

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Leadership Coaching in a multigenerational workforce – a case in the engineering sector

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DECLARATION

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Signed:  30 October 2023

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ABSTRACT

In the current volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous environment, the case in this study, an engineering consulting organisation based in KwaZulu-Natal, has found itself navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fifth Industrial Revolution, and a multigenerational workforce. Faced with these dynamic shifts, leadership has needed to cope with the various impacts. Intrinsicly, leaders have needed to be aware of themselves, of their strengths, opportunities, and challenges that could be associated with these different contextual shifts. Furthermore, the leadership team has been required to cultivate a robust pipeline of future leaders from a multigenerational team. The purpose of the study was to explore leadership coaching readiness to harness new leadership skills, which would enable leaders to improve on their emotional intelligence skills in order to bridge generational gaps. The research was underpinned by a qualitative exploratory research methodology using participatory action research. The strategy was to use a case study with a phenomenological philosophy. Through purposive sampling and use of primary data collection methods, namely, interviews, focus groups, and observations, the objectives were met. Desktop research was conducted to review the extant literature. The thematic analysis tool, NVivo, was used and triangulation of the data sets was implemented. A specific leadership coaching model, crafted for the organisation being studied, included an emotional intelligence element, which resulted in an innovative approach to accelerate the development of future leadership in a multigenerational workforce and which also contributes to the existing body of knowledge. The study highlighted that the expression and appraisal of emotions, use of emotions in decision-making, knowledge of emotions, and management of moods or emotions are critical aspects of emotional intelligence, and, if brought into a coaching intervention, can benefit the leadership and organisation. The recommendations are: the addition of a mentoring element; team coaching interventions to bring the multigenerational workforce together in order to build on relationships; and developing an understanding of the learning gained to ensure the transference of skills to the younger generation, thereby enabling them to work toward professional registration. These recommendations would enhance employee engagement and retention.

KEYWORDS: Coaching models; communication; confidence; decision-making; emotional intelligence; leadership coaching; leadership styles; multigenerational; retention.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AI	Artificial Intelligence
COMENSA	Coaches and Mentors of South Africa
DISC	Dominance, Influence, Steadiness and Compliance
ECSA	Engineering Council of South Africa
EI	Emotional Intelligence
EQ-I	Emotional Quotient Inventory
ESG	Environment, Social and Governance
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GenX	Generation X
GenY	Generation Y
GenZ	Generation Z
IAC	International Association of Coaching
ICF	International Coaching Federation
MBTI	Myers Briggs Type Indicator
MSCEIT	Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test
PDA	Personal Development Analysis
PDP	Personal Development Plan
PPP	Private Public Partnership
PPP Bottom	People, Planet and Profit
Line	
Pr Eng	Professional Engineer
Pr Tech	Professional Technologist
ROI	Return on Investment
RQ	Research Question
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time Bound
SUMUP	Self-Awareness, Understanding Current Reality Linked to Self and Job Role, Meaning of New Reality, Understanding Others through the Process, Proactively Reroute
VUCA	Volatile, Uncertain, Complex and Ambiguous
WEF	World Economic Forum

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

There have been considerable changes in societies, their institutions and people brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, which have created unprecedented social and economic crises globally (Chong, Huang, & Chang, 2020; Gallup, 2020). These changes have introduced significant uncertainties into familiar structures, as discussed by Renjin (2020, p.22): “This has caused macro-level changes in and uncertainties about the underpinnings of business and society, that resilient leaders must navigate – shifts such as virtual work, virtual studies and learning to work and engage remotely”.

The organisation being studied (which the researcher has called NCE due to the company requesting to remain anonymous) where this research was carried out, faced an uncertain landscape while operating during the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Executive leaders were required to be resilient, agile and adaptable. Chen and Sriphon (2021) stated in the pandemic context, that leaders must have good communication skills, be mindful of situations, and be able to manage and navigate change in uncertain circumstances, while still behaving in an ethical manner during and after the pandemic.

The leadership landscape is constantly evolving. Leaders must make high-impact decisions in settings with limited information, and provide direction for their teams. The pandemic has negatively affected the workforce, and no leader has been unaffected by it (Finstad et al., 2021). Globally, organisations have been impacted by difficulties ranging from economic crises to social and geopolitical challenges. It has been observed that extraordinary leadership in all layers of an organisation is urgently required (Ashford & DeRude, 2012). Ahn et al. (2014) discussed the leadership competencies that are required by young engineering graduates, which are the ability to manage change while synthesising business imperatives, engineering, and social perspectives. Synthesising in this context is the ability to make linkages between these imperatives by looking at trends and integrating

these into the ecosystem of work, community and self. In the current context of the organisation under study, Ahn et al.'s critical proposition is explored through the case study.

1.2 Background to the study

This research investigates a civil engineering consulting organisation (NCE) that is situated in KwaZulu-Natal, and was established in 1999 to provide professional engineering services. The company has had exponential growth since 2014, and has a multigenerational workforce consisting of the following generations, as described in Johnson & Johnson (2010): silent generation (born 1928-1946), baby boomers (born 1946-1960), Generation X (Gen X) (born 1960-1980), Millennials or Generation Y (Gen-Y) (born 1980-1995) and digital natives or Generation Z (Gen-Z) (born 1995-2010). These generations are explored further in Chapter two. Each generation brings its own perspective to the workplace. The organisation has 177 employees and a lean top and senior management structure consisting of the managing director, four executives and six senior managers. The organisation has developed a SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, time bound) action plan, which has resulted in exponential growth in the business through high-impact operational efficiencies, leading to a growth in the number of employees and clients. The younger generation are required to take on more responsibility and take on leadership roles. In addition there is a shift in the engineering industry in terms of technological advancements.

Yousefdehi et al. (2017) have discussed the response to the shift in engineering education, from no longer seeing engineers as enablers of technical solutions, but rather as leaders in the technological field. Yousefdehi et al. (2017) postulated that the need of industries for engineers with diversified capabilities in an increasingly competitive market is critical. In addition, growth in the engineering industry requires employees to have professional registration particular to the industry, as there is a need for more professionally registered engineers and technologists (Government RSA, 2022). As such, the silent generation, baby boomers, and Gen-Xers are required to fast-track and mentor Gen-Y and Gen-Z employees within the organisation to become professionally registered.

As posited by Pillay (2015), Gen-Y engineers require a different approach than Gen-X employees. Each generation has different behavioural traits, wants, and needs regarding work ethos, communication, and values. The civil engineering industry in South Africa comprises of employees from various age groups, requiring management to understand the drivers of these different generations in order to retain talent. Leadership at the organisation in question will need to ensure that they develop the talent for their future pipeline. James and Mathew (2012) note that managing talent is a critical element of leadership requirements. Iles et al. (2010) describe talent as the capability of employees to make an impact on organisational performance and improved decision-making, in order to make both instantaneous and long-term contributions to the organisation. However, Thunnissen and Buttiens (2017) have argued that despite different authors having different meanings for talent, to add value, an employee would need to be provided with opportunities for development.

