Industry, the DTI. The establishment is a merger various organisations, namely: Ntsika Enterprise Promotion Agency; National Manufacturing Advisory Centre; and the Community Public Private Partnership Programme. The GODISA Trust and the Technology Programmes were integrated into the DAA in April 2006, forming the DAA Technology Programme (source: DTI).

DAA provides business development and support services for small enterprises through its national network, in partnership with other role players in the small-enterprise support industry. DAA also implements programmes targeted at business development in areas prioritised by the government.

From the outset one may infer that, given the merger of diverse cultures, leadership styles, and organisational structures, DAA's approach to organisational-development interventions such as coaching will be complex, and neither will such approaches be easy to implement. What attracted the researcher to the study of DAA was also the different cultural backgrounds of institutions that constituted DAA, the turnover of talented employees, CEOs deployments from DTI to lead DAA. These secondments were viewed with contempt as political interference. Complicating the issue, was the credibility of the top leadership. Most officials from the merged organisation felt that the new top leadership lacked experience, insight, and

industry knowledge to lead DAA. Skewed salaries and benefits scales had an adverse effect on parity and internal integration, thus lowering employee morale. The constant political interference in the running of DAA led to the board of directors being changed, reshaped, often at the expense of continuity and organisational stability. Nepotism, and the overlooking of internal talent for promotion and development adversely affected the retention and empowerment of talented employees.

Executive turnover adversely affected the stability, performance and even the audit record of the organisation. The overemphasis on clean audits hampered the execution of DAA's role and mandate to efficiently serve the SMMEs' community, as fear of approving budgets for critical projects meant that some projects were delayed, and some indefinitely deferred. Employment of less qualified business advisors on the ground was a cause for concern, some having had less experience or absolutely no idea of the industry dynamics. Leadership development was compromised because top leadership focused on themselves, rather than on building internal future leadership. As a result, internal capabilities remained weak to effectively respond to client needs. Constant concerns raised by parliament portfolio committees on small-business development focused on a lack of competent leadership and visible results as related to the investment into the organisation. Organisational-development interventions such as coaching were always skewed in favour of a few top leaders, some of whom, having receiving coaching, left the organisation. Coaching return on investments and organisational impact was therefore unaccounted for.

It is as result of the history, structural nuances, leadership development deficiencies, unresolved post merger issues, DAA cultural make-up, and the overall make-up of the DAA that the researcher chose the organisation for this study.

### **1.3. Problem statement**

Coaching at the DAA has in the past been procured on an individual executive basis and in response to the personal interests of an individual leader request, rather than on the strategic business needs and enterprise-wide human-capital-development imperatives. Coaching was equally procured for largely remedial purposes rather than for developmental imperatives. Coaching impact as a result could not be realised and sustained over time and return on investment failed to manifest. It is in the light of this gap in both literature and practice that

this study becomes relevant. However to understand the problem in context a brief background is following.

### **1.3.1 Background to the problem statement**

Selected executives were not asked whether they actually needed such services, the top leader made this decision, imposing such services on his executives. This has led to some executives being unwilling participants in coaching, because this carried the negative connotation that someone needed to be 'fixed'. All these coaching sessions were conducted on a one-on-one basis. It was the coach and coachee behind closed doors. In other words, they were conducted in a dyadic way, to the exclusion of team members, and not in alignment with organisational objectives (Kets de Vries, 2010). These sessions were largely career conversations rather than about the way in which organisational leadership capabilities might be enhanced to effectively respond to external client demands (Wood, 2012). The obvious challenge of this one on one coaching approach at the DAA was that the impact could not be documented, and learning experiences were not shared for the benefit of the organisation. This then dented the integrity of the programme (Wright, 2005).

This problem of a leadership coaching gap at the DAA has been similarly captured by Kets de Vries (2010), in which he discovered that conventional coaching offerings within the organisation are largely procured on the basis of merits and personal interests rather than being based and purposed in realising the organisational strategy. Kahn (2011) further posited that the dyadic approach has traditionally and initially focused largely on the remedial side of leadership development. It was intended to close individual performance gaps and career interests, focusing less on broad organisational strategic needs. According to De Meuse et al. (2009) and Conger (2007), coaches reports are mainly subjective and less on how coaching impacts business results and in building a solid organisational bench-strength for organisational effectiveness.

According to Grant, Curtayne and Burton (2009) and Kets de Vries (2010) one on one coaching is lauded as impactful in leadership development, however, more comprehensive research is required to establish how such benefits unfold and be able to be cascaded to other organisational levels. This gap has sparked the interest in the researcher of establishing which

other coaching approaches can be implemented to complement the one to one (dyadic) coaching. As a result an organisation-wide coaching intervention for the development of organisational strategic leadership was identified. According to De Meuse, Dai and Lee (2009), the return on investment remains a concern for organisational leaders across sectors. Coaching is not a cheap intervention. Pressure has therefore mounted on coaches to prove their worth when it comes to value-adding to the bottom line by enhancing productivity. In other words, a gap in the coaching literature remains a concern in respect of applications of enterprise-wide coaching interventions so as to ensure a wider strategic leadership development beyond that of a privileged few top leaders in organisations (Goldsmith, 2006).

#### **1.4 Motivation for the study**

This study aims to explore and understand the overemphasis of the one-dimensional application of coaching within organisations (DAA included), by introducing a systemic approach to coaching that is inclusive. According to O'Toole (2001) and Paige (2002), the systemic approach to coaching will attempt to assist one to better understand how one may draw strategic value from coaching by embracing a wider leadership development practice. Such a practice would view leadership development as an organisational quality, rather than an individual trait. This approach is further espoused by O'Neill (2000), who posits that the systemic coaching approach is fundamentally intended to assist organisations to focus on building their strategic leadership bench-strength within their budgetary constraints.

In summary, systemic coaching research is very limited and less preferred (Brown et al. 2010, Kets de Vries, 2010). An alternative systemic approach to coaching will demonstrate the way in which coaching may be used as an enabling vehicle for strategic leadership development and in enhancing organisational effectiveness through the empowerment of teams. This can also assist client organisations to better appreciate the organisational system and context within which leadership operate and assisting coaches to appreciate the reality that a coaching engagement should not be treated as an event, but rather as process able to produce results over time. This study also seeks to posit a shift in perspective wherein leadership development may be integrated into the daily work of the organisation, thereby better understanding the complexity of leadership development.



## **1.5 Aim and Objectives**

This study aims to explore and understand the overemphasis of the one-dimensional application of coaching within organisations (DAA included), by introducing a systemic approach to coaching that is inclusive.

The following are objectives of the study:

- a) To highlight the limitations of the one on one coaching approach mostly used for leadership development in contemporary organisations.
- b) To introduce and propose an alternative and a complementary approach to dyadic coaching (one on one coaching), namely, systemic coaching (enterprise-wide in nature).
- c) To explore an understanding of how coaching can enable and enhance the development of strategic leadership within organisations.
- d) To explore the influence of coaching on cultivating a coaching culture for organisational performance and effectiveness.
- e) To understand the contextual issues, by exploring whether there are any personal or environmental factors either facilitating or impeding coaching success within organisations.

## **1.6 Preliminary literature review**

According to Turner (2003), coaching has become a popular mainstream way of improving the efficiency of executives. With the advent of coaching, we have seen organisations procuring coaching services and inviting external coaches into their environments for various purposes, including for the improvement of their leadership skills, building and empowering their teams, and transforming their organisational cultures. The emergence and interest in leadership coaching and coaching in general emanates from the complexities that leaders face in organisations (Ting & Riddle, 2006).

Coaching has been described as a multibillion dollar enterprise (Kampash-Kokesch, 2007). IBM, Hewlett Packard, General Electric, Sony, Ernst and Young (Global Coaching Report, 2010), are a small selection of multinational organisations providing executive coaches for their employees. Coaching has been identified as the second-fastest growth industry, with reports that some organisations are spending up to \$15000 (USD) a day on coaching programmes (Berglas, 2002; Wasylyshyn, 2003). Despite this substantial growth, anecdotal support fingers the major driving force behind the popularity of coaching, with leaders who have experienced coaching, coaches who have delivered coaching, and human-resources professionals who have initiated coaching, generally reporting benefits (FitzGerald, 2010). Overwhelmingly, coaching is viewed positively.

While there are a number of empirical studies on coaching, there is still a lack of research providing systematic data on the effectiveness of coaching beyond the executive being coached, and how such positive coaching behaviour can be sustained over time (Grant & Cavanagh, 2004).

### **1.7 Research Methodology**

Ghuri and Grønhaug (2002) refer to qualitative research as being interpretivist and constructivist, the researcher applying his skills and knowledge in analysing the data. Smeyers (2008) and Nichollas (2009) refer to qualitative research as data collected based on people's experiences, feelings, and needs. According to Borrego, et al. (2009), qualitative research may be in the form of interviews, surveys, focus groups, and observations, amongst other forms.

In-depth interviews were used as a method of data collection. An in-depth interview is a qualitative method which explores the participants' perceptions on the research topic, encouraging people to share their views, experiences, and ideas. During the in-depth interviews, the researcher learnt as much as possible from the interviewees, and therefore the researcher is considered to be a learner receiving all the knowledge from the interviewees (Milena, et al., 2008).

A total of 15 interviews were conducted during the study. The interview sessions lasted approximately 45 minutes to an hour. A digital recorder was used to record all interviews, which were transcribed so as to facilitate data analysis. Data analysis was in the form of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis was used to interpret and analyse the data, which was transcribed from the audio into a readable format. Thematic analysis is a method of classifying and examining patterns gathered within data. Thematic analysis offers flexibility and seeks to establish themes presented in the research.

### **1.8 Limitations of the study**

The study was limited to officials and employees of the DAA employed at the DAA head offices in Pretoria, and does not include other provincial offices within the organisation at which similar issues may have been experienced. Another limitation was that only in-depth interviews were used as one of the instruments to collect data. Time limitations also presented a challenge.

### **1.9 Significance of the study**

This study seeks to explore and develop an understanding of the way in which to use coaching systemically in order to align coaching offerings within organisations, so as to enable the development of strategic leadership capabilities. This approach will then better enable leaders to face future challenges. A contribution to the literature of the relatively young emerging coaching profession is considered important by the researcher.

#### **To whom will such findings be important?**

- Coaching practitioners;
- Organisations that use coaching, or potential coaching for organisational clients; and
- Researchers in the coaching and organisational dynamics' space.

### **1.10 Structure and outline of the study**

The research consists of five chapters which are detailed below.

### **1.10.1. Chapter 2**

Chapter 2 discusses a review of the literature relevant to study in the field of coaching and leadership. A contrast is drawn between one to one coaching and systemic coaching. Various coaching models are discussed and compared and finally the link between coaching and strategic leadership is posited.

### **1.10.2. Chapter 3**

Chapter 3 provides a description of how the study will be conducted and with what research instruments. How the research is sampled and structured and how such research participants will be sourced is explained. Matter relating to ethics and reliability are also presented to ensure the credibility of the study.

### **1.10.3. Chapter 4**

Chapter 4 presents the findings and results of all collected data which were then analysed and evaluated within the ambit of the study objectives. Findings are also related to previous research.

### **1.10.4. Chapter 5**

Chapter 5 serves as a conclusion of the study in relations to the findings in chapter 4. Research findings are followed by recommendations and insights for future studies.

## **1.11 Summary**

This chapter intended to introduce to the reader the focus and context of the study. It covered the fundamental purpose, motivation, and the research problem. It also covered the study framework and structure, and a brief and preliminary literature review and research methodology. The next chapter seeks to discuss and unpack the literature review pertinent to the study at hand.

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

Conventional leadership approaches that assume organisational life as linear and therefore can be engineered, controlled, and predicted, are misleading. The world has changed significantly, reflecting a different generation of employees, and thus demanding a new breed of leadership (Bowes, 2008). In other words, previous years strategies and solutions held as sacred by organisations have become unhelpful in the current world of constant complex change. According to the study conducted by Hoffman (1999) should leaders wish to succeed in stimulating innovation within their organisations, they should facilitate an informal organisation which appreciates informal processes not based on hierarchy, but rather on the role played by an individual within an organisation.

Jarvempaa and Tanriverdi (2003) in their research found that the shift from hierarchical structures towards networks and flexible structures has imposed a demand on leaders of organisations to review the way in which corporate projects and assignments are arranged and executed. This has led to an appreciation that working in teams should take precedence over the traditional approach of work arranged around individuals only. Hawkins (2011) and Brown and Grant et al. (2010) suggest that one way of ensuring that these teams are coherent and that they collaborate is to make use of coaching across all levels and across internal organisational boundaries.

Following on from this statement, it has now become the norm globally to observe the adoption of coaching interventions in workplaces (Goldsmith, 2008). For example, in the United States, a recorded 25% and up to 40% of United States Fortune 500 corporations are enlisting the services of coaches (International Coach Federation, 2011). This reality has facilitated an active involvement of organisational practitioners acting and being used as internal coaches to empower employees for optimal performance (Hamlin et al., 2008). Despite the overwhelming evidence of the role of coaching and its impact, coaching continues to be employed in a reductionist way for the exclusive use of individual executives and leaders (Grant & Cavanagh, 2004).

Given the changes in the world of work, and in sculpting a different leadership breed, a systemic approach to coaching which complements the traditional use of coaching (dyadic approach) is advanced. The rationale for the above is that when both dyadic and systemic approaches are utilised by organisations in a strategic way, a broader stakeholder community benefits, rather than simply the selected few (Kets de Vries, 2010; Cavanagh, 2006; De Meuse et al., 2009).

## **2.2 Coaching Literature**

Looking closely at the coaching literature, it is evident that coaching remains an emerging practice with high potential to make definite inroads into the leadership-development landscape (Kilburg, 1996). The researcher in this section expounds on various conceptual roots of coaching, and how such practice continues to positively affect organisational leadership development.

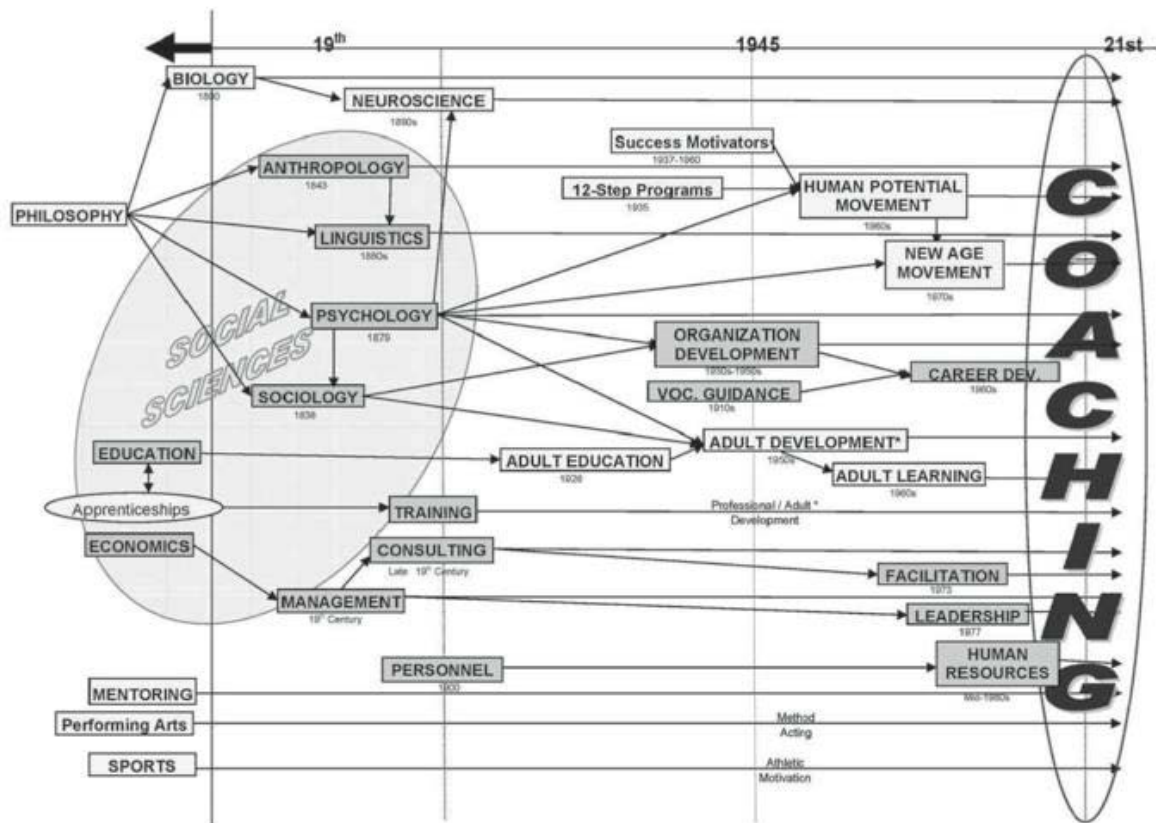
### **2.2.1 Historical and Multidisciplinary Roots of Coaching**

According to Boyatzis et al. (2006), the advent of coaching is not a new concept though new in business context. A form of consultancy did to some degree have a form of coaching and mentoring (Van den Poel, 2007). The flourishing of coaching according to Kilburg (2007) happened largely in the past three decades due to influences of executive assessments and gaps to deal with to remain an effective leader. The value of coaching psychology application to the business world was identified as one of the reasons for coaching entering the business arena (Grant, 2007). Some researchers such as Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) found that the genesis of coaching is really not fully known due diverse disciplines from which coaching seem to emerge from.

According to Charan (2009), the emergence of coaching may be traced from the sporting world to business, eventually emerging in business schools as a field of study. Coaching arose from several independent disciplines and intellectual traditions, spreading through a complex and somewhat unpredictable series of relationships (Bono et al., 2009). Although coaching in the context of the workplace is relatively new, the roots of coaching may be

traced back as far as the 1880s, stemming from disciplines such as sports, philosophy, and economics, as depicted in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Root disciplines of coaching**



Source: (Brock, 2012: 3)

According to Bono et al. (2009) coaching emanates from a diverse range of disciplines, including philosophy, learning perspectives, psychology, and other related fields, such as education. However, research also reveals that coaching is traceable to the 1800s. This indicates that coaching per se is not a new phenomenon.

Grant and Cavanagh (2004) provide descriptive reports in which managers act as internal coaches. In other words, several researchers including Grant and Cavanagh (2004) in their work identified the emergence and the uses of coaching in the corporate boardrooms. Gershman, according to Grant and Cavanagh (2004), produced the first coach-specific doctoral study in 1967. Huffington (2007) noted that some of the pioneers seemed to have made a successful effort to bring his model of therapy from a family-coaching perspective

into the workplace. According to Cushion et al. (2006), these ground-breaking research efforts aided the coaching offering to survive all odds of criticism, finding expression in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Researchers noted a trend towards the development of scientific models and approaches in coaching. An illustrative case at hand is the birth of international coaching bodies making an effort to professionalise coaching. In other words coaching appears to be embraced and showing signs that it is here to stay (Hamlin et al., 2008).

### **2.2.2 Definitions of coaching**

Schein (2005) defined coaching as a helping profession using a set of behaviours on the part of the coach (consultant) assisting the client to develop a new way of seeing, feeling about, and behaving in situations defined by the client as problematic. Some authors have indicated that coaching is collaborative (Grant, 2007), helping, and facilitative (Hamlin et al., 2008), as well as a type of thought-provoking and creative partnership (ICF, 2011).

There is limited agreement as to the actual definitions of coaching (Paige, 2002). Palmer and Whybrow (2006) posit that coaching lacks professional identity and is therefore open to a diverse range of definitions. It appears to Paige (2002) that coaching should primarily be used in the life of a leader as a sounding board, followed by personal development.

Kahn (2011) argued that coaching constitutes various activities that may be defined as follows: coaching for development, coaching for performance, and executive and leadership coaching. Coaching has also been described as relating to the development of an individual leader in helping him or her better to lead or perform (Kilburg, 2007). However, Kets de Vries (2005) defines coaching as having an organisational-context dimension rather than simply an individual dimension. This idea is similarly observed by Orenstein (2002), who suggests that a coaching impact may only be felt within the organisation's corridors if and when it includes other organisational stakeholders, rather than a few preferred, selected individuals.

Immediate change and improvement seem to be largely the focus of coaching as articulated by researchers such as Parsloe (1995) and Downey (1999). Other researchers such as Guest (1999) share the same understanding and definition of coaching - a means of integrating the



coachees thought processes and knowledge. This coaching process being enabled by a conducive learning environment.

Local and international bodies such as COMENSA and ICF view coaching as an organisational-development (OD) intervention for individual empowerment (ICF, 2011). Coaching is also understood to be outcomes-driven (Rostron, 2006). Orenstein (2002) also observed this view of an individual coaching focus at the executive. Orenstein (2002) states that coaching should be seen as dyadic intervention when it is conducted with an executive to improve his or her leadership skills.

According to Grant and Cavanagh (2004), although empirical evidence exists to help define coaching, the field and definition of coaching as such remains blurred. Thus, for the purpose of this study, *coaching* is defined as inclusive offering, a facilitative relationship (Hamlin et al., 2008; Schein, 2005), and a systemic process (Brown & Grant, 2010), fostered by a trained professional who supports the client's (e.g., individual, group, or organisational) positive growth and change (Stober & Grant, 2007; McDermott et al., 2007) for the intended outcomes of increased effectiveness and performance (Grant, 2003; Hackman & Wageman, 2005; Hamlin et al., 2008). This definition assumes the uses of both a dyadic and holistic approach to coaching which can be complementary.

In summary, this review of the literature on the definition of coaching revealed multiple definitions and contexts of coaching. Although no one common definition of coaching exists, more similarities than differences exist across the field in terms of definitions of coaching. What is more evident and warranting the attention of the researcher is that coaching is still defined and described as a solution for individuals, rather than as a strategic intervention which may be used in a systemic way for the wider organisational benefit. The following section serves to describe the limitations of the dyadic coaching in relation systemic coaching.

## **2.2.3 Traditional dyadic coaching**

### **2.2.3.1. Definition**

According to Orenstein (2002) states that coaching should be seen as dyadic intervention when it is conducted with an executive to improve his or her leadership skills. In other words, one on one coaching completely focuses on the coachee often at the exclusion of his or her team. Although the one to one coaching provide the coachee with a safe space for reflection and thinking without any disruptions (Paige, 2002) concerns were raised in terms of this approach historical conceptualisation and its effectiveness in building leadership not only leaders in organisations as discussed below.

### **2.2.3.2. Historical conceptualisation of a one on one coaching approach**

Conceptualisation of dyadic coaching has come under heavy criticism as an insufficient intervention in capacitating leaders to face adequately the complexity and challenges of the business world (Peters, 2009). The most-cited reason is the mechanistic and reductionist practices arising from the Newtonian influences, whose focus is on the parts, in order to understand the whole (Brustad, 1997). The above influences have since found expression in the current dyadic coaching, which tends to promote the individual development over and above the collective (Cushion et al., 2006). This is inclined to make leadership development an individual trait rather than an organisational collective capacity (Hawkins, 2011).

### **2.2.3.3. Concerns relating to one on one coaching**

A critical concern in relation to a dyadic (one on one) approach to coaching is its neglect of acknowledging that most organisational recurrent challenges are of a systemic nature, therefore such systemic concerns warrant attention beyond the individual coachee (O'Neill, 2000; Paige, 2002; Wheelan, 2003). Senge (2006) echoes the same sentiments that coaching should acknowledge the context as of value to both organisation and coachee. These aforementioned practitioners agitate strongly for the employees in organisations to have a systemic awareness if and when a sustainable change is desirable.

According to Senge (2006), the above systemic appreciation necessitates a need for working collaboratively; such an activity should assist in inculcating systemic thinking into team members. The resultant effect should be a strategic alignment of the organisational system with other systems (Schein, 2003; Senge, 2006). According to Paige (2002), the resultant effect of not being systemic in coaching within organisations is the coachee's lack of capacity to make an intentional personal transformation within the organisational system and culture. Paige (2002) observed such lack of ability as one of dyadic coaching limitations in being conducted one on one. Kets de Vries (2005) takes this debate even further by positing that one on one coaching is fraught with coordination and infrequency challenges, yet rather than introducing an enterprise-wide alternative, it is still being employed.

Cavanagh (2006) alludes to this neglect of the systemic appreciation as a lack of understanding that an organisation is a complex adaptive system. Hence, coaching is still offered on an individual-merit basis rather than in response to organisation-wide leadership development needs. According to Cavanagh (2006) and FitzGerald et al. (2010), the dyadic approach to coaching assumes the following reductionist tendencies: i) it is largely merited and thus preserved for leadership and the select few. ii) this approach is adopted assuming that full and profound understanding of organisational challenges may be resolved only at that senior level; iii) the success of the organisation depends solely on the empowered senior leadership. It is not extended to any other level, hence coaching budgets target the executive level to the exclusion of other levels.

According to O'Toole (2001), chosen leaders who are coached tend to keep such learning to themselves and for their benefit exclusively, instead of cascading down such benefits for the empowerment of direct reports and their teams. Thus the opportunity for the team to be aligned with their leader is forfeited. More importantly, the coaching that would have benefited the entire organisation in a systemic way in augmenting the leadership cadre, is lost. According to Hoffman (1999), the opportunity for a positive coaching culture to emerge disappears, to the detriment of the organisation. This matter is further compounded by the infrequency and lack of proper coordination of coaching interventions within organisations (Kets de Vries, 2005). This infrequency further fuels the loss of coaching value within organisations, and does not add relevance in the developing of organisational leadership, owing to the uncoordinated reporting process, some organisations tending to engage more

than one coaching organisation per procurement process (Paige, 2002). According to Turner (2003) as a result, organisationally coordinated and aligned enterprise-wide learning is lost; consequently, return on investment of coaching interventions for the organisation remains unmeasured. These assumptions, according to Kets de Vries (2005) and Wright (2005), are compounded even more by the secrecy of these coaching sessions, as though they have become an individual imperative rather than of organisational importance.

According to Spillane et al. (2004) what further fuels the preceding assumption is that for a long time wisdom to lead has always been seen to be linked to titles or positions within traditional, organisational, hierarchical structures. These assumptions hold no value any more, the world having moved on, and a new breed of employees having emerged, displaying far more innovation even surpassing the assumed wisdom of their leadership (Kets de Vries, 2010). Hence Rider (2002) and Ungerer (2007) argue for a coaching intervention that will complement the dyadic approach, which in their view should be systemic in design, one which consciously seeks to empower leadership at every level of the organisational structures regardless of title, position, and hierarchy.

According to Turner (2003), Spillane (2004), and Wright (2005), benefits flowing from such systemic intervention emanate from a whole organisational leadership alignment, propelling the organisation forward at every leadership level, capacitated with adaptive leadership which engages the complexity of the world of business. According to Riddle (2008), and Turner (2003), systemic interventions are the inverse of the Western and Newtonian advances of compartmentalisation, divisions, not advancing collaborations, coherence, and shared leadership. It follows then from the above that a systemic approach to coaching is able to strategically complement and advance broader organisational leadership development initiatives.

#### **2.2.4 Procurement and recipients of coaching services within organisations**

As practice indicates, coaching remains the privileged intervention reserved for the already-empowered executives, often in the narrow and reductionist sense which denies other leadership levels the opportunity of growing (Jones & Wallace, 2005; Anderson, 2003). This practice happens even though the impact of one-on-one coaching within organisations remains limited when it comes to increased organisational and team impact.

The conceptualisation of coaching as an individual trait rather than an organisational quality influences the way in which organisations source coaching externally. Most organisations usually source coaching intervention externally, based on their personal needs, rather than on their motivation to strengthen and cultivate organisational capabilities, these always seeming to be needed yesterday (Bass, 2007). This practice has various unintended consequences as identified by various authors (Kets de Vries, 2005; Grant, 2012), as it compels human resources and organisational-development practitioners to source coaching interventions in haste, without spending sufficient time understanding the actual needs of their internal clients (these mostly being the executives). This further reduces the importance of a proper buy-in and relevance to the organisational strategic vision. Consequently:

- a) Active participants are compromised, as is return on investment;
- b) Human resources practitioners often engage outside coaches without any idea which coaching model can be relevant and appropriate for their context and needs;
- c) Less regard is given to planning and how such intervention would be rolled out and coordinated successfully in augmenting the organisational leadership effectiveness;
- d) The entire intervention is thus left to the external coaches, less time is being spent in positioning such coaching interventions strategically within organisations (Goldsmith, 2008).

Mthembu (2010) revealed that sourcing coaching externally is compounded further by the misplaced practice by human resources practitioners of always focusing on selecting the intervention with the lowest investment cost, often compromising quality and overlooking requisite expertise and appropriate models. Decision making is thus conducted at a lower level and yet for a strategic purpose (Bass, 2007). Effective coaching programmes require and involve substantial commitment in terms of resources, budgets, prolonged timescales, potential disruption, and alignment with running projects or programmes, and major business or organisational change (Peters, 2009). Not having a clear and precise idea of the purpose and uses of coaching within an organisation, leadership creates and allows confusion, thus compromising the maximisation of coaching benefits and return on investment (Nelson & Hogan, 2009; Paige, 2002; Marion, 2001). The above-cited factors have the potential to compromise the integrity and impact of such interventions within organisations.

### **2.3. Empowerment of Organisational Leadership and Coaching**

The practice of one on one coaching has diverse origins. According to Rock and Page (2009), leadership development has always been traditionally viewed as no different from training. Most studies have shown the ineffectiveness of relying only on leadership that is taught in a classroom, often outside the leader's context and within diverse, conflicting systems (Day, 2001). According to Rock and Page (2009), this traditional leadership-development approach denies that most learning takes place within an organisational context and that generally, organisational problems emerge from unresolved systemic roots. In other words, leader development and leadership development have been mis-conceptualised and confused in many organisations as meaning the same thing, although this is not so (Dalakoura, 2010). Leader development is about the leader for his or her human-capital individual-development needs, whereas, leadership development speaks to the collective development of organisational leadership for coherence and for organisational effectiveness (Dalakoura, 2010; Kets de Vries, 2005).

Chapman (2010) and Kahn (2011) maintain that the reality of coaching within organisations is its capacity to integrate leadership input to overall organisational growth, thereby compelling individualistic leadership tendencies to surrender to systemic leadership and collaboration. According to Dalakoura (2010), since the collapse of the traditional leadership styles and assumptions of heroic life leaders and know-all personalities, leadership coaching presents the new business leadership with an opportunity of leading in a different way, one that upholds the care and growth of employees in a systemic way, instead of merely adopting a tick-box approach (Hawkins, 2011). According to Cook and Viedge (2011), this leadership empowerment can happen through coach training and leadership coaching with the aim of empowering the broader organisational leadership.

Nelson and Hogan (2009) and Kemp (2009) argue that because of global business failures through mergers and acquisitions, the current leadership has no option but to seek coaching so as to be able to achieve a balance between chasing profits while advancing and inculcating their leadership development and retention into their organisation. According to Britton (2010) and Goldsmith (2009), the coaching industry has grown exponentially to an estimated \$1.5 billion year-on-year investment. This is indicative of the reality that coaching as an

intervention for the development of strategic leadership in organisation is embraced as a meaningful intervention for sustaining leadership teams in modern organisations.

#### **2.4. The International Growth and Development of Coaching**

Coaching as an emerging profession is growing as organisations are making use of it. For instance, it was recorded by several authors such as Britton (2010) and O’Flaherty (2004), that coaching investment is now in excess of a billion dollars. Equally so, coaching is recorded as growing in Europe and in the Western corporate world. According to Kets de Vries (2010) and Kemp (2009b), one on one (dyadic) coaching remains the most attractive approach to corporate executives for leadership development. According to Parsloe and Rolph (2005), coaching is largely utilised for development and learning purposes. Once again, as indicated earlier, leadership coaching was and is still individually driven and targeted, rather than being systemic as an organisation- wide phenomenon.

#### **2.5. From International to Local Growth of Coaching in South Africa**

Having discussed Europe and the Western world above, a brief South African perspective is shared below. According to Rostron (2006), a similar trend has emerged in South Africa in terms of the growth of coaching in this country compared with elsewhere on the African continent. A range of industries has begun to use coaching for a variety of reasons, including performance and developmental agendas (Mthembu, 2010). Among those in the forefront of such developments are the financial services, such as banks, also oil companies such as Shell South Africa (Rostron, 2006). According to Cilliers (2005), given the interest shown in coaching and with the purpose of creating a professional and regulatory home for this practice, progressive coaches in South Africa established the Coaches and Mentors South Africa. Although this coaching practice is accepted as an emerging intervention, robust research in this field remains minimal (Kahn, 2011).