Although the entry to the market of small- and medium-sized enterprises, along with the tendering process, has increased competition dramatically, now competitive advantage is leaning more towards human capital, efficiencies, and quality. As such, at NCE, for employees to develop, they are required to be supported in these developing roles in order to be retained.

Furthermore, the organisation that was being studied was facing a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) context, as explored in Giles (2018) in Chapter two and illustrated as:

- V – Volatility in government moving funds from infrastructure to health care (COVID-19 responses), thereby creating economic volatility.
- U – Uncertainty in navigating the current pandemic and the way forward.
- C – Complexity in terms of the fourth industrial revolution, digitisation by becoming paperless, and using more modern engineering software to compete in the market.

- A – Ambiguity in that no precedence exists in dealing with virtual work, managing demands and employee wellbeing in the current context.

When examining a conceptual framework, one needs to consider what the next generation of executives requires, and design experience, coaching, and jobs in terms of development, as discussed in Kates (2008). As NCE is working in an uncertain landscape, with a multigenerational workforce who all need a different approach in terms of their values (Lowe & Barry, 2020; Pillay, 2015), leadership needs to be sturdy in the face of adversity, and agile to cope with rapid change. Rimita (2019) posited that leaders should not feel threatened by adversity or ambiguity. Bleich et al. (2021) stated that on the contrary, leadership skills require self-awareness, relationship capacity, and the capability to handle information through the lens of others.

Moreover, there is a need for information exchange between older generations and younger ones. As posited by Ringberg and Reihlen (2008), knowledge transfer brings much complexity, as it requires both the receiver and the transferer to mutually agree to this knowledge transfer. At the organisation being studied, the younger generation is required to perform roles in a multidisciplinary environment, from managing themselves, projects, and employees below them, along with developing the business and managing finance. In the current VUCA landscape, leaders need to be resilient, adaptable, and agile, while leading in the face of adversity, as suggested by Schad and Bansal (2018), Rimita (2019), and Ringberg and Reihlen (2008).

In the context described, this thesis sought to explore leadership coaching readiness in harnessing new leadership skills at a senior level, enhancing emotional intelligence and interpersonal effectiveness to reach business goals, and bridging the generational gap. Executive coaching has grown in the last number of years globally (Auerbach, 2022), with 70 per cent of organisations making use of some type of leadership coaching. Through participatory action research, an executive coaching model was crafted specifically for the organisation being studied.

1.3 The research gap

Leadership has faced an uncertain landscape while operating during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, which required executive leaders to be resilient, agile, and adaptable. According to Chen and Sriphon (2021), in order for leaders to act morally both during and after the pandemic, they needed to be skilled communicators, situationally aware, and able to manage and navigate change in uncertain circumstances.

Together with the uncertainty alluded to, the fast-changing economic environment and professional framework demand that employees be professionally registered. The organisation under study requires more professionally registered engineers. Due to a lack of professional registration, millennial leadership levels are restricted in signing off on engineering projects, which is a requirement of the Engineering Council of South Africa (ECSA) (ECSA, 2021). Unregistered professionals are required to work and be supervised by a professionally registered engineer across all professional categories (Pr Eng, Pr Tech Eng, Pr Techni Eng, Pr Cert Eng). The slowdown in the economic environment, and the requirement for organisations to have professionally registered engineers and technologists to sign off on work, has created a business capacity issue and a gap between the older and the younger generation at the organisation. As such, there is a business imperative to accelerate, coach, and mentor millennial leadership to ensure these registrations occur in the various categories (Pr Eng, Pr Tech Eng, Pr Techni Eng, Pr Cert Eng). Therefore, NCE needs to capacitate these leaders, enabling them to bridge the generational gap between millennials, baby boomers, and the silent generation to ensure the transfer of critical knowledge, as well as for the younger generations to have a sense of accountability. The current study is a Doctorate in Business Administration, presenting an existing problem in the organisation being studied, and postulates a model of coaching which could alleviate it. The crafted model could potentially be applied to other organisations in the engineering sector.

It was cited in the Government Gazette 45860, 2nd February, 2022 (Department of Home Affairs, 2022), that professionally registered civil engineers and civil engineering technologists under the ECSA are scarce in South Africa. In the list of 101 scarce skill occupations, they are numbered 35 and 36, respectively. Tancott (2014) identified engineering skills in his list of priority skills. This scarcity poses a problem of attaining relevant resources from outside of an organisation. Therefore, it is crucial to enable leaders to bridge the generational gap in order to ensure the transfer of critical knowledge to the younger generations, to instill in them a sense of accountability, so that they can attain professional registration.

In the context of NCE, Figure 1.1 represents the professionally registered employees from the total workforce of 177 employees.

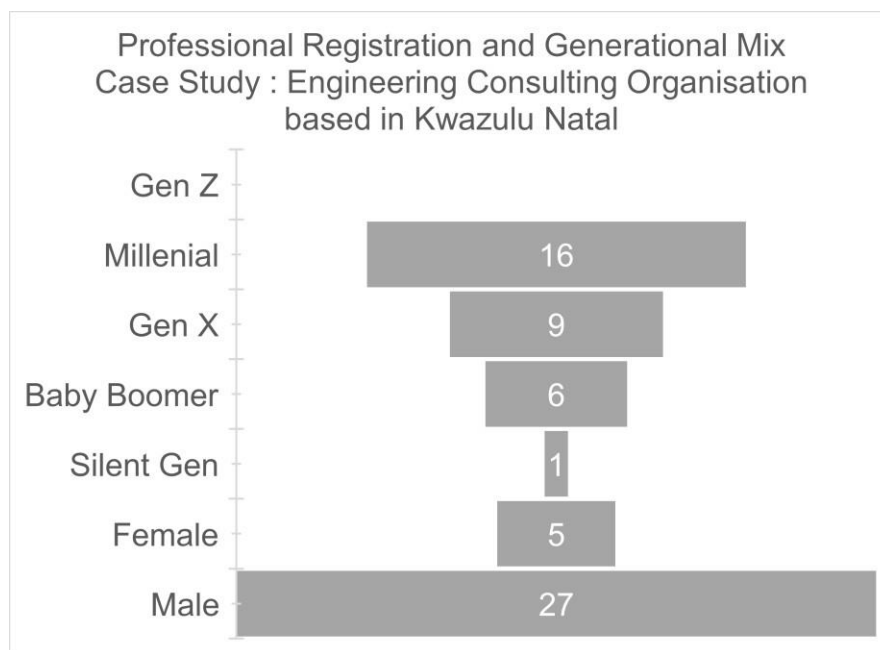


Figure 1.1: Professionally registered employees at NCE

Source: Extracted from the current workforce profile at NCE, an engineering consulting firm in KwaZulu-Natal.