#### **2.6 Coaching sustainability in organisations**

According to Fitzgerald et al. (2010), key to the sustaining of coaching beyond the exiting of the coaching organisation or coach, the following may be considered for implementation:

- i) coaches to transfer coaching skills across levels of the organisation (leader as coach, manager as coach, supervisor as coach). This will create a larger pool of change agents spread across hierarchical levels;
- ii) promote peer and team coaching;
- iii) eliminate silos by deepening and promoting collaborations;
- iv) introduce and promote a practice of team awards and appraisal rather than only individual achievements;
- v) introduce a coaching community within the organisation and, more importantly, leadership should ensure sufficient budget, such interventions needing a committed budget. This will naturally compel team members to work collaboratively and respect and appreciate each other's contributions (Orenstein, 2000).

In addition to the above, Ting (2006), Clutterbuck (2005), and FitzGerald (2010) state that one of the key benefits of a coaching culture is that it positions coaching in the mind of the people, who then unconsciously and simply manifest it through their interactions with others. As a result of this, new behaviour emerges; learning becomes collaborative and effortless. Ting (2006) further suggested the following as key factors that can take coaching beyond the exiting of the coaches from an organisation:

- i) Use of peer coaching;
- ii) Availing of resources and tools by leadership; and
- iii) Information and knowledge-sharing to sustain learning within the organisation.

Similarly, Passarelli and Van Oosten (2014), further identified peer coaching as one of the ways of sustaining coaching within organisations. They propose that, when the whole organisation is acknowledged, and coaching is integrated into the culture and other organisational programmes, sustainability will emerge.

## **2.7. Systems Theory and Organisations**

Systems theory was developed in the early 20th century by researchers in North America and Europe in an attempt to transcend the limitations of the prevailing reductionist approach to



the natural sciences (Morgan, 2006). Noteworthy early researchers of general systems' theory include Fitzgerald (2009), Checkland (1989), Beer, (1979), and von Bertalanffy (1968). Systems theory was built upon over time in the 1990s (Senge, 1994) to include systems' thinking as applied to organisations. According to this view, organisations were observed as complex, interconnected, open systems, interacting with their environments through permeable boundaries. A core concept in systems theory is that the nature of a system's (organisation's) existence relies on holism, meaning that interdependence, feedback and feed-forward loops, and dynamic equilibrium are necessary for change, creativity, innovation, and thus survival. Another core concept is that within the system, the parts of the system dynamically interact and, together, are greater than the sum of the whole (Collier and Esteban, 2000).

Daft (2007) synthesised the literature on systems, defining a system as a set of interacting elements acquiring inputs from the environment, transforming them, and discharging outputs to the external environment. Organisations are considered complex, open systems, because, like organisms, they are open to, and interact with their environment. According to Bertalanffy (1968), nothing in nature exists without being embedded within something else, whether it be an atom, a cell, a person, a team, an organisation, a nation, or a plant. Anderson (1999) posits that a key principle of systems theory is that the system's survival depends on interaction with its environment. This means that continuous cycles of inputs and outputs are influenced by feedback loops (Argyris, 1977). According to Argyris (1977) interaction with and feedback from the environment influences and even co-shapes the other. In the simplest form, feedback is information reflecting the meaning of the outcomes of an act or a series of acts by an individual, group, or organisation.

According to O'Neill (2000), systems theory emphasises the importance of responding and adapting to feedback. The idea of organisations as systems is not new. Neither is the idea that organisations are complex and rapidly changing (Marion et al., 2001). Kouzes and Posner (2002) concluded that the environmental contexts in which organisations exist are themselves changing at an increasing rate, and toward increasing complexity. Today, the challenges of the world continue to grow exponentially in terms of complexity, interconnection, and speed of change (Marion et al., 2001). According to Jarvempaa and Tanriverdi (2003), the 21st century organisations are facing a complex competitive landscape driven largely by

globalisation and the technological revolution. Given the complexity of doing business in today's increased global and technological environment, organisations need to act locally on the basis of broader goals, expectations, and intentions for the whole system in order to survive, let alone thrive in the long-term future (Laske, 1999).

According to Marion and Uhl-Bien (2001), complexity theory has been developed and applied to organisations. Morgan (2006) maintains that general systems theory and systems thinking are at the core of complexity theory. This is a concept attempting to explain complex phenomenon not explainable by traditional mechanistic theories (Palus et al., 2003). The systems theory informs the theoretical lenses used by the researcher to advance a systemic form of coaching in sculpting adaptive leadership development for modern organisations.

### **2.7.1 Application to human organisations**

Researchers have applied the concepts of systems and complexity to better understand human organisations, such as for comprehending how they emerge, interact with other systems, change, learn, and adapt (Anderson, 1999; Cilliers, 2005; Marion, 1999; Sperry, 2004). No longer do the main challenges of organisations lie in the people or individual parts of the system, but in the interfaces and relationships between people, teams, functions, and different internal and external stakeholder needs (Kahn, 2011; O'Toole, 2001). The nature of human relationships, including team interactions is inherently non-linear and often unpredictable (Hawkins, 2011). In other words, although a team may plan, it also needs to interact with, and adapt to, its environment, including the various interconnected parts of the larger and smaller system. O'Neill (2000) discusses micro-level dynamics interactions among individuals as the emergence of aggregates, or small informal groups. These aggregates form (emerge again) into larger aggregates, and so on. Thus, the organisation is made up of both formal and informal systems (Kets de Vries, 2005).

### **2.8 Contrasting systemic coaching approach with other coaching approaches or models**

A literature scan of available coaching models reveals several of these, and includes among others, the following: i) the Team Model is best described by Kiel and Rimmer, (1996); this model advances a team-oriented approach. Executive coaching is often associated with the

development of leadership skills. ii) the Leadership Development Model, as described by Wasylyshyn, (2003); and Palus et al. (2003), seeks to associate executive coaching with the acquisition of leadership; iii) the Human Development Model as articulated by Laske (1999) focuses on a coaching approach seeking to be inclusive of the development of the corporation and the individual. iv) the Integrative Model, as posited by Orenstein (2000), seeks to advance the point that coaching in an integrative way, includes both the subconscious and the unconscious. Finally, v) the Compliance Model, as captured by Kilburg (2001), seeks to focus on what really derails coaching within organisations.

### **2.8.1 The systems thinking approach to coaching within organisations**

According to Daft (2007), external stakeholders and institutions belonging to the organisation, such as clients or customers and agencies of government, are as important as internal stakeholders. In other words, as the organisations interact with these stakeholders, appreciation of such has the potential to inhibit or enhance the organisational operations or effectiveness. Morgan (2006) and Kets de Vries (2010) posit that ignoring the context and the broader system within which the organisation finds itself, is imprudent.

According to Senge (1994), interrelated systems and subsystems which constitute the environment within which the organisation is party to as an organism that is living and open to external influence is a reality which cannot be ignored. It is this reality that made Huffington (2007), to argue for a systems-wide intervention, so that other systemic, often ignored issues, may be addressed equally in the coaching conversations. In other words, a call for coaches to intentionally appreciate the entire interrelated systems that are at play influencing the behaviour and actions of the coachee is pivotal in coaching holistically. Similarly, several authors, such as Wageman (2005) and Hawkins (2011), supported Huffington's (2007) argument for coaching that is systemic and enterprise-wide rather than a dyadic approach practised largely in a reductionist way. They argue that when one coaches in a systemic way, individual agendas give way to collective interests. In this coaching model, organisational stakeholders are engaged for the purpose of assisting the organisation to expand or to improve.

According to Cavanagh (2006), this systemic coaching approach facilitates an effective collaboration within teams for the betterment of the entire organisation. Coaching is essentially systemic as this is echoed by Grant (2011). In other words, the coachee is part of the broader system, this fact must be effected in his or her coaching conversations. Not appreciating the organisational issues that are systemic in nature compromises the feedback loops and ignores the core invisible forces at play in the coachee's developmental journey. According to Kets de Vries (2005) and Hawkins (2011), the coaching practitioners will better appreciate the dynamics of groups and how organisations should respond to change internally and externally, by becoming oriented and trained in the realities of complexity and systems thinking. The preceding argument is carried forward by Brown and Grant (2010), who argue for the systemic awareness to be given attention in learning. Such awareness will assist organisations to move away from separating and compartmentalising systems parts to giving primary preference to the larger system.

The agitation for the orientation towards and training in systems thinking by coachees or leadership will ensure that coachees efforts are directed at crafting and realising the organisational strategic objectives (O'Neill, 2000). This assists employees to think broader and deeper in facilitating the realisation of their future, considering the complexity and dynamics impacting on the effectiveness of organisations (Senge, 1994). O'Neill (2000) and Kilburg (2000) advance and support what Senge (1994) posits, that systemic interventions are more strategic and can be sustainable.

The attempt by the systemic perspective on coaching is to position the coachee in the context of systems that interrelate. According to Kilburg (2000), coaching should be based on a systems platform, it being systemic in nature. This view is further expressed by O'Neill (2000), who advances a systemic approach to coaching in order to have sustainable outcomes. Cavanagh (2006) further advances this systems view by suggesting that organisations are complex and may be adaptive, a systemic approach therefore may assist organisational leadership to thrive.

Limited research has been conducted into this area of systemic coaching that will assist organisations to take informed decisions. Follow is the case for systemic coaching as the suggested alternative model to one on one coaching.

## **2.9 Systemic Coaching**

### **2.9.1 A case for systemic coaching in various contexts**

According to Cociveria and Cronshaw (2004), effective and dynamic coaching within organisations should be holistic. In other words, coaching should be concentrated on various organisational dimensions, namely, team, and individual, rather than on the individual alone. A systemic coaching approach draws its orientation from the acceptance that leaders are a product of their own environmental systems, and thus their behaviour cannot be isolated from their context (Ungerer, 2007).

Cook and Viedge (2011) posit that systemic oriented coaching as a holistic offering to organisations should be positioned likewise in current modern business contexts, especially in the light of a management and leadership theory which tends to advance the need for effective teams and collective learning in support of organisational effectiveness.

The way employees function and discharge their responsibilities in organisations is not only based and constrained in the borders of that organisation. The advent of the globalised world and free flowing of ideas and information in the knowledge dispensation has become both a challenge and an advantage for organisational leadership (Bowes, 2008). Change of business economic context and conditions has sparked a need for a different offering such as coaching for enterprise-wide impact to emerge (Britton, 2010). Team based learning became one of the key learning that come with systemic coach as it affords leadership to invest for maximum impact and can be cheaper than one to one coaching with a minimum impact (Riddle, 2008). The design of systemic coaching of being able to scaled down to other organisational levels present organisational leadership to coach their direct reports also (Brown & Grant, 2010).

Though the literature indicates instances where organisation wide coaching emerges with various forms and shape, one to one coaching model still remains one mostly used in regions of Europe and Australia (Thornton, 2010; Ward, 2008). According to Kets de Vries (2010), team or collective coaching does indeed result in a better return on investment in coaching than dyadic coaching. Interestingly, Ibarra et al. (2010) view coaching systemically as another way of reducing isolated development of women from man and this can then assist in

cultivating an integrated leadership development of all genders for organisational effectiveness. This point is further advanced by O'Neill (2000) who posit that systemic approaches to leadership development are key to coaching within organisations as they cover more than one individual. This approach is pivotal in ensuring a collective execution for the organisational benefit.

The literature on the systemic approach to coaching has been recorded by some authors, albeit anecdotally, as shown above. The cited benefits may be clustered as follows: increased awareness of the systemic nuances within the organisational context; intentional alignment with and inclusion of diverse perspectives from different levels of the organisational leadership and values; expanded understanding of group dynamics; and knowledge-sharing and improved relations among individuals (Cavanagh, 2006; Conger, 2003; Buys, 2007; Bennis, 1999; Brown & Grant, 2010).

The systemic approach as opposed to other models includes several systems in and outside the organisation and is not limited to individuals, teams, or groups. Unlike the dyadic coaching, systemic coaching is focused on the wider enterprise and beyond the enterprise, rather than on internal individuals only as is currently the case (Stober & Grant, 2006). Much value and impact is felt by the organisational system when the systemic coaching is applied, as shown in case studies by Diedrich (2001), who coached first systemically and then dyadically. Of course this would depend on the client requirements and needs at that point in time. Ward (2008) also works systemically by leveraging other stakeholders opinions, such as those held by peers and direct reports. A holistic systemic approach is much elaborated on by Kets de Vries (2005) in his work within organisations, in which the requirement is for those receiving coaching to spread it throughout the organisation (Goldsmith & Lyons, 2006).

The next section covers strategic leadership as it pertains to organisation and coaching as the topic of the study proposes.

## **2.10 Strategic Leadership**

Coaching has been suggested as enabling intervention for the systemic development of strategic leadership in organisations. This section intends to introduce the reader to importance of strategic leadership and how such leadership in turn impacts the organisational life and stakeholders. To assist in building capabilities in leadership this study seeks to suggest that systemic approach to coaching can be invaluable in strengthening organisational bench strength.

### **2.10.1 Definitions of strategic leadership**

Strategic leadership can be defined as the leadership capacity and quality, think strategically and systemically and possess the ability to read signs from the operating environment and to preparing accordingly (Ireland & Hitt, 1999). This strategic task cannot be done at exclusion of the followers. Hence, Zaccaro and Banks (2004), posits that the critical role of a strategic leader is to be able to adapt and to influence employees to voluntarily make decisions that enhance the effectiveness of the organisation. In other words, strategic leadership is concerned with ensuring the future of the organisation through the development and management of people, enabling them collectively to participate in ways that help achieve the organisation's future. The ensuring of organisational effectiveness is critical. This should therefore be spread across levels and hierarchies; the systemic development of leadership within organisations is necessary. Coaching becomes one of the strategic interventions which can assist organisations to build their leadership capabilities across organisational boundaries.

According to this study, strategic leadership is viewed as a collective activity versus a top-individual act, often to the exclusion of others, owing to positioning or hierarchical authority. This idea was earlier observed by Van Velsor and McCauley (2004), who proposed that leadership be defined and described as a collective phenomenon seeking alignment, and embracing collective wisdom and coherence at all organisational levels. In other words, strategic leadership is spread and resides horizontally within the organisation; it should be seen and propelled through roles not only through hierarchical positions.

According to Hernez-Broome and Hughes (2004), leadership is the ability to influence a group towards the achievement of goals. Strategic leadership, on the other hand, is defined as

a person's ability to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, think strategically, and work with others to initiate changes that will create a viable future for the organisation (Tichy & Cardwell, 2002). Likewise, O'Toole (2001) defines strategic leadership as the retaining of influence over others so as to carry out tasks on a daily basis. What is missing in the above definition is exactly what systemic coaching is attempting to achieve by arguing for the importance of organisations to appreciate strategic capabilities as resident across and within organisational levels not only in top leadership. Hence the researcher aligns himself with the definitions by Kets de Vries (2010). According to the researcher, strategic leadership refers to a collective and is relational in nature and concerned with ensuring the destiny of the enterprise through human capital development across the organisation, keeping the organisational employees engaged.

### **2.10.2 The importance of strategic leaders and their effect on organisational systems**

Yukl (1998) stated that the importance of strategic leaders and their effect on the performance of large organisations is a controversial issue. According to Kotter (2007), some researchers argue that leadership has a major influence on organisational performance (Finkelstein & Hambrick, 1996), whereas others contend that leaders have very little impact on organisational performance (Hewson, 1997).

Some of the reasons for these researchers doubting the importance of strategic leaders include the following: An individual strategic leader, such as the chief executive officer, has little influence on organisational performance owing to many internal and external constraints within an organisation, including powerful stakeholders, internal coalitions, a strong organisational culture, scarce resources, strong competitors, and unfavourable conditions. The performance of an organisation is largely determined by factors within the external environment that are beyond the control of the strategic leader. The discretion of an individual strategic leader is limited by internal and external organisational factors; the influence of an individual strategic leader on an organisation tends to be exaggerated as a result of discounting the impact of other explanations, such as industry performance and economic conditions (FitzGerald, 2010).

Yukl (1998) stated that research does demonstrate that leaders have less influence over organisational events than is often assumed, however, it emphasised that the research in no



way supports the conclusion that leadership is unimportant to organisational success. Yukl (1998) concluded that, despite all the internal and external constraints, individual strategic leaders and top teams are still able to have a substantial influence on organisational effectiveness and performance.