Leadership at NCE consists of top, senior and middle management occupational levels, as indicated in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1: Levels of management

Level	Description
Top-level management	This is the most senior level of management in the company and is responsible for setting the overall route and strategy of the company. Top-level managers include executives such as the chief executive officers, chief financial officers, and chief operations officers. They are typically responsible for making significant decisions that affect the entire organisation.
Senior management	This management level is below the top level and includes executives who oversee specific functions or departments within the organisation. Senior managers are responsible for implementing the strategies set by top-level management and are typically involved in making decisions that affect their specific areas of responsibility. They manage the development of innovation and change, translate the overall business strategy into business plans for business units (BU)/functional units (FU) and operationalise the overall business strategy ensuring the overall key organisational/BU/FU outputs.
Mid-management (Professional)	This level of management is responsible for overseeing day-to-day operations within the organisation. Managers may be responsible for specific departments or functions such as human resources, finance, or operations and are typically responsible for implementing the strategies set by senior management. They are also responsible for managing and supervising the employees within their department or function. Their primary focus is ensuring that their area of responsibility runs efficiently and effectively in support of the organisation's overall goals and objectives, the professional knowledge of subdiscipline/discipline.

Source: Gjerde and Alvesson (2020); Department of Employment and Labour, EEA9 Occupational levels.

Through investigating the current state of leadership interventions and behaviour in the context of a multigenerational workforce at NCE, and observing a plethora of coaching interventions and models available, one of the objectives of the study was to identify an executive coaching programme specific to the organisation. Combining an emotional intelligence element with a coaching model, while using participatory action research, enabled the researcher to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by crafting an innovative model to accelerate leadership development at the organisation. This study also addressed the gap in the multigenerational workforce, creating a mechanism for accountability and retention of critical skills. Clutterback (2013) suggested that further research could be undertaken into coaching models.

Furthermore, Outhwaite and Bettridge (2009) concluded that coaching is one of mechanisms that would meet the needs of both the planet and the individual, in linking what the planet requires (as an economic, social, and ecological system) with what individuals need (from an emotional, psychological, cultural, and spiritual perspective). The urgency of these needs make enabling an organisation to discover them important, as is the possibility of using coaching to integrate sustainability into its workings through efficiencies and productivity.

As alluded to in Gill et al. (2014), companies that run efficiently show sustainable profits for a longer duration. Passmore (2015) posited that researchers investigate the efficacy of coaching in various circumstances, including the development of leadership, career pathing or career change, and organisational change. Bozer and Jones (2018) stress the need for future research to look at global self-efficacy beliefs, and to track the impact of changes or task-specific self-efficacy in organisations.

A study completed by Grant (2014) supported the hypothesis that participation in a coaching programme has an extensive variety of positive effects, from a solutions-focused perspective, an ability to adapt and be agile through change, to

leadership efficacy and resiliency, the reduction of anxiety, stress, and depression, and an increase in engagement of the workforce.

Addressing issues of adaptability, resiliency, stress, depression, agility, decision-making through coaching could create long-term sustainability for the organisation as well as the industry sector as a whole, due to the ability for a business to tender using internal employees who have reached the milestone of professional registration to provide professional services. Organic growth allows internal employees to move into managerial positions, whether at NCE or in the engineering sector as a whole, ensuring access to opportunities and wealth creation.

The National Development Plan 2030 of South Africa (National Planning Commission, 2012), which the organisation being studied aligns with, discusses solving technical and managerial skills through career pathing, mentoring, and the introduction of measures in the workplace that focus on career mobility. Furthermore, Action 94 of Chapter 13 of the National Development Plan addresses the need to formulate longer-term skills strategies for developing technical professionals and senior management.

Grover and Furnham (2016) highlighted that coaching was an effective mechanism to benefit a company; however, further research is required to determine its efficacy. Through this study at NCE, it was determined that an executive coaching model was appropriate and contextually timeous for NCE.

1.4 Research aim

This particular study sought to investigate leadership coaching readiness to harness new leadership skills at a senior level in an organisation. Through the crafting of a coaching model, leaders would be enabled to improve their emotional intelligence and interpersonal effectiveness in order to reach business goals and bridge the generational gap.

1.5 Research objectives

The research conducted in this study was based on a sample of executives, managers, and millennials to determine the outlined objectives:

- 1.5.1 To determine whether executive leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.
- 1.5.2 To identify the type of executive coaching programme required in the current landscape.
- 1.5.3 To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior and middle-level leaders, and result in a retention strategy.
- 1.5.4 To explore the influence of a coaching model in terms of building a positive and sustainable organisation.

1.6 Research questions

The research questions that informed the objectives of the research conducted at NCE were:

- 1.6.1 To what extent are leadership skills required for leaders in a VUCA and post-COVID-19 world?
- 1.6.2 How will the criteria be determined to unpack whether leaders are ready to harness new skills?
- 1.6.3 How can a coaching model/programme best fit the organisation?
- 1.6.4 What can be changed by means of the coaching model?

1.7 Defining the terminology

1.7.1 Leadership

Leadership, as defined by Ren (2019), is not specifically about a person and it is different from management. It is a relationship of influence between a follower and

a leader who has an intention for change that is beneficial to both parties. Two critical components of leadership that need to be present are that: firstly, the association is centred on influence; and secondly, the follower and the leader are individuals in this association, and they wish to create reciprocal purposes. However, the literature has provided no conclusive definition of engineering leadership. The impression that leadership has left on humanity resonates over many centuries and will most likely do so for many more.

1.7.2 Leadership pipeline

Charan et al. (2011) laid out critical rites of passage that a leader needs to go through. Furthermore, they unpack the skills and requirements of these varying rites to develop a company's leaders and a pipeline of leaders. The authors discuss six leadership phases and a model that was integrated into this participatory action research study on coaching interventions. This model assesses the potential of leaders for the next occupational leadership level. Conventional theories of measuring leadership effectiveness based on technical skills have been discredited by advancements in technology-enabled organisational management solutions linked to the fourth industrial revolution (4IR). Thus the importance, as explored in the literature review, of softer skills and not just technical ones is explored.

1.7.3. Coaching

Kombarakaran et al. (2008) define coaching as a short-term intervention focused on improving leadership effectiveness, through applying new behaviours and exhibiting self-awareness. It was pointed out that executive coaching improves performance by supporting aspects of time management, setting goals, interfacing and communicating with others, and managing one's work environment, as discussed in Paulo-Pons (2022).

On their website, the International Coaching Federation (ICF) (ICF, 2022) defines coaching as a partnership between a coach and their coachees in a thought-provoking and creative process, which brings about personal and professional growth and awareness into untapped internal sources of ingenuity, leadership effectiveness and efficiency. The Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA) (COMENSA, 2022), which is a South African Quality Assured (SAQA) professional body for coaches and mentors, defines coaching on their website as “a professional, collaborative and outcomes-driven method of learning that seeks to develop an individual and raise self-awareness so that he or she might achieve specific goals and perform at a more effective level” (COMENSA, 2022).

Paulo-Pons (2022) also explores the definition of coaching from the perspective of the International Association of Coaching (IAC), which comments that coaching is a progressive form of communication whose objective is to assist an individual, organisation, or team to yield the anticipated result emanating from the co-creation of finding solutions to obstacles and awareness. As such, from the literature review and definitions, one can conclude that coaching is a positive growth experience for coachees. Through the participatory action research and qualitative interviews at the organisation under study, this was also evident.

1.7.4 Mentoring

COMENSA (2022) defines mentoring as a learner learning from a mentor who shares their main or specific, or on-the-job knowledge. The mentor should have experience in the mentee's field of expertise.

1.8 Contribution of the study

At the time it was done, the study sought to determine through participatory action research if coaching would be an effective tool in supporting leadership at NCE. Through participatory action research, a model was crafted specifically for

NCE, which was a significant contribution to the creation of new knowledge at the organisation. This was because the research dealt with a business challenge in a real-world setting. At the time of the study, no coaching model or intervention existed at NCE. A Doctoral Degree in Business Administration, through its research, would provide useful understanding and remedies, which may immediately be put to use in situations of a professional business nature, and could improve business practices at NCE.

The study provides a methodological contribution through the combination of the synthesis of empirical studies in the literature review, the observational method in the participatory action research, and the qualitative interviews and focus groups highlighting the experiences of the participants in the organisation. Moreover, the study offers a framework for comprehending the theoretical foundations of coaching that integrates emotional intelligence as a tool for leadership development to connect a multigenerational workforce in a VUCA landscape, and makes recommendations for future areas of research on team coaching.

A thorough knowledge of the methods through which leadership coaching can improve emotional intelligence and interpersonal effectiveness is essential. This knowledge helps an organisation to reach business goals, and gain an understanding of how to overcome the generational gap between millennials and executives or senior management. The theoretical framework provides insights into various aspects, including leadership styles and attributes, multigenerational workforces, individual motivation, self-efficacy, new paradigm skills, emotional intelligence, and coaching models. As discussed in the review of the literature and the findings of the research methodology, the coaching intervention is likely to be beneficial to both the organisation and its employees.

The coaching intervention, linked with emotional intelligence workshops, can assist leadership in bridging the gap between the generations, through understanding leadership and managing emotions, becoming more resilient in times of change, and demonstrating agility. Bridging the generation gap should allow for the fast tracking of the transference of knowledge to the younger generation, resulting in professional registrations. This, in turn, will also result in sustainability for the

as discussed in the following chapters.

The additional contribution of this study was to develop a coaching model for the organisation, by adding to existing models, with the possibility of combinations to craft a model one suited to it. Stefaniak (2017) discussed that coaching also provides support to those that are on a career path, to enhance their journey or skill set. Although Grover and Furnham (2016) support coaching as an effective mechanism to benefit a company, they emphasise that further research is required to determine its efficacy. The coaching model crafted through this participatory action research cannot be undervalued.

This research also contributes to the existing knowledge of the organisation being studied, by revealing whether, through the intervention, current executive leaders are indeed harnessing new leadership skills to embrace and cultivate the new millennial workforce. Farr and Brazil (2009) cited that as far back as 1997, any professionally qualified engineer would reason that an engineer would be hired for their technical abilities but dismissed for poor person skills, while still being promoted for leadership and management capabilities. The coaching model advanced will develop people, leadership, and management skills in a VUCA context, thereby supporting the leadership team. Furthermore, an important part of studying emotional intelligence is establishing its relevance within relationships and its contributions to the workplace, which then contributes to this body of knowledge.

1.9 Limitations of study

Due to time constraints in this study, some participant leaders may not have devoted sufficient time to the semi-structured interviews. This was mitigated somewhat with the triangulation of data from the focus groups and observations. The research was completed at NCE, a specific civil engineering consulting organisation based in KwaZulu-Natal, and not within the civil engineering consulting industry as a whole. The qualitative research design

required a small sample size from a large industry/sector, which meant the findings would be specific to the organisation being studied. Creswell (2011) confirms that small sample sizes are common in qualitative studies, but which may restrict how broadly results can be applied.

1.10 Layout of thesis

This study consisted of six chapters, namely:

Chapter one produces an overview of the research study and lays out its foundations. The study background is presented with the problem statement detailing the research objectives and questions.

Chapter two centres on the literature review, which includes a discussion of a VUCA context, as well as the challenges facing the engineering consulting industry and a multigenerational workforce. Furthermore, a definition of leadership, leadership potential, coaching, mentoring, benefits of coaching, and theoretical and conceptual frameworks are explored. Through the exploration in the literature review, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for the research study are presented.

Chapter three presents the research methodology, the approach, process, and reasoning behind the selected methodology, and the research instruments employed to collect the data informing the study's outcomes, reliability, and validity.

Chapter four offers the presentation of the qualitative data collected and the data analysis.

Chapter five discusses the findings, interpretation and explanations of the research linked to the literature review to examine, deliberate on, and evaluate the outcomes. The analysis and synthesis of the extant literature provided input for the theoretical, methodological, and practical contributions of the study.

Chapter six provides the conclusion to the study with reference to the research questions that were answered and the research objectives that were achieved. Furthermore, this chapter also provides recommendations to the organisation being studied and for future research.

1.11 Conclusion

In conclusion, Chapter one presented the background to the study, the research gap, the research questions that were answered in the study, enabling the research objectives and aim to be met, and considered the contributions and limitations of the study. The ensuing chapter presents the literature review undertaken.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

Chapter one was a high-level overview of the research study and the structure of the thesis. This chapter undertakes a critical analysis of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks in the literature, which is used to corroborate or confirm the qualitative study's findings through the synthesis of the existing literature. The aim of the study was to investigate leadership readiness in harnessing new leadership skills in a VUCA landscape, in order to improve leaders' emotional intelligence and interpersonal skills in reaching business goals, whilst also bridging the generational gap through a leadership coaching intervention.

Leadership is dynamic and ever changing in the current context. Globally, leaders are faced with digitisation, which is changing the nature of people's work, the way people interact with each other, and also efficiencies, and innovation (Lorenz, Rübmann, Lueth, & Bolle, 2015). Leadership values appear to come under scrutiny during times of crisis and significant disruption (Roberts, 2020). Roberts (2020) explores the personal values and decisions that leaders must make at such times. Al Saidi et al. (2020) posited that strong leadership skills are imperative during a pandemic such as COVID-19.

Leadership extends to the organisation, the community, the country, and the world. The sector for this research was positioned in the setting of a global pandemic, alongside a multigenerational workforce and the 4IR. Executive coaching, as suggested by MacIntyre (2016), is key to advancing leaders in engineering. Furthermore, Ballesteros-Sanchez et al. (2019) posit that executive coaching has been found to have the highest effect on behaviours linked to managing, leading, and finding solutions within a challenging area. Through coaching and understanding the generational differences in the workforce, soft skills, emotional intelligence, and psychological factors may be improved, resulting in talent retention.