According to Bass (2007), it has been demonstrated in many studies that the decisions and actions of strategic leaders have a strong influence on organisational success. For example, O'Reilly (2010) found that strategic leadership actions have an effect on employee commitment and satisfaction. In addition, according to Bass (2007), an organisation depends on the actions of the CEO. CEOs whose organisations are consistently profitable maintain their focus on the 'bottom-line'.

Wheeler et al. (2007) are of the opinion that strategic leadership ensures the effective implementation of the strategic-management process. Rapid and discontinuous change, and increased levels of volatility, uncertainty, and competitive intensity in the business environment have increased the need for strong, systemic, strategic leadership on all levels of organisations. Robust strategic leadership and strategic management processes that facilitate effective formulation, implementation, and control of strategy on organisations can create a competitive advantage, maximise wealth, and help organisations to survive in the long term.

In addition, an organisation's chances of creating competitive advantage, maximising wealth, and surviving in the long term increase when the strategic leaders of the organisation continuously align the internal organisational environment with changes taking place in the complex external environment. Failure of CEOs is assured when they are unable to respond to changes in the external environment or to identify the need for change (Hitt et al., 2001).

The profitability and sustaining organisational competitiveness remains the major role of the strategic leadership. Hitt et al. (1998) also highlighted the role of strategic leadership in attaining competitiveness. These researchers posit that robust strategic leadership activities are able to assist enterprises to augment their output in the context of an uncertain and complex world market. A strategic leadership of an organisation can become a source of competitive advantage when strategic leadership actions are effectively practised. This

competitive advantage can in turn, lead to survival in the long term as well as competitive advantage for the organisation, together with above-average returns.

Bass (2007) noted that strategic leaders have to free themselves from short-term goal orientations to focus more attention on long-term threats and opportunities. In addition, they are responsible for providing long-term leadership on strategic issues. Effective leadership can positively contribute to organisational performance and change in both the short term and the long term. Hitt et al. (2001) believed that one of the major reasons for differences in sustainable success is the effectiveness of the leadership exhibited throughout the enterprise. Strategic leadership, therefore, enhances the sustainability and stability of the organisation. It is thus critical for maintaining current levels of performance and for ensuring superior performance and change in the long term.

## **2.11 Summary**

Dyadic (one on one) coaching, as discussed in this chapter, occupies a centre stage in sourcing and implementation of coaching within organisations. This practice is effected in full view of the shift towards systemic interventions. Systemic coaching seems a logical complementary offering to organisations for them to gain maximally from coaching. The researcher has tabulated the literature review, and advanced the importance of an enterprise-wide systemic coaching within organisations. This chapter has also shown the contradictions in conceptualising strategic leadership, the leader heroic status still being advanced, whereas there is contradictory evidence. CEOs have been failing at the expense of organisational long-earned benefits. Thus a movement towards a systemic collective leadership is indicated. This effective collective leadership may be realised through coaching which advances the systemic development of leadership capabilities within and across organisational levels, regardless of rank, position, or organisational hierarchy.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter focused on reviewing literature on coaching and leadership, this chapter concerns itself with researcher methodology that was applied in the study. The collection of data and analysis is also described.

### **3.2 Research Design/Methodology**

According to Blanche et al. (2007), research methodology refers to a process that is purposed to show how questions relating to the study are to be answered. In qualitative research, a research question is entertained, unlike in quantitative research in which hypotheses are the norm. In this study, a research question informs the methodology to be employed, also the way in which data will be collected and analysed.

### **3.3 Research Methods**

Research methods are described as a process of data collection in a structured way for the purposes of responding to a research question or research questions (Ghuri & Grønhaug, 2002). As indicated above, popular and tested methods for data collection are referred to as either quantitative or qualitative. Both research paradigms are dictated by the question/s one asks in research (Borrego, et al., 2009). These two research methods are briefly described below.

#### **3.3.1 Quantitative research method**

Data collection in this paradigm takes a statistical form. As indicated above, data here is generated, and hypothesis is formulated from data-reflecting variables. Larger samples are usually used in the quantitative research for the purpose of generalisability of results. Participants or research objects are viewed in a similar way (Wisker, 2001; Smeyers, 2008; Nichollas, 2009)

### **3.3.2 Qualitative research method**

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument for the collecting and analysing of data, therefore the researcher experience and knowledge are as critical as the researcher's skills (Golafshani, 2003). In qualitative research approach both researcher and research participants experiences and opinions matter (Nichollas, 2009). Meaning-making of people's experiences and narratives constitute data. As a result, according to Ghauri & Grønhaug (2002), 'constructivist' and 'interpretivist' are qualities of qualitative research, the researcher using both constructing meanings. The qualitative research method, according to Borrego et al. (2009), assumes in practice the form of observations, focus groups, interviews, and surveys, depending on which of these is most appropriate and useful in that study context. As a qualitative study for example, the researcher has chosen to employ the interview tool with which to gather data from research participants, as dictated by the research question.

### **3.4 Method of Data Collection**

As indicated above, the researcher has opted for the qualitative approach, thus making use of interviews, as per the study inquiry. The researcher was able to solicit the participants opinions, perceptions, and narratives, in relation to the research question and topic. According to Milena et al. (2008) and Golafshani (2003), the researcher is the instrument of data collection; he conducts in-depth interviews with the intention of coming to an understanding of the matter under discussion. According to Berg (2001), field notes have to be captured on the field as interviews proceed. Hence, the researcher in this study made use of both voice-recording and note-writing wherever possible.

The study sought to explore and understand the uses of coaching for leadership development within organisations; and whether or not the chosen model delivers benefits to the organisation. In the context of the study, the researcher deemed in-depth interviews as a tool for data collection within the qualitative approach as appropriate for a study of this magnitude (Silverman, 1993). For the purpose of ensuring that no harm was done to respondents consent was sought from them in addition an ethical clearance was sought from and granted by the university (Appendix 3).

Given the research question and study purposes, a sample of 15 DAA participants was selected, based on their experience and insight of the coaching model they undergone at DAA. Their having undergone coaching and selection across all levels of the DAA was considered. In other words, representivity per level informed was paramount for the researcher to gain an in-depth view of coaching interventions at the DAA. Given the intention of eliciting sufficient in-depth responses an interview list was constructed keeping the researcher focused. As suggested by Wisker (2001), the semi-structured approach was employed. This was intended to ensure consistency, the rationale being that, after interviews were completed transcription would follow so as to have a better-structured product and for the analysis to follow in an orderly, comparative and comprehensive manner. Each interview took 45 minutes to an hour. This was because the officials are always on the move, therefore time constraints were considered. The interviews took place between the 1-31 July 2013. A recorder was employed so as not to miss any critical data for analysis and for transcription and proper reflection thereafter.

### **3.5 Ethical issues**

The researcher ensured that no harm to the participants occurred according to Cooper and Schindler (2003). As an administrative research requirement, all respondents were invited, being presented with an informed-consent form. This was completed by the researcher after the participants had read what the research covered. Participants were given the option of participating or not as this was voluntary for them (see Appendix 2). The researcher maintained a transparent process, encouraging the respondents to feel free to communicate any concerns should any arise during the course of their participating in the research study. The respondents all signed agreeing to participate. All participants were interviewed during the month of July 2013. Given the conversation held, the identity of the participants remains confidential. This information will therefore not be exposed without their consent.

### **3.6 Sampling approach**

In purposive sampling the researcher uses his or her own judgment when choosing participants (Bachman & Schutt, 2003). Purposive sampling is what the researcher opted for. This assisted the researcher to target those people who had gone through the coaching

process, recording their experiences (Nichollas, 2009). This followed a process by the researcher of purposefully identifying participants across levels, with the help of the organisation's development manager.

Given the proximity between Johannesburg and Pretoria, all interviews were conducted face to face. This approach advantaged the researcher, as all unclear matters were clarified instantly, unlike with a telephonic, distance interview. All consent forms were secured after proper clarification had been given and all the interviews were conducted in English.

### **3.7 Has the Research Design covered the Research Objectives?**

The methodology chosen by the researcher delivered the expected outcomes. The study was based on a qualitative paradigm which focuses on people's views and opinions on coaching received at the DAA. These views, as indicated earlier, were subjective as they focused on people's insight, knowledge, and experiences. The study title, in my view, was accommodative enough to entertain the research objectives. According to Wisker (2001), researchers should always avoid crafting complex research questions and objectives. The study data was structured enough to ensure proper analysis.

The DAA officials targeted for the interviews were easy to access. However, the process was not free from difficulties, as some officials were travelling, while the researcher had planned to interview a minimum of four officials per day. In other words, some interviews were rescheduled several times. The researcher was greatly assisted by some of the officials personal assistants in finally conducting the interviews. The interviews were in all cases held at the interviewees working areas which meant some driving between Johannesburg and Pretoria.

**Table 3. 1. Demographical information of the participants**

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Qualifications</b>	<b>No. of years' service at DAA</b>	<b>Years in current position</b>
R1	CEO		BCom	5 years	5 years
R2	OD Senior Manager	Human Resources	MCom	2years	5 years
R3	Executive Manager; CIO	Information and Strategy	MA	3 years	1 year
R4	HOD Human Resources	HR	Bachelor Degree plus certificates in management	3	3
R5	CFO	Finance	B Com	4	4
R6	COO	Operations	Honours' Degree	4	4
R7	Senior Manger	DTP	BCom	2	2
R8	Senior Manager	CPPP	Bachelor's degree	3	3
R9	Senior Manager	EDD	Degree	2	2
R10	Senior Manager Training& Development	EDD	Honours' Degree	3	3
R11	Manager	Procurement	Bachelor in Auditing		
R12	Labour: Shop Steward	DAA	Bachelor's Degree	2	2
R13	Manager Finance	Finance	Bachelor's Degree	3	3
R14	Specialist	Special Projects	Honours' degree	3	3
R15	Specialist	Special Projects	Honours' degree	3	3

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability**

Common practice shows that issues of validity and reliability remain inseparable. In other words each depends on the other (Golafshani, 2003). To establish validity in this study, the same questions in the interview document were repeated throughout the interview process. This was followed by a comparison exercise showing the responses, and how such responses compared with the research question. Validity constraints are evident in this study as the researcher made use of interviews as a tool with which to gather and collect data, hence recommendations for future research reflect this gap.

Participants responses from the data were by themselves subjective. As a consequence, a variety of responses occurred, although the questions were the same, time and context influencing one's response in such interviews. This is simply the nature of the qualitative-research approach of which the researcher was conscious of.

### **3.9 Data analysis**

The researcher sent recorded interviews for transcription, employing a thematic analysis as an approach for a proper data analysis. Thematic analysis is a method of identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (also called *themes*). A theme is an *outcome* of coding, categorisation, and analytic reflection (Saldana, 2009). Braun and Clarke (2006) pointed out that thematic analysis is not a linear process of simply moving from one phase to the next rather it is a *recursive* process, with movement back and forth throughout the data and the phases of analysis.

According to Ryan and Bernard (2003), thematic analysis may be defined as methods including pattern examination and classification emanating from data. The use of this method is critical in qualitative analysis. Four steps in thematic analysis have been identified, namely, themes and subthemes, selecting the important themes, forming theme pyramids, and linking themes into theoretic models (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Once all data have been analysed, themes emerge. The critical elements in the analysis process are the transcribing of the digitally recorded data, being able to assemble concepts repeatedly emerging. Differences and similarities in data may also be important for theme-building.



### **3.10 Summary**

The qualitative research methodology was chosen by the researcher for the study as being the most appropriate. The data-analysis method employed was thematic. A data-gathering tool employed was an in-depth interview of 15 officials from the DAA. The researcher was the main person conducting interviews face to face, thereby obtaining first-hand insight and views, and being able also to observe the way in which emotions were expressed during the interviews. A digital recorder was used by the researcher to ensure that no information or data was lost, recordings were later transcribed and analysed. Although other methods, such as observations and surveys employing qualitative methodology were available, they were not used in this study. The researcher was conscious of the fact that making use of only a single method would have disadvantages such a total reliance by the researcher on subjective and personal experiences that could not be verified by other methods. This could be mentioned here as one of the limitations of the study.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

As set out in Chapter 3, a thematic analysis approach was adopted for this study. In order to provide distinct clarity to the reader, some of the themes below were further divided into sub-themes. Links are also made between the study findings and previous research.

#### 4.1.1 Theme 1: Procurement of coaching services at DAA

Proper procurement of services and the quality thereof is vital for organisations to be able to enjoy a return on investment for such an intervention. Subthemes such as coaching procurement decision making, absence of diagnosis of both organisational and individual needs, coaching alignment to strategic objectives compromised, lowest bidder principle unhelpful, lack of proper coaching coordination and confusion around the purpose and uses of coaching within the DAA are discussed below.

##### 4.1.1.1. Coaching procurement decision making

What was revealed during the study interviews by participants is that decision-making relating to procurement of coaching services at DAA remains an executive privilege as a budget holder. Decisions are taken haphazardly, in an uncoordinated fashion. As a result coaching remains unfocused and lacks strategic focus.

*Decision making relating to procurement of coaching interventions at DAA is an executive privilege, it is haphazard, ad hoc, and influenced by sectional and individual needs rather than by organisational needs. (R4)*

*Often decision-making relating to procurement for coaching intervention is done at the exclusion of those targeted to be beneficiaries or participants of the project. (R2)*

This finding contradicts the work of Kirkpatrick and Locke (1991) who found that a lack of attention to decision making contradicts the principle of investing sufficient time in making

decision that can have far reaching implications for the organisation and individuals involved. Such attention will demand both cognitive attention and sensitivity.

#### **4.1.1.2. Absence of diagnosis of both organisational and individual needs**

Participants indicated and emphasised the need to first and foremost establish both organisational and individual needs before procurement of coaching services are sourced. This is a non-negotiable factor in ensuring purposeful and meaningful participation.

*No prior internal diagnosis and assessments is conducted to justify gaps for the invitation of external coaches to DAA. (R4)*

Participants highlighted that the absence of proper diagnosis and needs assessment has affected the depth of the programme and outcomes thereof. Grants (2012) study contradicts a practice of not having comprehensive needs assessments done as they inform which area of concerns warrant attention. This will further assist in measuring whether the intervention was a success or not.

*As HR we were never involved in any decisions or party to any deliberations prior coaches arriving at DAA. (R15)*

In other words, as revealed by participants that though human-resources department (HR) existed, coaching is sourced per department, often without the knowledge of the HR department executive, who is employed primarily, to ensure that the DAA's human capital is improved, enhanced, and developed.

*Some political dynamics seem to be clouding and influencing decisions of who gets developed in DAA. For example, the HR was seen as adding less value to line departments and thus not meeting line-management expectations, and consequently ostracised. (R5)*

*As result of HR being sidelined, line management involved their own division officials with less or no experience in human capital development matters. In other words, no*

*coaching panel existed critical for the selecting and evaluation of the appropriateness, quality, and timing of the intervention. (R2)*

This finding is similar the work of Kets de Vries, (2005) who found that, practitioners tend to source coaching models in haste without sufficient consideration given in understanding the needs of their internal clients. Thus the implementation and evaluation of the coaching programme will be difficult to measure given the lack of comprehensive understanding of the what and the how of the coaching offering. This gap will then result in external coaches dominating the coaching content and direction thereof to the client.

The majority of participants indicated that the dissipating role of HR had an impact on the design and coaching model sourced for executives.

*Due to the diminished role of HR involvement in coaching, one to one coaching contracts for executives leaders only started to sprawl across the executive suit, every executive choosing his/her own coach with not consultation with HR executive. (R11)*

#### **4.1.1.3. Coaching alignment to strategic objectives compromised**

Participants revealed the internal lack of alignment of coaching processes compromised the importance of the alignment and integration of coaching intervention to the broader organisational strategic objectives. Absence of integration will complicate measuring of results coaching outcomes, and consequently the return on investment.

*Absence of experience and knowledge of coaching processes open a gap for DAA to be led and exploited by external coaches. (R14)*

The lack of coaching alignment and individualistic approach to leadership development by DAA contradicts the work of Britton (2010) who found that if less regard is given to proper planning and coordination of coaching, organisational leadership development will be left entirely in the hands of coaches who also might have their own profit making agendas by exploiting such disarray.