For leaders to adapt, change will require more than just readiness, with change readiness needing to exist beforehand, not itself being the actual change.

Change readiness suggests that those in training are ready to embark on the process of change, but will still be required to make actual changes (Theeboom, 2017; Triberti & Riva, 2016). As described by Hagemann and Bawany: “There are two things we can say with certainty about the future: it will be different, and it will surprise. Now, more than ever, leaders must navigate unfamiliar, challenging times, a quickening pace of change, increasing expectations and a rising tide of rapidly evolving conditions” (2016, p. 9).

The COVID-19 pandemic, already two years in and seemingly permanent at the time of this study, has impacted leaders, employees, and communities in South Africa and globally. No leader was unaffected. This pandemic has occasioned an economic and health crisis, and has placed leaders in a VUCA landscape. Moreover, Gen-Z individuals in the workforce have brought with them an entirely new range of principles, aspirations, and motivations that require a different approach to inspire productivity, engagement, and retention in organisations. As such, the literature review explores various themes and constructs, ranging from VUCA, leadership, multigenerational workforce, coaching, emotional intelligence, while also explaining the theoretical and conceptual frameworks used in this study.

2.2 The VUCA environment

The formulation and meaning of the acronym ‘VUCA’, referring to the descriptors volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous, as stated by Giles (2018), originated from students in the US Army War College in the 1990s. The term is now used to describe the current business landscape. Unpredictable events that are external to a company present a greater VUCA environment. For example, the Covid pandemic may have shown a negative uncertainty because of companies and leaders being unable to plan for the future, or the negative complexity of the economy that originated from it. Frontline leaders therefore have to be agile and adaptive in the face of adversity, distinguishing “friends from enemies” (Giles, 2018).

Giles (2018) explains the acronym as follows:

- Volatile: Phenomena can change suddenly and unpredictably, and notably, for the worse.
- Uncertain: Lack of information about future outcomes and lack of clarity regarding the current context and future conclusions, which are unable to be trusted.
- Complex: Multiple key decision aspects, collaboration between diverse agents, and the arrival of adaptation, co-evolution, and weak signals. Specifically, in this organisation being studied, there is a multigenerational workforce and a need to embed various methods to develop future leaders at each point of their career trajectory.
- Ambiguous: Events can be understood in varying ways.

The current organisational landscape in the business arena can be described as similar to that on the battlefield: constant change, disruptive technologies, a diverse workforce, and the need to be adaptable and agile. Schad and Bansal (2018) contend that the inherent complexity in the current landscape brings paradoxical tensions that leaders must navigate. Furthermore, leaders will require faster decision-making skills, while being deprived of full and clear data, through communication and collaboration, thus using the organisation's network systemically through collaborating with various leaders, who all have varying resources, skills, and expertise, to tackle the challenges faced and be open to differing viewpoints (Schad & Bansal, 2018).

When looking at a conceptual framework, one needs to assess what the next generation of executives might require, and from there design experiences, coaching, and jobs for their development, as mentioned in Kates (2008). Organisations working in an uncertain landscape with a multigenerational workforce also need a different approach regarding their values (Lowe & Barry, 2020; Pillay, 2015). Leadership needs to be sturdy in the face of adversity and agile to cope with rapid change. Rimita (2019) posited that leaders should not feel threatened by adversity

or ambiguity. Bleich et al. (2021) stated that leadership skills require self-awareness, relationship-building capacity, and the capability to handle information through the lens of others. In the current VUCA landscape, leaders need to be resilient, adaptable, agile, and lead in the face of adversity.

There is a need for information exchange between older generations and younger ones. As explored by Ringberg and Reihlen (2008), knowledge transfer brings much complexity, as it requires both the receiver and the transferer to mutually agree to this knowledge transfer occurring. The younger generation needs to perform roles in a multidisciplinary environment, from managing themselves, projects, and employees below them, along with developing the business and managing finance

Moreover, to bridge the gap between senior engineers, who carry corporate intellectual property, and middle-level engineers in terms of 'soft skills', business leaders need to improve their emotional intelligence and interpersonal effectiveness and moreso in time of societal challenges such as the pandemic. As reported in the Edelman Trust Barometer (2021), leaders are expected to operate at higher standards than before, with the expectation that they should step in when the government does not sort out societal challenges. Hendon et al. (2017) suggest that emotional intelligence and good communication skills have positive outcomes for teamwork and relationship building between generations. The organisation being studied, as an engineering firm based in KwaZulu-Natal, needed to navigate the pandemic. Its leadership had to think more quickly, be adaptable and transparent, and be strong in the face of adversity.

Charan et al. (2011) developed a leadership model of six leadership stages, which were described as six turns or passages which a leader transitions between. These are: "managing self and transitioning into managing others, then managing others to managing managers, then managing managers to managing a function, in other words a functional manager, and then moving from function manager to business manager and then to a group manager, and finally to an enterprise manager" (Charan et al., 2011, p.29). They further explore a central architecture that can be

adapted to an organisation. Mamula et al. (2019) also discuss key leadership traits and what is required of leaders, such as inspiration, engagement, independence, and the ability to overcome difficult situations. A further suggestion by Sinek (2016) is that leaders now need to lead with empathy and perspective, and concentrate on sustainability and frustrating the competition, rather than on spreadsheets, profits, and projected revenues. However, whether this is true for today's leaders in the current pandemic and VUCA world, is open to question. Leaders are required to have the ability to look to the long-term future rather than the immediate present, while demonstrating resiliency and agility. Sinek (2016) alluded to the example of Apple, a company that looks to the next 50 years and competes against itself. In contrast, Microsoft looks at the now and competes against its current competitors, insisting that leaders need to focus on revenue and targets, and not demonstrate empathy and perspective. A paradox in leadership in these two examples is evident. It is also evident from the review of the literature that leaders in a VUCA environment are moving toward heightened self-awareness, improving upon complex abilities, learning agility, and reasoning, using non-linear approaches in more diverse settings that require collaboration with diverse groups and people (Hagemann & Bawany, 2016).

Uncertainty in the current VUCA landscape can occur when an individual loses control over their situation. This refers to precarity as a form of reality where a person is not able to predict the next steps or have security/stability. It is a state of uncertainty. There are many schools of thought around the terminology of precarity and precarisation, as stated by Porta et al. (2015, p.23): "It is more often the structured quality of particular situations and events lived by people, rather than their personal characteristics that determine what kind of risks and challenges" they are faced with, and how they should deal with such challenges. In the context of COVID-19 for organisations in the civil engineering sector and globally, given the economic instability and unsafe health context, leaders have lost some control over their own situation. During the pandemic, government leaders had control over the work situation, which required business leaders to have a more controlling leadership to ensure efficiencies and productivity were met. The current precarity is caused by the economic shift that has occurred during the last two years due

to the pandemic. There was an increased focus on the health sector and the capacitation of hospitals, so infrastructure funding was shifted there. The organisation under study, which is in this sector, currently competes over the service delivery of infrastructure. To remain stable, ensure economic stability, and save the jobs of those employed in the company, leaders have had to drive efficiencies and productivity and work leaner. The deliberations used in an attempt to maximise the efficiencies have led to precarisation. Lorey (2010) postulated that precarity, in a political and managerial context, is a shift from autonomous to heteronomous control to overcome specific problems. Furthermore, Nørreklit (2016) mentions that the method of working leaner to drive efficiencies is strewn with uncertainty, instability, and struggle. Millennial leaders question their role, work performance, and capability to make decisions independently. Nørreklit (2016) further mentions that in a business, when employees are uncertain about their future, emotions of anxiousness and low self-esteem ensue. Millennial leaders may lose self-esteem and confidence. In the organisation being studied, this may result in these leaders not taking on stretch tasks or doing more, as they have lost confidence in their ability, which is likely to result in burnout at the next layer of leadership because of overwork.

2.3 Leadership and performance

The concept of leadership is a large and diverse topic. Writings from various cultures and disciplines, such as the Art of War treatise, the Bible, philosophy, and the social sciences, frequently discuss leadership. Leadership was defined in Ren (2019) as not being about an individual and also as being different from management. Leadership is rather about a relationship of influence between a follower and a leader who has intent for change that is beneficial to both parties. This relationship has four critical components which consist of the following: a relationship that is focused on influence, leaders and followers who must be in association, both parties must have an intent for true change, and both parties must have a common purpose.

Leaders are faced with an increasing change of requirements due to a changing organisational landscape and role expectations (Holmberg, Larsson, & Backstrom, 2016). Competent, effective leaders are often lacking in organisations (Rothwell, 2010), resulting in unsustainability and people leaving organisations, affecting retention. Notably, these definitions come from a pre-COVID-19 and a pre-VUCA context and are from an old paradigm. The question is whether they fit the organisation in the current landscape.

In a study by AlShehhi et al. (2020), it was suggested that an individual's work performance is positively affected by ethical leadership. In other words, workers' performance increases as a result of good treatment. Furthermore, these authors demonstrated that ethical leadership impacts performance depending on social learning and social exchange theory.

In their study, Paais and Pattiruhu (2020) observed that there is a positive relationship between performance and motivation. The authors cite Stogdill's work, which emphasises that understanding leadership theory and organisational theory is critical in carrying out the task of leadership. In their discussion, Paais and Pattiruhu (2020) posited that the leadership style impacts job satisfaction in an organisation, as does the organisational environment and social relations at work. Motivation, as an urging agent in enhancing an individual's performance and satisfaction, is indivisible from leadership in creating an optimal and professional environment. Clohisy, as cited in Burton et al. (2019, p385), highlighted that "leadership traits, comprising of integrity, credibility, useful listening, visionary, fairness, humility, and caring, will echo with and entice staff that are innovative and productive".

Leaders will also be required to understand behaviours, values, and beliefs through the lens of others, as complexity will arise from the diversity of a multigenerational workforce. Therefore, an increased demand for leadership coaching will continue as this complexity is expected to increase (Auerbach, 2022).

2.3.1 Leadership pipeline

Developed by Charan et al. (2011), the leadership pipeline charts the critical passages that a leader needs to go through. The notion of the leadership pipeline describes how leaders develop and advance within an organisation, often from individual contributor jobs to higher-level management responsibilities. Although the leadership pipeline approach has been widely embraced and put into practice in many businesses, it has come under fire for lacking empirical support (Kaiser, 2011). Gonzales (2019) completed a study specifically for leadership in schools and found the leadership pipeline to support vertical and horizontal leadership in considering increasing levels of leadership. However, it was discussed that the leadership pipeline model might not successfully take into account the complexities and nuances of leadership development. In contrast to the model's assumption of a linear progression from one level of leadership to the next, the process of developing leaders is complex and dynamic. Charan et al. (2011) unpack the skills and requirements of these varying passages to develop an organisation's leaders and a pipeline for them. They discuss seven leadership phases and a model that the researcher integrated into this participatory action research study on coaching interventions. This model assesses the potential of leaders for the next occupational leadership level using a nine-box matrix, as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Box matrix – the leadership pipeline

Turn Potential Demonstrates the ability to do the work at the next level in the next 2–5 years.	1 “Exceptional and Turn”	3 Full with Turn Possibility	6 Not Yet Full or Not Yet Turn
Growth Potential Demonstrates the ability to do the job or stretch tasks at the same level soon.	2 “Exceptional and Growth”	5 Full or Growth	8 Not Yet Full or Not Yet Growth
Mastery Potential Demonstrates the ability to do the same work only better.	4 “Exceptional and Mastery”	7 Full or Mastery	9 Not Yet Full or Not Yet Mastery

Source: Charan et al. (2011, p196)

Charan et al. (2011) posited that elements such as accumulative experiences, the capability to acquire new skills, and the eagerness to take on more challenging and bigger tasks all impact an employee's ability to develop. This model, which takes into consideration Individual variations, organisational context, and situational difficulties, could be linked to other models to possibly make it more robust. Currently, as it is a stand-alone model, according to the research, it may oversimplify the complexity of leadership and might not account for all the elements that go into good leadership development, resulting in a limitation of the leadership pipeline.

2.3.2 Leadership challenges: engineering consulting industry in South Africa

In the current VUCA landscape, the engineering sector and South Africa as a whole, have had to cope with an economic crisis due to COVID-19 policies. Unemployment rates of 34,9% were recorded in the third quarter of 2021 (Vanek, 2021). Added to this, leaders are faced with a multigenerational workforce, which comprises employees from different generations working together. There are presently four generations of employees in the workplace, which poses a possible necessity for leaders to bridge this gap because of differences in generational viewpoints, values, and priorities (Lowe & Barry, 2020). Ng and Parry (2016) corroborate that the workplace has multiple generations working together, ranging from millennials, Gen-X, baby boomers, to the silent generation. Chaudhuri (2020) mentioned that because of the increase in the use of technological tools, there is a greater incidence of burnout. Evidence shows that approaches to the stimulation of intrinsic motivation should look at bridging generational barriers between educators and students. This could also be true for other industries dealing with a multigenerational workforce.

In the engineering industry in South Africa, there is little evidence of coaching. However, MacIntyre (2016) posited that engineering organisations of all sizes expect their engineering graduates to have a combination of business acumen, technical expertise, and leadership capabilities. The same author mentioned that engineers are perceived only as technical problem-solvers and are not equipped

to lead.