*Request for coaching by executives have always been an urgent request as though no prior thought have been invested in it. (R11)*

This finding corresponds to the work of Bass (2007) who found that coaching diluted by personal agendas and private needs is always characterised by a component of dire urgency at the neglect of sustainable results and strategic benefits for the organisation.

#### **4.1.1.4. Lowest bidder principle unhelpful**

The participants interviewed indicated that the procurement policy of awarding coaching assignment contracts to the lowest bidder have also compromised the quality of coaching in DAA.

*Given the public sector PFMA procurement red tape with its unreasonable restrictions on how much to spend and the requirement of three quotations, quality coaching sourcing is compromised as we are told to always go for the cheapest option. This opens the organisation to coaching charlatans, good, experienced coaches come at a high premium. In other words, we are forced to compromise quality owing to the investment costs. (R5)*

This finding is similar to what the work of Mthembu (2010) who found that most government departments and states owned entities are bound by PFMA codes and cannot procure beyond a fixed certain amount as per delegation of authority and this has since kept good coaches at bay and instead attracted a flood of inexperienced and cheaper coaches to dominate the government projects.

#### **4.1.1.5. Lack of proper coaching coordination**

Lack of coordination and how decisions are taken have proven unhelpful and have adverse effects in the implementation, participation and success of coaching intervention in DAA. It was found that coaching intervention coordination within the DAA was poorly executed. Coaches are not obliged to share emerging themes critical for the collective development of

leadership within the organisation. Value-adding of disparate coaching organisations was seen as problematic by the participants.

*I, as the DAA OD Manager, was told that the organisation chose various coaches from various coaching houses. I found this to be so; hence we find it very challenging to coordinate the coaching intervention activities and to assess their work. As a result we do not even ask the coaches to share collaboratively with us the emerging themes within the organisation, their work being disparate and unfocused. (R2)*

The finding contradicts the work of Williams and Parr (2006) who found that the core essence of programme management includes activities such as the integrated planning of multiple projects, identification and understanding of dependencies, managing of risks relating to complex interdependencies, maintaining of focus on the overall business benefits, and coordinating of large and often dispersed projects. It appears that in DAA this basic project management skill is not applied to coaching coordination, thus compromising the effectiveness of the intervention.

#### **4.1.1.6. Confusion around the purpose and uses of coaching within the DAA**

The majority of participants highlighted strongly the internal confusion about coaching and its intended purpose for the DAA. This lack of proper understanding has led the organisation not to source coaching interventions properly so as to maximise the benefits of such intervention. Human-resources department practitioners lack of exposure to modern coaching offerings limited their appreciation of coaching models which can assist in leadership development within the organisation.

*In our HR department and I can safely say organisation-wide, deeper knowledge of what coaching is and what it is not remains a challenge. Sometimes I feel that we are just following what other government agencies within DTI are doing. Coaching is used for remedial purposes and often for career and personal development rather than for the organisation-wide benefits. (R10)*

This finding corresponds to the work of Kets de Vries (2010) who found that this practice as misleading and uninspiring to those leaders sent for coaching, as it tends to reduce their status to that of a person requiring some rehabilitation or remedial help. This has led to coaching being seen as a remedy to fix the weak. Dalakoura (2010) further cautioned that, should coaching be viewed and offered on a remedial basis, the collective developmental aspect of coaching will be lost; coaching intervention will further discourage active participation.

#### **4.1.2 Theme 2: DAA's culture and its impact to leadership development**

Culture is critical in ensuring the success of interventions such as coaching in any organisation. Subthemes include, dictatorial culture, treatment of employees at DAA, absence of employee development, absence of coherent human capital development strategy and silo mentality entrenched in DAA.

##### **4.1.2.1. Destructive and dictatorial culture**

The majority of participants revealed that the DAA's culture is destructive and dictatorial. In other words, the word of the leader is final, regardless of suggestions to the contrary. Hierarchy and position power is often abused and employees have come to accept it as a norm. The above has an adverse effect on leadership development in DAA and how coaching is conducted.

*DAA's culture is very bad and toxic. We all came in full of fire and that fire and innovation has gone out of the window as the internal environment suffocates what I experienced when I joined the DAA and is still the same. (R2)*

This finding contradicts the study of Ting (2006) and Hoffman (1999) who found that destructive and dictatorial cultures similar to the above are not conducive to the flourishing and sustainability of any organisational-development intervention. Hence Ting (2006) suggested the following as critical for creating and cultivating a coaching culture, namely, role modelling by leader coaches; embedding a coaching mindset through effective coaching skills; integrating leadership training and development through formal and informal training and development sessions.

*For coaching to stick creative efforts methods must be in place or else we are likely to default to old ways of doing things. (R8)*

This corresponds to the study of Wood (2012) who found that for a coaching culture to emerge, the following must be in place, namely, i) coaching must be integral to organisational activities; ii) coaching must be seen as beyond an HR activity, and be seen as an organisational strategic intervention; iii) coaching must top the list of projects to invest in, meaning that there must be a budget for coaching-related activities, such as coach training, setting up coaching communities, and assembling peer coaching platforms; and iv) coaching must be embedded in the organisational system for it to be sustained so as to deliver return on investment, and to heighten the organisational bench-strength and effectiveness.

#### **4.1.2.2. Treatment of employees at DAA**

The participants revealed that the treatment of employees at DAA is indicative of the way in which leadership perceives their employees, in terms of the value they add, this being key in sustaining the morale of employees, and pivotal in realising the effectiveness of the organisation. The perception of employees at DAA is that they are there to work, not to think, therefore they must keep their opinions to themselves. This attitude tends to impact on employee motivation and innovation, and consequently on their general contribution.

*The level of employee engagement at the DAA is very low and of concern. You will daily hear people talking about leaving for much better working environments and greener pastures where their development aspirations will be attended to. This attitude is reflected in their output, highlighting a low morale and a disengaged people; thus low productivity follows. (R1)*

This finding contradicts the work of Tichy and Cardwell, (2002) who found that the era of treating employees as slaves and passive has passed. It will thus do modern leadership good to embrace the new breed of employees who respond better to being treated as equals. In other words, more effort is demanded and placed on organisational leadership to adopt creative democratic principles of effecting justice in the workplace while achieving productivity through employee engagement.



#### 4.1.2.3. Lack of employee development and empowerment

The participants further revealed that the organisation is unwilling to assume the responsibility of developing their own employees, by shifting such responsibility wholly to individuals to do so at their own expense, unassisted by the organisation. The major frequently cited reason is the scarcity of financial resources and time. This practice according to the interviewees has led to the organisational employee development taking a rear seat, preparations for next-level positions being frustrated, thus giving way to external candidates when opportunities arise.

*At DAA, the moment you see your line manager for your development, you are always reminded that you are personally responsible for your development; and given the scarcity of resources, only a few employees are budgeted for. I feel that the DAA fails her employees by failing to appreciate that, unless I am mistaken, employee development is a joint activity. (R2)*

This finding correlates to the work of London and Smither (1999) who found and argued for a balance between the two extremes, stating that considerable attention should also be given to the leaders' self-development initiatives at all levels. It is imperative at the DAA that in the fast-changing environment of today, employees should also take responsibility for their own development. Outsourcing one's development and laying it squarely on the organisation's shoulders is unhelpful, as revealed in this study. Self-development is an essential success factor since it promotes continuous learning. However, self-development is not only a matter of individual leaders themselves, these employees should be encouraged by their line managers and their human-resources department (London & Smither, 1999), i.e., through 360-degree feedback, coaching, and mentoring, and through the HRM systems.

*DAA's human resources, to restore and retain their respect by the organisational leadership, should be seen to be upping their game, otherwise no one will find it easy to respect their interventions or programmes. (R1)*

This corresponds with the work of Wright (2005) who found that and advanced that the HRM systems of the firm (i.e. recruiting, selecting, training, and development) should also enhance

the development of skilled, motivated, and empowered employees who engage in functional leadership behaviour for the firm. As O'Toole (2001) further posits, organisations that treat leadership development as pivotal across organisational levels signal that such leadership views such development as an institutionalised capacity for organisational effectiveness.

#### **4.1.2.4. Absence of coherent human capital development strategy**

The participants revealed that the absence of broad human capital development strategy has contributed to the DAA's not being able to maximise, measure and sustain coaching interventions. A comprehensive strategy will assist coaching to be properly integrated into other programmes within the organisation, not merely executed as a stand-alone. For example, it is strategic to align coaching with organisational strategy, ensuring that coaching becomes embedded in the DAA daily activities, although the coaching intervention was compromised owing to an absence of an agenda for integration.

*Although coaching was introduced internally at the DAA, given the fact that it was not properly launched and introduced, executive management had various interpretations of its use for both themselves and the organisation. This was compounded by the fact that the DAA does not have a structured human-capital-development strategy of which coaching should form part. (R2)*

This finding supports the work of Clutterbuck and Megginson (2005) who found and highlighted the risk of having organisation wide intervention in the absence of a coherent human capital strategy as organisations will not be able to know whether they are making headway in strengthening their leadership bench leadership.

#### **4.1.2.5. Silo mentality entrenched in DAA**

The participants revealed that challenges that leaders are facing in the DAA are beyond the capabilities of one or two top leaders. This creates a need for interdependence. To this end, it is established that success in leadership is now a function of how well the leader works with others. Silos have been cited by participants as rife within the DAA, manifesting themselves

in internal competition often to the detriment of the strategic use of limited resources and thus compromising the DAA's effectiveness.

*Silos and hierarchies are rife within the DAA. This, in my view, is a recipe for an operational disaster in respect to executing our DTI mandate and achieving leadership coherence. (R7)*

This finding correlates with the work of Thompson et al. (2006) who found that typically, leadership development programmes of the past tended to favour a hierarchical perspective, based on the traditional top-down leadership structure in which the upper echelon is in complete control of the decision-making process, and thus, organisational structure.

Brown and Grant (2010) work have extended this point by arguing that coaching both individuals and teams could serve as a potential means of creating change and improving performance at the individual, team, and organisational levels. This will assist in eliminating silos. However, literature on coaching provided by external coaches in the context of work teams remains sparse, as discovered in this study, where the individual based coaching remains the preferred approach.

*Team coaching could bring about change and progress in terms of working together and in producing better results. (R12)*

In support of this view, Katzenbach and Smith (2003) and Wenger (2000) posit that studying the practice of coaching in the context of teams is important, because as organisations and the environments in which they operate remain uncertain, a shift towards team wisdom emerges to realise organisational objectives. However these teams must be effective. Yet less is known about the practice of coaching work teams in a systemic way.

#### **4.1.2.6. Leader led development**

The participants highlighted that human development at DAA is at an executive leader's discretion and not organisationally determined.

*Leadership development in our organisation is often a benefit reserved for those in leadership instead of looking strategically into the future and starting to build capabilities for leadership at various levels of the organisation. We always have requests for development of executive A or B, less do we see a request for some team building or something of this nature. (R11)*

This finding contradicts the works of Paige (2002), Orenstein (2000), Sullivan and Decker (2009), Lissack and Gunz (1999), and Grossman and Valiga (2009), who found that limited benefits can accrue from one to one coaching. The preceding authors instead suggest that more comprehensive benefits can be flowing from enterprise wide coaching approach which can align organisational imperatives than satisfying individual needs.

#### **4.1.2.7. Wisdom to lead based on top positions**

The participants further revealed that historically knowledge or wisdom to lead has always been seen to accompany titles or positions in traditional organisational hierarchical structures which includes DAA. In other words, DAA leaders view themselves as possessing certain unique attributes absent from others below them. These assumptions as indicated by the participants no longer hold any value, world hierarchies having collapsed, and a new generation of employees having emerged, displaying even far more innovation than their leaders.

*We see this practice of selecting a few for leadership development interventions as disabling rather than enabling the development of leadership capabilities, especially those external training programmes. (R10)*

*What compounds the problem of leadership development in DAA is that the culture of the organisation allows for titles to determine the seat of knowledge, a kind of a know-it-all attitude, whereas I think in the real world, insights of leadership may be found everywhere in the organisation. (R3)*

In contrast to the above finding, Peltier (2010) research found that Western and Newtonian advances of compartmentalisation and divisions and knowledge separation by position and

rank instead of advancing collaborations, coherence, and shared leadership were unhelpful in the knowledge era. It follows then from the above that a systemic approach to coaching is better able to strategically complement individual based leader-coaching (dyadic) approaches, advancing a broader organisational leadership development.

#### **4.1.2.8. Development budget disparities and uses**

The participants expressed a concern in relation to employee development budget disparities between general employees and top leadership. Given the fact most work and solutions are discharged largely by employees at the coal face of client services, sufficient budget should reflect that.

*Often the major excuse being expressed is that DAA does not have money for developing leaders within the organisation's lower rank. This is disempowering. By disempowering, I mean, once those top leaders are coached and leave the organisation, the gap is vast, therefore internal promotions' plans and talent-retention programmes become undermined, owing to the broken record of "there is no one equipped inside; we have to look externally". (R12)*

Rock and Page (2009) research contradicts this traditional leadership-development approach of reserved resources for the top as it affects wider employee empowerment. Chapman (2010) and Kahn (2011) support the same argument by Rock and Page (2009) as revealed by the participants, by positing that the reality of coaching within organisations is its capacity to avail requisite resources so as integrate leadership input into the overall organisational growth, thereby compelling individualistic leadership tendencies to surrender to systemic leadership and collaboration.

Furthermore, an argument is advanced by Dalakoura (2010) and Solankys (2010), who argue that, since the collapse of the traditional leadership styles and assumptions of leadership for life, and heroic personalities, leadership coaching presents the new business leadership with an opportunity of leading in a different way, one that upholds care and growth of employees in a systemic way, instead of simply ticking boxes.

#### **4.2.9. The executive 5 year term**

The participants revealed that the 5 year term office for top leadership in government agencies such as DAA has an adverse impact on leadership development focus of those in power. These leaders tend to focus more on building their own career for future deployment than giving much attention to capacitating organisations.

*The traditional leadership approach is made even worse in government agencies by the five-year contract arrangement, which compels executive management to push goals, often at the expense of people-development. Often the revolving door syndrome and cadre deployment in which one leader is here today and somewhere else tomorrow, tends to affect the attention of leaders in seeing through employee development initiatives, these not normally being measured on them, thus the empowerment of staff is grossly undermined. (R12)*

Cook and Viedge (2011) present an alternative to the above different finding in their work by proposing that leadership empowerment can happen through coach training and leadership coaching with the broader aim of empowering the broader organisational leadership. This argument is further expanded by Nelson and Hogan (2009) and Kemp (2009), who maintained that following global business fatalities, mergers and acquisitions, the current leadership has no option but to seek coaching, so as to be able to achieve a balance between chasing profits while advancing and reinforcing their leadership development and retention. Similarly, Britton (2010) and Goldsmith (2009) observed that the industry of coaching has grown exponentially to an estimated \$1.5 billion year-on-year investment. This is indicative of the reality that coaching as an intervention for the development of strategic leadership within organisations is embraced as a meaningful intervention for sustaining leadership teams in modern organisations to formidably engage complex demanding times.

#### **4.2.10. Coaching investment can be maximised**

The majority of participants felt strongly that should leadership development interventions such as coaching be made available in a strategic way, the return on investment for DAA may be maximised, and trust may be increased through responsible delegation by leadership. This

will also be a show of confidence to the broader organisation that human capital development is not merely lip service within the DAA.

*Often the mistrust in our boardrooms excos and mancos leads to leaders being reluctant to share leadership responsibilities let alone sharing their knowledge and experiences. This led to misalignment and task duplication of tasks and programmes within and across divisions. (R6)*

It is clear that the DAA's leadership style is one of hoarding information and not being trusting and inclusive. Spillane et al. (2004) work contrasts the above DAA practice that leadership should be best understood as a practice distributed over leaders and followers, and should incorporate the activities of multiple groups of individuals. Harris (2005) further attests to this fact that distributed leadership implies a social distribution of leadership wherein the leadership function is stretched over the work of a number of individuals, and the task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders. It also implies interdependency rather than dependency. This argument further exposes the leadership practice at the DAA of promoting individual importance over the collective.

*Leadership of DAA should be left to us as leaders, as I personally account to the board and all other issues concerning DAA will be expected of me to answer. (R1)*

Leadership responsibilities at DAA are still viewed by position and rank. However, as indicated earlier, leadership is no longer solely the purview of the executives, rather, managers and employees lead, whether in formal or informal positions through their interactions with others, thus contributing to the improvement of the organisation. In other words, leadership is a practice, not a person.