The sector currently has employees ranging from the silent generation to Gen-X in its workforce. Pitt-Catsouphes (2008) explored the variance in employee engagement, and how to maintain engagement for the older generation in terms of flexibility fit. There are different impacts of working in a multigenerational workforce, and different ways in which a leader bridges these gaps in generations working together and in their capacity to deliver on to the next-generation of leaders, thereby creating a succession of future leaders. Every generation has a different communication taste and style. Leaders can enhance communication and establish a common language that promotes efficient collaboration and teamwork by including references that appeal to various age groups. Clearer instructions, greater engagement, and enhanced productivity may result from this. Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) stressed the importance of a communication perspective to understand millennials. Sherman (2019) asserts that for productive cooperation and increased output, closing the generational gap at work is essential.

Significantly, it has been discussed that differences between the generations in organisations impede the handover of critical information dissemination from managers in leadership positions to entry-level employees (Al-Asfour, 2015). Leading multigenerational businesses requires leaders to embrace varying leadership styles. An organisation's pipeline of leaders is expected to deliver its future generation of leaders who are capable of leading now. The benefit of this to the organisation is a future pipeline of leadership talent that concurrently achieves targets, strengthens and protects the company's ethical reputation, and navigates transformational change in pursuit of a better and more competitive future (Bawany, 2014). However, as explored by Lappalainen (2015), the type of leadership that cultivates this leadership pipeline needs to be cognisant that their employees demand challenging tasks, that they want their seniors to be present,

and that they want a 'speak-up' culture within a values- and ethics-driven organisation. Different generations contribute a variety of talents, experiences, and viewpoints. Bridging this generational gap allows for the exchange of knowledge and expertise in that the older leaders can share their wisdom and insights gathered over the years, while the younger employees can bring new ideas and technological know-how (Ringberg & Reihlen, 2008). In support of this point, only 36% of millennials were cited as confident in having the skills for the 4IR in the 2018 Deloitte Millennial Survey (Deloitte, 2018). This study pointed out that the critical skills that need to be coached are soft skills such as self-esteem, confidence, and motivation.

The younger generation wants businesses and leadership to upskill them through individual development plans and mentorship during the journey of continuous development. Furthermore, Johnson (2015) proposed that millennials were pleased with the idea of companies offering them coaching. Greatwood (2016) found that if staff felt appreciated and supported through coaching, they felt their work was psychologically meaningful and were, therefore, engaged, which added to the company's bottom line.

It seems clear that millennials require communication, leadership opportunities, and work of value. Poor intergenerational communication often sees these requirements go unheard. However, executive leaders need coaching on this. Rose and Gordon (2015) investigated a conceptual approach and suggested that there are three key elements of intelligence, fluid, crystallised, and working memory, and that fluid intelligence should be balanced with experience. Furthermore, Rose and Gordon (2015) mentioned that age-associated changes and distributed leadership are essential for the management of a multigenerational workforce; thus, top management needs to bridge the gap between millennials and senior generations to ensure crystallised intelligence (experience) is passed on from one generation to the next. Refer to Table 1.1, p.7 for levels of management occupational levels. Leaders need to support and encourage coaching to occur. Numerous studies advocate that a shortage of backing by the coachee's company is a possible barrier to the success of a coaching intervention (Athanasopoulou &

Dopson, 2018; Grover & Furnham, 2016).

As stated in Harrison (2016), the new decade starting in 2020 is the first ever in which four generations are working together in the workplace. Each has different values, viewpoints, and expectations. The literature reviewed thus far in this chapter has demonstrated that bridging the generation gap is crucial for leadership. Organisations can fully utilise their multigenerational workforce by resolving communication barriers, utilising intergenerational collaboration, improving workforce efficiency, fostering organisational innovation, and adapting to the digital era. In this way, an organisation will be better positioned for sustainable growth. In the engineering sector alone, leadership is undergoing a huge technological shift in Civil Design and Build Information Modelling Systems in which the younger generation are more adept, and, as such, to appreciate the significance of generational diversity, measures need to be put in place to close the gap.

2.3.3 Leadership pipeline development and employee engagement

Several factors will be analysed which contribute directly to the leadership pipeline and employee engagement, which are: employee value proposition and succession planning and retention, the latter which encompasses recognition and reward programmes, employee benefits, performance management systems, job satisfaction, communication, collaboration, team building, tools, autonomy, and career development.

Rothwell (2010) defined succession planning as a deliberate, systematic attempt to ensure that a pipeline of leadership is developed in order to retain intellectual and knowledge capital for the future of an organisation. The right time to prepare for the next successor (Bano et al., 2020), as deliberated by these authors, is five years. Bano et al. (2020) set out four major steps to implementing succession

planning: assessing the current employees, identifying existing competencies, actual plan development, and training, coaching, and mentoring.

As discussed in the leadership pipeline section, Charan et al. (2011) described the key phases that one needs to go through to get to the next level. Bano et al. (2022) further considered more detailed best practice succession planning practices for organisations. Rothwell (2015) mentioned that critical positions in organisations must be analysed. It should be an evolving, rigorous, and intentional exercise to develop staff organically to fill critical jobs. He also discussed the notion of intellectual knowledge and the importance of keeping this in an organisation. Bano et al. (2022) also explored the criticisms of succession planning as stated by Gabriel et al. (2020).

Organisations need to ensure that they develop a pipeline of leaders, as discussed in the preceding chapter. Van der Westhuizen (2016) discusses steps to be followed to ensure that gaps are filled in an organisation. According to Haid (2012), the rationale is not to replace employees when a position arises, but to rather grow them organically and develop future talent from within the organisation, so that they can readily fill a position when it becomes available. Related to this, retention is defined as measures taken to ensure employees stay in the organisation. James and Mathew (2012) discussed that the essential rationale behind retention is to prevent talent from exiting the organisation. Terera and Ngirande (2014) mentioned a range of challenges that organisations are facing in retention, from relocation to another country or joining competitors, to the inability of companies to predict the future and therefore not having succession or career pathing programmes.

In today's competitive global economy, businesses have to work hard to keep their employees. Moreover, companies are under more pressure than ever to keep their best employees, because it is costly to find and train new people. Retention is thus an important part of a successful business strategy because it can cut down on the costs of hiring new people and replacing those who leave. To keep as many

employees as possible, companies should focus on giving them the right mix of benefits, recognise their contributions, and manage their performance well. Satisfied employees are more prone to be engaged, motivated, and eager to take on the leadership responsibilities, which contributes to retention and the development of future leaders (Lok & Crawford, 2004). In the ensuing paragraphs, three strategies, which all affect the likelihood of an employee staying with a company and contributing to the leadership pipeline, are discussed: employee benefits, recognition, and performance management.