#### **4.1.3 Theme 3: Individual based Coaching**

The participants repeatedly emphasised the point that DAA coaching interventions have often been very personal and career driven lacking the organisation's ambitions. In other words, having the organisation's agenda in mind for both coach and coachees is vital in realising the value of the coaching programme within DAA.

#### **4.1.3.1. Isolated coaching**

*The way the coaching programme was designed and executed, it isolated the executives from their natural teams, as though they are the only ones to execute and realise the DAA strategy. A collective coaching type will better assist the DAA in identifying and dealing with challenges collectively...because largely our current challenges are not only caused by one person. (R3)*

In relation to the one on one coaching approach, Wheelan's (2003) research contradicts the DAA approach by discouraging the use of a dyadic coaching as the only answer to leadership development. The reason given is that dyadic coaching tends to not appreciate that most coaching concerns are of a systemic nature, therefore such systemic concerns warrant equal attention beyond the individual coachee. This point is further supported by Senge (2006) and Scharmer (2007) who argued the same sentiments, that coaching should acknowledge the context to be of value to both coachee and the organisation. These aforementioned practitioners agitate strongly for the involvement of employees in systemically solving organisations problems rather than leaving answers to top leadership, strategic leadership being diffused across the organisational levels (O'Neill, 2000; Paige, 2002). This suggests that DAA needs to review their concept of leadership as this practice seems to suggest that the organisation has assumed a secondary position to the individual executive whereas the organisation is the ultimate sponsor of the coaching programme.

#### **4.1.3.2. Secrecy of coaching sessions**

The majority of participants indicated that behind the closed doors, the dyadic coaching model leaves less to be desired in relation to organisational learning. Often such sessions are both initiated and finalised confidentially, which may be interpreted as secrecy, leaders often feeling no obligation to share learning and insights. Collective learning is thus sacrificed on the altar of secrecy. Participants further indicated that if and when given the opportunity they can and wish to contribute towards the development of their leaders. However, at the DAA they have difficulty to exercise that opportunity.

*The isolated one-on-one coaching sessions have often been conducted in secrecy. The strange part about these sessions with external coaches is that we know most of the*



*time, direct reports highlighting the areas of development our leadership must pay attention to. If we may be involved, we can be a resource in those coaching sessions, but as things stand, we are being isolated. (R9)*

This finding contradicts the work of Kets de Vries (2010) who found that, executive development requires the support and input of one's team, peers and even clients. Sufficient spotlight on leader's development can fast track the leaders transformation better than when it is conducted in secrecy.

#### **4.1.3.3. Organisational needs or individuals needs**

The participants posited that, for the coaching intervention to deepen its effectiveness within organisations it must primarily consider organisational needs, thereafter individual needs. These needs are competing, however, in some respects they are complementary.

*The scale, to me, seems to tip in favour of the individual executives being coached, rather than seeing them ever making an effort to share their learning with us as their teams. One wonders whether these coaching sessions are for private use or for the organisational benefit. (R4)*

Kahn (2011) work takes issue with this practice, suggesting that coaching within organisations should be viewed in three dimensions: the environment, system, or business context which includes, *inter alia*, the organisational culture, work-based teams, the socio-political situation within which they operate, and the individual being coached.

The majority of participants further expounded on this fact, stating that individual development in the knowledge sector contradicts the DTI purpose and mandate to DAA which should be the advancing of collaborative development and an integrated approach to small- and medium-enterprise-development clients.

*Coaching in isolation will not benefit the leader. Anyone needs support in one's development from both internal and external stakeholders regardless of one's 'superman' status. (R2)*

The un-strategic introduction of coaching at the DAA is further discouraged by the work of Kets de Vries (2005) and Ting (2006), who argued that one on one coaching is fraught with coordination and infrequency challenges, yet is still being employed instead of an enterprise-wide alternative. They account for this neglect of the systemic as a lack of appreciation that an organisation is a complex adaptive system. Hence, coaching is still offered on an individual-merit basis instead of in response to organisation-wide leadership development needs.

#### **4.1.3.4. Coaching as a badge of honour**

It was found that in the DAA, receiving coaching at the executive level signals importance above other employees. This further entrenches secrecy and lack of accountability in sharing key learning points with peers.

*Participants observed that leadership coaching at the DAA is now seen as a badge of honour, a rite of passage for promotion within the organisation, and a methodology for accelerated progression up the hierarchy. (R3)*

This importance imputed to leaders was observed by Peltier (2010) in his work where he found that senior managers in general are more prone to having an overinflated view of their intelligence compared with middle and junior managers. While coaching can play a useful role in highlighting developmental areas for these senior managers, as well as for 'problematic' individuals, current trends point to the exclusive use of leadership coaching for high-potential players which is often perceived as an exclusive award (Peltier, 2010).

#### **4.1.3.5. Developmental lessons and insights not shared**

Participants revealed that one on one coaching has the limitation of isolating leaders from learning from one another, one on one coaching involving only coach and coachee. Learning tends to not be shared broadly; it is reserved for the individual. This further denies the organisation who first and foremost is the sponsor the opportunity of having those experiences shared for the purpose of collaborative learning. This practice is also unhelpful when it comes to peer feedback and development.

*As a result of the kind of secrecy of these coaching sessions, as far as I have observed, when one asks the executive what has happened during the session that may be shared, my executive will respond by saying, "Your time will come when you are an executive; then you will be coached." I think because of this secrecy our ability to assist our executives to improve and change is lost. (R10)*

The above point is confirmed by Sullivan and Decker (2009) who posit that chosen leaders who are coached tend to keep such learning to themselves, and for their benefit exclusively instead of cascading down such experiences to the empowerment of direct reports and their teams. Thus the opportunity for the team to be aligned with their leader is forfeited. More importantly the coaching impact is lost that would have benefited the entire organisation in a systemic way to augment the leadership cadre. The opportunity for a positive coaching culture to emerge is equally lost to the disadvantage of the organisation.

#### **4.1.4 Theme 4: Enterprise wide coaching approach for DAA leadership development**

In view of the limitations and consequences of individually based coaching, participants suggested a coaching model that will be more inclusive and holistic.

It was revealed by the participants that organisational interventions such as coaching should be conducted strategically and holistically. The scarcity of resources will remain a challenge at all times, but with the systemic approach resources can be maximised. Leadership wisdom should prevail, making it essential rather to expand the net of coaching participants than narrowing it to a privileged few. The more participants, the wider the intervention, the better the impact, the wider and deeper the effectiveness all in spheres of the organisation. Subthemes include, maximising resources for organisational change and impact, employee collaborations through enterprise wide coaching, return on investment and sustainability can be greater and importance of organisational sponsorship for enterprise wide coaching.

##### **4.1.4.1. Maximising resources for organisational change and impact**

*Given the scarcity of resources in state enterprises like in the DAA, coaching for a few holds no water, as it benefits only a few. I believe strongly that such an approach*

*to coaching might just promote an exclusive club which will eventually not change the organisation for the better. (R5)*

*I think what the DAA's executive lacks is the appreciation of leadership as a collective in which leadership is practised within an organisation. (R9)*

The above observations by participants is what Grant (2011) used to promote the need for developing a systemic awareness within organisational leadership. DAA's narrow view of leadership development shows an absence of systemic awareness. For example, Grant (2011) proposed the application of systemic theory to coaching, because coaching clients exists within the context of a larger system. He explained that ignoring systemic elements that impact the team could affect the success of the client and the coach client engagement, which is the case in point at the DAA.

#### **4.1.4.2. Employee collaborations through enterprise wide coaching**

The participants revealed that organisation-wide coaching has a much better potential for bringing about organisational collaboration and coherence at all levels than the traditional one on one coaching. Since some of the interviewees had been through some form of enterprise-wide coaching and experienced benefits before coming to the DAA, organisation-wide benefits were shared to enrich the conversation around the two models.

*Before I was employed at the DAA, in my former employment as an OD specialist, I used to source OD interventions, including coaching. We used to ask for coaching organisations with the capacity to facilitate enterprise-wide coaching interventions; and who are trained to appreciate group dynamics. Here at the DAA my suggestion of doing the same was shot down by my executive in the interests of a dyadic approach. (R2)*

*Enterprise-wide coaching is beneficial to an organisation; it facilitates team collaborations and positive cross-departmental operations, and it reduces unwise competition among departments. (R6)*

A systemic coaching approach avails the opportunity for cascading learning within and across the organisation.

*We also observed that if an enterprise wide coaching programme can be implemented effectively at the DAA, our response rate to small-business enquiries can be faster and having a greater impact, knowledge being freely available across divisions to deal with external occurrences. (R15)*

#### **4.1.4.3. Return on investment and sustainability can be greater**

*I believe strongly that, as in other organisational-development OD initiatives, the return on investment can be greater the more people who benefit. I also view this as a platform of free experience and knowledge exchange that can lead to innovation. Remember that we are a public entity also prone to be influenced by the external feedback either from DTI, our incumbents, or the general public. (R10)*

*I believe from my own experience of the DAA that organisation-wide change will surely stick longer than individual impressions which often disappear with the disappearance of the individual. (R1)*

Kets de Vries (2007), Vera and Crossan (2004), and Ungerer (2007) support the sentiments shared above by citing that systemic coaching is much more profitable and strategically empowering for organisations than simply concentrating on individual leaders.

#### **4.1.4.4. Importance of corporate sponsorship for enterprise wide coaching**

It was revealed by the participants that executive sponsorship is critical in the beginning, during, and after the coaching intervention. This is important for various reasons, namely,

- i) Credibility of the programme;
- ii) Financial support;
- iii) Encouraging participants to embrace change. DAA coaching interventions lack executive sponsorship; this to a great degree compromises the effectiveness of the programme.

*We can talk about coaching and development of leadership that will not suffice in the absence of a strong-willed executive sponsorship and an open, progressive working environment. (R2)*

A supportive climate becomes a reality where there is genuine will and support for coaching within organisations. Absence of a positive climate might mean the following:

- a) Resistance
- b) Non-participation
- c) Coaching programme being undermined

The participants mentioned the following as key factors for the successful implementation of a coaching programme within the DAA:

- a) Inclusive programme at least two per level to be involved initially; then cascading such learning downwards and across peers.
- b) Integration of the coaching programme with other organisational initiatives because as a stand-alone it will never take off.
- c) Openness, and frank internal diagnosis of what our expectations of the coaching should be.
- d) Extending the coaching intervention to two years, given the history of the DAA's toxic culture and environment.
- e) Continuous review should be an inbuilt part of the programme, so that we together with the coaching organisation can assess whether we are deriving any value from the intervention.

#### **4.1.5 Theme 5: The importance of workplace coaching**

The participants emphasised that opportunities for organisation-wide change could be achieved through a strategic use of coaching within the DAA. Opportunities identified by participants range from, crafting a new, positive, nurturing, coaching culture, embedding coaching in the culture of the organisation, training the managerial leadership and organisational agents in coaching, such leaders as coach and manager, or a coach and coach agents throughout the organisational hierarchy, introducing coaching communities into the

DAA. Subthemes include, employee commitment through coaching and turnover intention through coaching.

*The approach our leadership adopted denied the organisation (DAA) an opportunity of benefiting the DAA-wide community that would increase retention of capable staff.*  
(R7)

Walker's (2002) research corresponds with this finding by revealing that innumerable opportunities for coaching are present in the workplace. For the coaches themselves, it was critical that a more optimistic view of the dormant capability of people be adopted (Whitmore, 2002). Whitmore (2002) further identified ten broad categories of opportunity which were deemed obvious for the application of coaching in the workplace; and which, according to Buys (2007), could improve performance by as much as 85%, as well as sustaining such performance: Motivating staff; Delegating; Problem-solving; Relationship issues; Team-building; Appraisals and assessments; Task performance; Planning and reviewing; Staff development; Team work.

Akin to the views of Whitmore (2002) around potential and coaching opportunities in the workplace, looking after talent becomes even more important in a climate of constant change and uncertainty (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). In the South African public health-care sector, low morale and general dissatisfaction amongst the workforce had been identified as key factors driving the migration of this class of skilled labour to greener pastures abroad (Van Deventer, 2005).

#### **4.1.5.1. Employee commitment through coaching**

It was revealed during the research that employee commitment within the DAA is frustrated by the prevalent destructive culture and leadership inconsistencies, among other factors. As a result, employee morale has diminished, manifesting itself in employees openly talking about seeing no future at the DAA, therefore applying externally for better opportunities.

*I'm doing only what am told to and worry myself nor further, for raising your concerns here will take you nowhere as no one cares.* (R15)

The rate of productivity within DAA as revealed by interviewees is low, and people are openly saying that they are coming to work because they have to pay their children's school fees and pay their bond or rent. They are less concerned what the DTI government mandate says, and what their contribution is towards realising DAA's objectives. As a result employee turnover at the DAA is high, and sick leave taken over a period of time reveals patterns of abuse.

*Given the manner in which coaching has been rolled out in the DAA, it has indeed denied the organisation leverage on coaching for employee commitment to the DAA.*  
(R12)

*Were it not for my children being at school, and had I only to take care of myself, I would have been long gone.* (R10)

The participants in this study supported the conclusion that coaching can impact employees organisational commitment if and when it spreads across all levels within the organisation. Bennis (1999), Dalakoura (2010) and De Meuse et al. (2009), in their respective research studies, do attest positively to coaching having a positive impact on employee's commitment to their organisations.

#### **4.1.5.2. Turnover intention through coaching**

Resignations at the executive level are alarming at DAA. The participants have raised the risk of such occurrences as affecting leadership and project continuity which often result in low employee morale.

*Although coaching at the DAA initially delivered one-on-one coaching it still has assisted to avert the resignation of some executives that I know had intention to leave prior to the intervention.* (R1)

Bakker et al. (2003) in their study similarly found that coaching had a direct impact as well as an indirect impact on employees' turnover intentions. What was revealed in their research



was that job resources, such as performance feedback, social support, and supervisory coaching, facilitated employee organisational commitment.

*Currently my colleagues are my reason for staying as they assisted me to consider jumping the boat even if it means staying at home. (R11)*

This finding is similar to the work of Joiner et al. (2004), Schein (2005) and Wisker (2001) who found that coaching can provide a supportive work climate for employees who are likely to develop a sense of identity with the organisation and to increase their commitment to their organisations, leading to a decrease in employee turnover intentions. However, this study showed that coaching can also facilitate employee turnover.

*The observation has been made that my leader cares although the culture of the organisation might be toxic. I can still stay, but the day I consider my boss as displaying the toxic culture I am out of DAA. (R4)*

This practice indicates that employees might reduce their turnover intentions owing to their managers' coaching but they may not necessarily increase their commitment to the organisation. One conjecture is that employees might be attached to their managers rather than to their organisations. This can lead to a decrease in organisational commitment and an increase leader appreciation. This might not augur well for future of the organisational alignment and employee commitment.

#### **4.1.6 Theme 6: Embedding coaching for sustained change in DAA**

The majority of participants revealed that the DAA, as with any other business, would appreciate interventions that would leave behind a permanent positive change for the betterment of the organisation and her people, rather than having to secure the same services recurrently. Subthemes include, coaching viewed as a training offering, absence of knowledge sharing platforms, lack of leadership continuity, DAA inability to retain and sustain gains and positive nurturing culture, absence of organisational and employee readiness, lack of or absence of clarity by managers, DAA takings taking priority rather than participating in coaching and tick a box syndrome.

*Coaching given that it is not a cheap intervention, return on investment has become critical. It is expected to produce sustained change. (R5)*

This finding corresponds with the work of Grant (2012) who found that and highlighted the importance of ensuring that value for money is realised from coaching as it an expensive offering.

The participants have highlighted the following as barriers to sustainable coaching within DAA:

#### **4.1.6.1. Coaching is viewed as a training offering**

The participants indicated that coaching in DAA is viewed as a process of skills acquisition, rather than transformational intervention for the betterment of current and future leadership.

*Coaching at the DAA is conducted very casually, seen as a common offering and thus not carried out strategically, and thus has no strategic value. (R5)*

This finding contradicts the work of Diedrich (2001) who found and highlighted that the risk of conducting coaching with no strategic purpose in mind and how that will not strengthen the corporations leadership bench strength.

Hence the participants have reiterated the frustration of non-commitment of certain leaders to behavioural change. This non-commitment is often displayed when leadership coaching sessions were recurrently rescheduled.

#### **4.1.6.2. Absence of knowledge sharing forums or platforms**

The retention and development of leadership in organisations is motivated by number factors including the establishment of learning communities or communities of practice. The participants at DAA highlighted and noted the absence of communities of practice which in the nature of their work require sharing of insight and solutions. However, the absence

thereof leads to unnecessary duplication and repetitions which delays DAA quick response to clients needs.

*Absence of knowledge sharing forum at DAA, either at leadership or employee levels causes DAA to miss the opportunity of codification of learning, experiences, and insights that emerge from such coaching conversations. (R3)*

This finding contradicts the work by the Gallup (2008), Conger et al. (2007) studies which found that among others things that knowledge sharing is one of the critical determinants to ensure employee competitiveness and engagement in the knowledge dispensation of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

#### **4.1.6.3. Lack of leadership continuity**

Lack of top leadership continuity results from among other factors, deployment, resignation, political reasons or due to the five-year contracts limitations.

*The five-year contracts tend to either limit leadership scope or cause the leaders to defer human capital development in pursuit of personal career interest to secure future deployment opportunities or purely to please their political principals. (R4)*

#### **4.1.6.4. DAA inability to retain and sustain gains**

The inability of organisations to retain and sustain what they invested in is alarming. The participants expressed their concern of DAA throwing huge financial investments in programmes which one will find no trace of a year later. This then led to organisations including DAA to procure similar services year after year. This then amount to wasteful expenditure as observed by participants.

*Having arrived at the DAA a year ago, I have sadly observed the inability of the organisation to secure OD interventions, such as coaching for lasting change. It is rather driven and conducted more like an event, hence it lacks the influence on targeted*

*organisational business objectives. I bet next year again we will find ourselves looking for coaching organisations to assist us. (R5)*

*I'm here for 5 years and that is very short and I have to take care of my future post DAA, that what counts most to me...other things can take a rear seat. (R1)*

This correlates with Grant (2012) research where he posit that it is organisations fault to procure and not sustain as consultants would gladly welcome to be called back again to render a similar service.

#### **4.1.6.5. Absence of organisational and employee readiness**

Failure to most organisation development interventions lie with organisational and participant readiness. Some participants expressed their ill preparedness when it comes to coaching as some were never coached anyone before.

*My concern was is this coaching likely expose my deficiencies and do what with them. (R5)*

#### **4.1.6.6. Lack or absence of proper clarity by managers in respect of their roles in coaching as it unfolds**

*When I was asked by my coach whether I can coach my team my response was a definite NO, as it was something I never did before and I think is best left to the experts. (R1)*

#### **4.1.6.7. DAA tasks and/or projects taking priority rather than participating in coaching.**

*Coaching is often seen as an add-on or an event not integral to one's job or daily activities. (R7)*

#### **4.1.6.8. Tick a box syndrome**

*Coaching is often viewed as similar to other normal projects in which one ticks a box as a sign that a task has been accomplished. (R5)*

The above is contradicted by the work of Britton (2010) who found that the effectiveness of coaching lies in the top leadership demonstrating the commitment required to lead so as to be followed by his team. In other words, coaching should be viewed as transformational rather than treated as an event or a tick box exercise.

Therefore a positive and nurturing coaching culture was deemed important as a basis and platform for the sustainability of organisation-wide leadership development.

The following were identified by the participants as critical to consolidating a coaching culture at DAA as opposed to coaching barriers.

- a) Coaches to transfer coaching skills across levels of the organisation (leader as coach, manager as coach, supervisor as coach. This will create a larger pool of change agents spread across hierarchical levels. This point was been mentioned by the majority of participants at the DAA in the form of leader, manager, and supervisor as a coach.
- b) Promote peer and team coaching. This was found of critical importance in building coherence at different levels of the DAA.
- c) Eliminate silos by deepening and promoting collaborations. This was found as fundamental to ensuring that collaborations do manifest for organisational effectiveness at the DAA.
- d) Introduce and promote a culture of team awards and appraisal rather than only individual achievements. This will compel team members at the DAA to work collaboratively and to respect and appreciate each other's contributions and learning.
- e) Introducing coaching communities. This will ensure learning is shared, and innovation becomes a DAA trait.

- f) Ensure sufficient budget as such interventions do need a committed budget. This will test the commitment of the DAA leadership and ensure that leadership development is a reality rather than merely a lip service (Fitzgerald et al. (2010).

#### **4.1.6.9. Positive nurturing culture**

*A positive coaching culture serves, I think, as glue, ensuring that all organisational processes and systems are aligned. (R8)*

In confirming the importance of a nurturing culture, Ting (2006), highlights that one of the key benefits of a coaching culture is that it positions coaching in the minds of the people and they, then, unconsciously, and effortlessly, manifest it through their interactions with others. As a result of such new behaviour emerging, learning becomes collaborative and easier to adopt. She further suggested the following as key factors that can take coaching beyond the existing of coaches within an organisation: a) use of peer coaching; b) availing of resources and tools by leadership; and c) Information- and knowledge-sharing to sustain learning within the organisation.

*A people-centric culture appears much more helpful than the person-centred culture and is key to ensuring OD-related interventions are welcome at the DAA. (R5)*

Similarly, Passarelli and Van Oosten (2014) identified peer coaching as one of the ways of sustaining coaching within organisations, shifting the culture of individualism to an inclusive participatory culture. They state that when the whole organisation is acknowledged and coaching is integrated into the culture and other organisational programmes, sustainability will emerge.

It is clear from the above statement that alignment of leadership-development programmes with organisational objectives is critical. Unfocused coaching arrangements at the DAA leave less to be desired in terms of attaining coordination, coherence, and eventually, sustainability.

#### **4.1.6.10. Making coaching to stick**

The participants expressed the need for training for internal change agents as one of the means to embed coaching in DAA.

*Coaching principles in my view should rather be practiced than spoken about. (R12)*

More creative alternatives for coaching to stick or become embedded in the organisation are highlighted by Fine (2013), who argued that, in order to build solid coaching culture, three aspects must be in place: a) coaching must be visible. Visibility and frequent practising of coaching principles will eventually positively influence a change in employee and leadership behaviour; b) identifying and exploiting of workplace opportunities. This will assist leaders intentionally to uncover coaching opportunities and obtain coaching for leaders more often—a key for building a coaching culture; c) the coaching process for leaders must be simplified; leaders must be incentivised and must account for the coaching done. In other words, coaching programmes should be less complex and more easily usable, so as to encourage managerial leadership to coach. This will also assist in ensuring the comprehensive embracing of coaching by leaders. Often the reason coaching fails is that it is presented as highly complex, and thus leadership considers it an extra burden on top of daily work pressures.

#### **4.2. Summary**

It is evident from the above interview conversations and outcomes thereof that wider organisational developmental intervention is needed within the DAA. For strategic reasons such as building collaborations, enhancing leadership capabilities and coherence. Individually based coaching was shown as limiting and un-strategic given the reality of resource constraints and leadership empowerment. This also highlights the lack of leadership development focus of the organisation. Should this situation remain as it is, the DAA will have a deficit of leaders capable of running this agency well while effecting and executing their constitutional mandates going forward. To mitigate what we have seen in this chapter, the ensuing chapter attempts to make some recommendations.

## **CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Introduction**

The preceding chapter shed light on the findings from the case study and analysis informed by theory. Study implications for managerial leadership within organisations and recommendations for further studies follow.

This chapter presents the conclusion of the study and makes recommendations on how to realise the benefits of coaching for leadership development across hierarchical levels within the DAA. These recommendations are premised on Chapters 2 and 4.

#### **5.1.1 The purpose and the need for the study at the DAA**

This was to highlight the limitations of the prevalent one on one coaching model used for leadership development and to propose an alternative and complementary approach to dyadic coaching (one on one coaching) which is systemic coaching and inclusive by design.

As shown in Chapter 2 of this study, coaching services in both the private and public sector have grown exponentially. The coaching interventions are lauded for their contribution which training programmes could not satisfactorily display. That means that organisations that are already investing in coaching will continue to invest their substantial resources in sourcing coaching services for the development of their human capital in general, and their leadership cadre in particular.

As shown in the study, comprehensive understanding of what coaching can do for organisations is important before even the external coaches are invited. The organisation can benefit more after having properly assessed its own internal developmental needs. This is where this study seeks to add value, by assisting the reader to make an informed decision in terms of which model to invest in, and in what way such a coaching model or approach is likely to realise return on investment for the enterprise. Critical assessment of coaching approaches will ensure that the coaching fraternity is not sacrificed on the altar of blind sourcing by organisations, thus blaming coaching rather than their own role in the process. This study is also needed to assist buyers of coaching services to empower themselves in



terms of the way in which they can also anticipate internal barriers to coaching success and not accept coaching as a panacea for all organisational ills. Lastly, given the uncertainties and complexities of the world, coaching knowledge can assist leadership to anticipate and plan accordingly on how to capacitate their organisations to survive beyond competitive market challenges.

Qualitative rather than quantitative research was employed, given the nature of the inquiry. For analysis purpose, a thematic approach was employed, as this gave the researcher the opportunity of coding and categorising the data towards assembling themes. Through the data-analysis process, patterns were identified. As a result of the analysis process, six themes were identified. Those themes assisted the researcher in answering the research objectives.

## **5.2 Study Objectives**

This section seeks to answer the objectives that were set, namely: 1) limitations and strengths of the prevalent one on one coaching model used for leadership development in contemporary organisations; 2) To introduce and propose an alternative and a complementary approach to dyadic coaching (one on one coaching), that is, systemic coaching (inclusive in nature); 3) To seek an understanding of how coaching can enable the development of strategic leadership in organisations; 4) To explore the influence of coaching on establishing a coaching culture for organisational performance and effectiveness; 5) To understand the contextual issues by exploring whether there are any personal or environmental factors that can either facilitate or impede coaching success within organisations. 6) To understand in what way does a coaching culture and gains thereof become embedded in the organisational system.

### **5.2.1 Objective 1: To highlight the limitations and strengths of the prevalent one on one coaching model used for leadership development in contemporary organisations:**

Before delving on the limitations of one on one coaching it would be insightful to also mention the recorded strengths of such an offering as the researcher has deemed systemic coaching as complementary not as replacing one on one coaching. One on one coaching can be viewed as critical in the performance and progress of individuals (Neale et al. 2009; Bueno, 2010; Jinks & Popovic, 2011). One on one coaching as posited by Quick et al. (2002)

focuses on the coachee progress, specific goals and personal growth with the intent of building the capabilities of the individual. According to Quick et al. (2002), the one on one model serves as a safe, confidential and non-judgement platform for the leader to grow and be a better leader.

However, as shown from the findings, dyadic (one on one) coaching has limitations as well that warrant a review in relation to leadership development, namely:

Findings clearly reveal that one on one coaching benefits only the individual as opposed to an enterprise-wide offering that is inclusive and systemic. This has various implications for leadership development at the DAA and other organisations, as confirmed by Kets de Vries (2005), Paige (2002) and Wheelan (2003): perpetuating and entrenching traditional forms of leadership development within organisations that are often characterised by i) heroic leadership styles; ii) hierarchical structures; iii) personally-driven leadership; iv) wisdom as a privilege of top leadership being assumed; v) advancing of leader development above leadership development; vii) condoning the empowerment of a chosen few as opposed to collective organisational leadership.

The study found that the exclusive offering of coaching by organisational leadership was un-systemic, meaning that it ignored the systemic realities of the organisation. The dyadic (one on one) approach to coaching fails to fully appreciate that most organisational recurrent challenges are of a systemic nature, therefore such systemic concerns cannot be resolved by an individual executive. Coaching should therefore acknowledge the context for it to be of value to both organisation and coachees. It was found that DAA leadership and internal change agents should have a systemic awareness if and when a sustainable change is desirable and for it to be sustained. (Grant & Cavanagh, 2004; O'Neill, 2000; Senge, 2006; Scharma, 2006).

Though the researcher recommends the systemic approach it cannot be deemed a panacea to all leadership problems in organisations. Some recorded challenges are *inter alia*, a) time factor as engaging the entire organisation requires significant time; b) Capable coaches trained in understanding group dynamics are needed; c) Huge task of coordination and administration among and across teams; d) Expecting resistance at various levels than just the

individual as the systemic intervention is rolled out at different levels of the organisation (Brown, 2010).

It is against this reality that a systemic coaching approach is proposed as an alternative to mitigate the gaps of dyadic coaching though not as a panacea as no model is perfect. As result, as Chapter 4 has shown, systemic coaching can result in organisation, team, and individual developmental benefits, such as:

- Leadership development ceases to be an individual trait, becoming an organisational quality; and
- Leadership development becomes an organisational phenomenon rather than a privilege to be enjoyed by a fortunate few.

**5.2.2 Objective 2: To introduce and propose an alternative and a complementary approach to dyadic coaching (one on one coaching), that is, systemic coaching (enterprise-wide in nature):**

As captured in the study findings, the application of coaching embracing the notion of an enterprise-wide leadership development - organisational leadership bench-strength is enhanced, and dyadic coaching is complemented, as the same selected few become part of the broader participant community. The strategic building of leadership bench-strength has diverse benefits for the organisation, which include, as captured by Kets de Vries (2005) and Keller (2007):

- Retention of capable officials: collective wisdom is cultivated and shared so as to respond creatively to external pressures, rather than it being the responsibility of a solo leader;
- The leader and leadership confusion is leveraged to assist prudent investment and deployment of resources in strengthening human-resource capabilities within organisations; and
- Acceptance that leadership resources are accessible across hierarchical levels of the organisation, empowers organisations to appreciate their employee cadre as co-owners and responsible entrepreneurs within organisations.

### **5.2.3 Objective 3: To explore an understanding of how coaching can enable the development of strategic leadership in organisations**

An organisation-wide coaching approach does yield the following possibilities:

Strategic leader empowerment is directly related and enhanced within the context of the organisation, team, peers, and direct reports, by whom cascading of the learning occurs.

A nurturing, positive coaching culture emerges, which may form a platform for the long-term development of strategic leadership. This study understood that strategic leadership is a phenomenon spreading across hierarchical levels within the DAA and other organisations. In other words, strategic capabilities are not a result of position or rank, however, they can reside in a role, regardless of how far or close that role is to top leadership.

The study identified benefits flowing from such systemic coaching intervention, ranging from a whole organisational leadership alignment propelling the organisation forward, with every leadership level capacitated with adaptive ability to engage the complexity of the world of business. The study highlighted that systemic interventions are in contrast to advances of compartmentalisation, silos and divisions. Systemic interventions advance collaborations, coherence, and distributive leadership. It follows then from the above that a systemic approach to coaching is then able to strategically complement and advance broader organisational leadership development in organisations (Sullivan & Decker, 2009; Lissack & Gunz, 1999; Grossman & Valiga, 2009).

### **5.2.4 Objective 4: To explore the influence of coaching on establishing a coaching culture for organisational performance and effectiveness**

It was found that a coaching culture is critical in sustaining organisation-wide interventions and employee engagement. Without a positive nurturing coaching culture or in the presence of a toxic culture as in the DAA, labour turnover increases, as shown in this study; gains from coaching are reversed after the intervention; retention of talent is compromised; leadership leads by discretion; organisational effectiveness is frustrated owing to system misalignments, disengaged and less committed employees. In the meanwhile, productivity and morale diminishes and employees start seeking employment elsewhere, those with institutional memory and experience leaving the organisation worse off, as shown in this study. The following were found to be critical factors in creating and cultivating a coaching culture,

namely, role modelling by leader coaches, embedding a coaching mindset through effective coaching skills, and integrating leadership training and development through formal and informal training and development sessions (Ting, 2006).

The study further indicated that a positive coaching culture, besides being a platform on which transformational leadership may flourish, also injects into the organisational system a new value set, bringing about behavioural change in leadership and to the broader employee community. Hence, a positive coaching culture is pivotal in ensuring sustainable effectiveness levels. It influences the habit of doing things while awaiting to be inspired (Clutterbuck & Megginson, 2005).

A coaching culture is critical for organisations on a number of fronts, for example, at an individual level it motivates employees to always to strive to exceed set targets; willingness to collectively overcome problems is enhanced, and an inclination towards personal and team development is increased. From an organisational perspective, higher productivity and excellence in performance becomes the norm; talent development and wise deployment of resources is practised (Wood, 2011).

#### **5.2.5 Objective 5: To understand the contextual issues by exploring whether there are any personal or environmental factors that can either facilitate or impede coaching success within organisations**

As in any model or approach, organisational factors are critical to the success or failure of such interventions. The study findings highlighted the following as factors which may lead to a failure of coaching initiatives within organisations:

- Absence or lack of executive sponsorship may derail or undermine coaching interventions;
- Absence of proper assessments of participants prior to coaching to assist in ascertaining gaps and resident strengths;
- Lack or partial buy-in and of embracing the coaching offering by participants;
- Financial constraints and lack of leadership will to ensure that such coaching programmes gains are sustained;

- Lack of proper measurement of coaching impact owing to uncoordinated, disparate, and unfocused interventions;
- Poor matching and lack of clarity on the coaching process, especially on who the sponsor is and who owns the results or outcomes of the coaching programme; and
- Confusion around the purpose and uses of coaching within the organisation.
- Organisational and individual readiness.

The above were explained by Bass (2007), who advanced that effective programmes require and involve substantial commitment in terms of organisational resources, sufficient budget, prolonged timescales, potential disruptions, and major business or organisational change.

The study findings are similar to the work of FitzGerald et al. (2010) who identified the following as barriers to coaching success within organisations: i) lack of coordination of coaching and integration thereof into other organisational programmes already running; ii) client commitment and the way in which they embrace the coaching offering; iv) the way in which coaching was introduced to potential participants, for example, was it introduced as a remedial, or a developmental intervention?

### **What then facilitates successful coaching?**

Personal level: a) embracing coaching as both an organisational imperative and for personal development; b) willingness to change.

Team level: a) team readiness to appreciate and embrace team collaborations and coherence; b) team commitment to see the organisation succeeding.

Organisational level: a) sufficient budget; b) sourcing of appropriate coaching model aligned with interests of the organisation; c) coaching coordination and link to strategy and vision of the organisation.

Similarly, FitzGerald et al. (2010) highlights the importance of a) coaching coordination; building relationships instead of merely relying on the coaching model; b) CEO's participation and regular feedback; c) sufficient budget, and maintaining of the coaching momentum.

### **5.2.6 Objective 6: To understand in what way does coaching culture and gains becomes embedded in the organisational system**

Sustaining coaching interventions by embedding them into organisational programmes is critical for various reasons: i) continuity of coaching culture and coaching skills to better build and nurture employees; ii) as key determinant of a solid future organisation that can thrive even in tough times as a coherent entity; iii) to maximise the resources invested in coaching over time, as change to produce results must be sustained. Coaches to transfer coaching skills across levels of the organisation (leader as coach, manager as coach, supervisor as coach). This will create a larger pool of change agents spread across hierarchical levels; iv) promote peer and team coaching; v) eliminate silos by deepening and promoting collaborations (Fitzgerald et al., 2010).

In addition to the above, the study found that one of the key benefits of a coaching culture is that it positions coaching in the minds of the people who then unconsciously manifest this effortlessly through their interaction with others. As a result of this, new behaviour emerges, learning becomes collaborative and effortless, with sustainability being the consequence (Ting, 2006).

### **5. 3 Implications of this research for leadership and recommendations**

- Participants interviewed emphasised the importance of expanding the development of employees beyond top leadership, in order to strengthen and enhance the DAA managerial leadership bench-strength at all levels, leading to the sustainability of the organisation. This may be achieved through various ways, such as by combining coaching teams and individuals across divisions within the DAA in order to eliminate the silo mentality and promote collaborations and coherence.

The above ways have various implications, such as budgeting, sufficient time on the process of coaching direct reports, and also in presenting financial challenges, given the budgetary constraints. This then presents leadership with the challenge of balancing organisational effectiveness through employee empowerment, while still demanding results. This will realise the DAA's objectives in general and will execute the DTI mandate, in particular. Therefore, management should set aside sufficient

budget and time, using it to advance human-capital developments while seeking nevertheless to remain productive (Nelson & Hogan, 2009; Kemp, 2009).

Coach training (e.g. leader as coach, and manager as coach) has been proposed as one of the ways of enhancing the empowerment of leadership across organisational levels (Cook & Viedge, 2011). Similarly, peer coaching has been viewed and suggested as key to embedding a culture of proactive and systemic development of leadership within organisations (Passarelli & Van Oosten, 2014).

- The study further showed that, even though the DAA might have in the past, and continues to attract talented officials, the toxic culture will eventually reverse such recruitment gains, as labour turnover will remain the norm instead of the exception. This encourages managers and leaders at the DAA to consciously and systemically invest time, demonstrating a leadership will for jointly crafting and evoking a culture that is people-centric and customer-centric. Should the culture be people-centric it may also be seen and experienced thus by the DAA clients. In other words, it should also be an external practice rather than one displayed only internally (Daft, 2007). Furthermore, a positive coaching culture must be modelled and embedded by leadership. Managerial leadership should be held accountable and incentivised in maintaining a positive culture for the sake of employee engagement and organisational effectiveness (Ting, 2006; Wood, 2012; Fine, 2013).
- Leaders create culture, thus there is a greater demand on DAA leaders to improve their discretionary leadership style, seeking alignment with their natural teams and sharing the same information and effort across the organisation.
- As the study found, in addition to the challenges cited earlier, understanding of early development of internal talent for future leadership positions is critical. This places a demand on the DAA managerial leadership to invest in employee transition programmes for promising potential and talented leadership (Kets de Vries, 2005). This will ensure leadership continuity, and mitigate the leadership failures when given challenging assignments. Leadership must scout strategically for good talent, investing systematically in transitional coaching. This will lead to retention of talented employees (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). Failure to attend to employee transitions can lead to the departure of good, talented employees (Boyatzis, et al., 2006).



- Although the above is important, so is employee engagement a platform for ensuring that the DAA pays no mere lip service but genuinely cares for her employees. Employee engagement, as research has shown, is critical in fostering retention, commitment, innovation, and loyalty within organisations. DAA management has no choice but to assume leadership, ensuring that teams and individuals are engaged for the effectiveness of the organisation, and adding to its capacity to respond to challenging times. In other words, employee engagement becomes the platform for the embedding of solid future fit into leadership.

Part of making certain that employees stay engaged is to afford them challenging assignments, delegating, team-building, coaching, and mentoring them, so they, singly, may later be able to skilfully and sustainably add value to organisational effectiveness (Buys, 2007; Whitmore, 2002; Joiner et al., 2004; Bakker et al., 2003). Gallup research studies (2008), suggest that employee engagement adds value to organisational success. Similarly, Kaye and Jordan-Evans (2003) state that the challenge today is not simply the retaining of talented people, but fully engaging them, capturing their minds and hearts at each stage of their working lives. It appears untrue, therefore, that the assumption often held by leaders is that if you financially reward your employees you have their commitment. In other words, employee engagement has become an organisational competence.

- For the above to come to fruition as this study has shown, a number of factors must be in place, which may pose challenges for the DAA leadership. These factors include CEO and executive support, a strong human-resources department at the DAA (currently lacking credibility), leadership will, and passion for human-capital development, the embracing of the coaching approach of nurturing and growing your teams; patience and tolerance while development is taking place; adopting of coaching as a strategy for leadership development, by making coaching a strategic organisational quality rather than an event, modelling good leadership at all times. All the above cited factors are not easy to implement, however, they are pivotal in seeing the DAA fulfilling its mandate in society (Kets de Vries, 2010; Brown & Grant, 2010; Senge, 2006; Mthembu, 2010).
- Barriers or impediments to successful implementation of coaching within the DAA remain a challenge, as this study found. For example, lack of proper strategic sourcing

has compromised the effectiveness of coaching within organisations. However, coaching success factors were identified in the study as follows:

- a) Integration of coaching into other organisational initiatives (Kets de Vries, 2010).
  - b) Proper introduction of coaching into the organisation to mitigate resistance, and to augment participation, thus providing better results (Bass, 2007).
  - c) Proper communication across the organisation and comprehensive marketing of such a strategic intervention. This will lessen confusion and reduce pessimism (Kets de Vries, 2005).
  - d) Top executive sponsorship: available financial resources are insufficient. Leadership must be involved at the beginning, during, and after the coaching intervention (Bass, 2007).
- Collective learning should be promoted, and reductionist tendencies reduced, in seeing that learning is not compromised by one on one confidential and secret sessions. Valuable insights do emerge in coaching conversations into which the entire organisation can tap, thus ensuring that leadership capabilities are strengthened (Sullivan & Decker, 2009; Peltier, 2010).
  - DAA, as shown in this study, often treats coaching as an event for top leadership, rather than as a strategic intervention. Leadership must accept interventions such as coaching as of strategic importance, not merely for the use of private, privileged officials. This will enable collective wisdom to take precedence over individualised knowledge and power display (Grossman & Valiga, 2009; Senge, 1995; Conger, 1995; McClelland, 1994).

#### **5.4 Recommendations for future studies**

There are a number of dimensions not covered by this study as they were not the core purpose of this research. Future research studies could focus on how to measure the coaching impact over a longer period of time, and the way in which such impact translates to profitability and productivity.

This study could be further extended and deepened by including a more comprehensive number of participants across organisations, rather than focusing only on one organisation. Future studies could expand on this study by investigating the impact of coaching in relation to the way in which innovation and creativity flows as a result of opening the organisational system to divergent thinking across organisational levels, regardless of rank and position.

This study was conducted within a state-owned agency. It would be interesting to see future studies investigating how this model may be implemented into profit-making entities, experiencing the way in which such a model is received, given the different pressures of public and private sector.

## **5.5 Conclusion**

As clearly indicated above that previous studies focused mainly on the uses of one to one coaching for the development of leadership in organisation. Given the identified gap in the literature, this study has advanced a complementary systemic approach to coaching that goes beyond isolated development of leaders in organisation. By so doing this study has intended to showcase the importance of an organisation wide coaching intervention to effect effectiveness and collaborations in organisations. In an effort to consolidate this study, aim of the study we made clear, major findings were clearly tabulated and listed so were the benefits.

The research aimed to:

- Demonstrate that dyadic coaching has limited impact on the development of organisational leadership if not complemented by a systemic approach;
- Share the limitations associated with the practice, focusing on leader development versus leadership development; and
- Establish the potential benefits of an alternative approach (systemic coaching) to dyadic coaching, as devoutly embraced by many organisations.

The main research question relating to how the uses of coaching as an enabling intervention can realise organisation wide leadership development has been answered in various ways, including by the six themes, and further explained through the objectives, as shared above. Of

equal importance was the identification of barriers to realising the empowerment of strategic leadership within organisations. As a result, the recommendations were tabulated above so as to mitigate such inhibitors and to realise systemic leadership development.

The major finding was that coaching may indeed be an enabling intervention for the systemic development of strategic leaders within organisations; dyadic coaching as the sole approach to leadership development across organisational levels is of limited benefit in the context of challenges facing organisational leadership, thus a systemic coaching approach to systemic organisational challenges is proposed so as to augment and capacitate the leadership bench-strength beyond the individual capabilities, towards the collective.

The value of systemic coaching as a complementary intervention to dyadic coaching was established through the case study of the DAA.

Through the thematic approach adopted in the study the following themes have dominated the interview conversations:

Strategic procurement of coaching by the DAA organisation was lacking, which compromised the introduction of coaching into the DAA in the following ways:

- Sourcing of coaching interventions without thorough understanding;
- Alignment with or integrating of coaching into other organisational programmes is compromised;
- Proper planning and promotion of coaching is lost;
- Often executive sponsorship is lacking, and this programme becomes an HR initiative, thus losing its intended strategic value.

In dyadic coaching, benefits are sometimes compromised, often resulting in the following:

- Coaching occurs without considering the needs of the organisation as a whole, meaning that organisational needs become secondary to individual interests;
- Shared learning that would have emerged for the effectiveness and thriving of the organisation is lost;
- Collaborative leadership growth and development is lost to the interests of leader development; and

- Development of a positive coaching culture is yearned for at the DAA and probably also in many organisations for the following reasons:
  - i) Restoration of mutual working relations within the workplace.
  - ii) Trust and genuine development of employees.
  - iii) Key for employee engagement.

This study also identified the following as potential benefits of systemic coaching within organisations:

- Impacts employee engagement positively;
- Plays a critical role in employee commitment to their organisations;
- Promotes and inculcates organisational and personal learning;
- It is key for sustained change within organisations;
- It assists organisations to retain talented leaders;
- It restores positive and cordial working relations;
- It is key for developing a future fit leadership bench-strength; and
- It is key for building strategic leadership capabilities needed for uncertain and complex situations.

## **5.6 Summary**

Coaching as an enabling intervention for the systemic development of strategic leadership within organisations is important as far as it invites organisation leadership to ensure that: leadership bench-strength and requisite capabilities are developed over a period of time; limited financial resources are wisely spread over a larger populace so as to obtain better return on investment; and employee engagement is a reality for retention and positive and productive leadership culture. Finally, for any organisation to thrive and remain in the game, leadership of any organisation must realise that unique competitive advantage is achieved through competent and capable employees, not only through leaders. This study is therefore relevant and topical: organisational leadership needs coaching more than ever before to secure sustained, positive results, over time.

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## APPENDIX 1: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Name of the interviewee:

Date of the interview:

1. Describe in your own words the coaching intervention that you and the organisation received?
2. What did the coaching intervention intend to achieve within the organisation?
3. How was coaching delivered or rolled out within your organisation?
4. How were the beneficiaries of the intervention selected? Describe the process of the coaching intervention.
5. How was the above approach received by various internal stakeholders?
6. What was the focus of the coaching programme?
7. What value, if any, has the coaching approach added to your organisation?
8. What was the coaching approach/model role in the development of your strategic leadership?
9. How has the organisational system been affected by the coaching intervention within your organisation?
10. How has the coaching intervention impacted on or influenced other organisational human-capital-development and management processes?
11. What, in your view, has changed in respect of how your departments and work teams relate to one another?
12. How has the organisational culture been influenced or impacted by the roll-out of the coaching intervention within your organisation and teams?
13. How would you rate the change in any of your leaders, as result of coaching?
14. Which elements of the coaching intervention that you went through, would you change?
15. Do you have any recommendations on how to improve coaching interventions?

## APPENDIX 2

### Informed Consent Letter

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP**

**MCLS Research Project**

**Researcher:** Eric Kumkani 0744272768)

**Supervisor:** Cecile Gerwel Proches (031 2608318)

**Research Office:** Ms P Ximba (0312603587)

Dear Respondent,

I, Eric Kumkani, am an MCLS student at the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, of the University of KwaZulu, Natal. You are invited to participate in a research project entitled: *Coaching as an enabling intervention for the systemic development of strategic leadership within organisations*. The aim of this study is: To explore an in-depth understanding of how coaching may enhance the systemic development of strategic leadership within organisations.

Through your participation I hope to elicit your understanding of coaching, and the way in which such coaching translates to a wider organisational effect. The results of the interviews are intended to contribute towards the broader understanding and uses of coaching for the development of leadership within organisations.

Your participation in this project is voluntary. You may refuse to participate and you may withdraw from the project at any time, with no negative consequences. There will be no monetary gain from participating in this interview/focus group. Confidentiality and anonymity of records identifying you as a participant will be maintained by the Graduate School of Business and Leadership, UKZN.

If you have any questions or concerns about participating in this study, you may contact me or my supervisor at the numbers listed above.

The interview should take you about sixty minutes to complete. I hope you will take the time to participate in this study.

Sincerely

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

*This page is to be retained by the participant.*

**UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL  
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND LEADERSHIP**

**MCLS Research Project**

**Researcher:** Eric Kumkani (0744272768)

**Supervisor:** Cecile Gerwel Proches (0312608318)

**Research Office:** Ms P Ximba (0312603587)

**CONSENT**

I.....(full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdraw from the project at any time, should I so desire.

.....

Signature of Participant

Date

## APPENDIX 3: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



26 April 2013

Mr Eric Mxolisi Kumkani 212559014  
Graduate School of Business and Leadership  
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Kumkani

Protocol reference number: HSS/0237/013M  
Project title: Coaching as an enabling intervention for the systemic development of strategic leadership in organisations

### EXPEDITED APPROVAL

I wish to inform you that your application has been granted Full Approval through an expedited review process.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number. Please note: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

  
.....  
Professor Steven Collings (Chair)

/pm

cc Supervisor: Ms Cecile Gerwel Proches  
cc Academic Leader: Dr E Munapo  
cc School Admin.: Ms Wendy Clarke

Humanities & Social Sc Research Ethics Committee  
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