Studies have shown that employee benefits are important for a business to be successful. Benefits not only give employees the security and stability they need, but they can also help make the workplace a better place to be in (Abraham & Abraham, 2018). Calvasina and Halaby (2018) suggested that employee benefits are an important tool for retaining employees because they can boost morale, loyalty, and motivation. Also, benefits can help reduce stress, which can lead to more work getting done and a better atmosphere at work. Benefits such as health insurance, paid time off, and plans for retirement can make employees feel valued and help them feel that they have a secure job. Organisations can also attract and retain top talent by giving them unique benefits like flexible work hours, gym memberships, and the option to work from home. By giving employees a full set of benefits, companies can reduce the chance that they will leave while also making them happier.

In addition to the usual benefits, employers can give their workers other perks that can improve the workplace (Spisakova, 2019). Companies can use incentives like bonuses, awards and promotions, and non-traditional perks such as gym memberships, telecommuting options, and flexible work hours, in addition to health insurance, vacation leave, and retirement plans, in order to show appreciation for their employees. Other benefits could be on-site childcare, free snacks and drinks, team-building activities, and even discount programmes for employees. Employers should also think about adding benefits like commuting subsidies and tuition reimbursement to their packages to make them even more valuable. Organisations

can also give employees access to professional development opportunities, such as mentorship programmes, to help them build their skills and knowledge. According to Jose and Mampilly (2021), benefits can be tailored to each employee or team. Wirch (2012) says that to get the most out of an employee benefits package, it is important to make sure that the benefits are both competitive and meaningful. Employers should look over their benefits packages on a regular basis to make sure they meet the needs of their workers.

A second strategy companies should use is to create a culture of collaboration and recognition, with programmes like team-building activities, peer recognition, and cross training to help boost morale and engagement., Employers should try to make their workers feel valued and appreciated by giving them feedback and performance reviews on a regular basis. This will help them see that their successes are being noticed. Research has shown that employees who feel valued and appreciated through recognition and rewards are more likely to stay with the same employer for a longer period of time. Wirch (2012) articulates a hypothesis concerning the efficacy of comprehensive benefits packages in the recruitment and retention of high-caliber employees. He posits that the modern workforce is progressively seeking employers who provide more than mere monetary compensation. This paradigm shift towards a more holistic employment package is beneficial for employers in two significant ways: firstly, it potentially leads to enhanced productivity as employees are more inclined to be engaged in their work; secondly, it reduces employee turnover, thereby mitigating the costs associated with hiring and training new personnel. Therefore, it is incumbent upon employers to advance a workplace culture that demonstrably values each employee, as this can yield enduring positive impacts on employee satisfaction and motivation

Recognising employees is another important part of valuing and therefore retaining them. When employees feel that their hard work and contributions are appreciated and valued, they are more likely to stay with an organisation. Different kinds of recognition include public praise, awards, bonuses, and special events. Organisations should try to show their employees appreciation on a regular basis, as this can help build loyalty and commitment (Luthans & Peterson, 2002).

Recognition is also a good way to get people to work hard because it encourages them to do their best. This perspective is further corroborated by the notion that acknowledging employees effectively serves as a significant strategy for organisations to express appreciation and to emphasize the value they assign to their workforce. Building on the previous assertions, Sánchez-Monedero and Dencik (2019) also support this perspective, advocating for a multifaceted approach to employee appreciation. They suggest that recognition should manifest in various forms, encompassing both public and private acknowledgments. This might include verbal expressions of gratitude, the conferral of awards, promotional opportunities, monetary bonuses, and the organisation of special events. Such a diversified approach ensures a comprehensive and inclusive recognition system within the workplace. This shows that they are committed to creating a culture wherein employees are encouraged to do their best work.

Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) say that organisations should implement a formal recognition programme if they want employee recognition to work. This programme should fit the culture of the organisation and should be reviewed and changed often. The programme should have a variety of ways to recognise people, such as awards for outstanding performance, recognition for years of service, rewards for reaching goals, and even the chance for employees to nominate their peers for recognition. Through implementing a clearly delineated and transparent recognition program organisations can ensure a committed and diligent workforce. Atrizka et al. (2020) posit that commitment and citizenship behaviour emanate from recognition programmes through talent management.

Part of the recognition programme should also be a system for keeping track of and reporting employee recognition. This would let organisations keep track of how well the programme is working and make changes as needed. This tracking system can also help organisations figure out where employees are not being recognised enough or where recognition is being used too much. This tracking system can

also be used to give employees feedback and show them how their performance compares to that of their peers (Sánchez-Monedero & Dencik, 2019). Overall, a tracking system offers a pragmatic solution for the organisation to monitor the efficacy of these recognition programs ensuring alignment with their intended objectives.

Organisations should also think about giving employees real and tangible rewards when they do a good job. This could be anything from gift cards and merchandise to more paid time off or even promotions. Offering tangible rewards can be a powerful way to motivate employees and shows how important it is to recognise them (Chen & Tremble, 2015). Also, organisations should make sure they put money into the tools and resources that their recognition programme needs. This includes the right tools, such as software for recognition, to make tracking, reporting, and recognition easier (Sánchez-Monedero & Dencik, 2019). Managers should also get training to make sure that they know how to use the programme properly and understand the importance of employee recognition. The authors underscore the necessity for organisations to integrate technology capable of supporting recognition programs, highlighting the importance of specialised software for tracking, reporting, and evaluating the efficacy of such initiatives.

An organisation should also ensure that its employees are aware of its recognition programme and know how to use it. Organisations can make sure their employees feel appreciated, engaged, and motivated to do their best work if they do what is necessary to make sure their recognition programme works. By taking the time to make sure their recognition programme works, organisations can show their employees that they care about them and are interested in what they do.

The results of a study concluded by the Society for Human Resource Management shows that recognising employees can help to both keep them engaged and working for the company (SHRM, 2015 p.6). Swider, Boswell, and Zimmerman (2011) posit that recognising employees increased job satisfaction and performance. The study mentioned that individuals felt more dedicated to their

organisation when they were praised for their work and had available alternatives. Moreover, when employees felt that their work was valued and appreciated, they were more likely to work hard and strive for excellence. This can have a positive effect on their performance. The study also found that employees who felt that their company cared about them were more likely to stay with the company, and were happier with their jobs in general. The study indicated retention is impacted in that when staff had lower levels of job embeddedness, it resulted in increased job search turnover.

As alluded to above by various authors, organisations with effective recognition programs often see a rise in employee engagement and satisfaction, subsequently leading to enhanced productivity. This is corroborated by a 2013 study conducted by the Harvard Business Review, which revealed that companies with recognition programs were 6.2% more productive than those without. The underlying rationale is that employees who feel acknowledged for their efforts are generally more motivated and engaged in their work. Recognition programs also serve as platforms for constructive feedback, encouraging continuous improvement and superior job performance. Therefore, it is imperative for organisations to ensure the efficacy of their recognition programs and to effectively communicate their existence to employees, thereby maximising the potential for a productive and engaged workforce.

A third strategy is performance management, which is also important if organisations want to retain their employees. Companies can make sure that staff are attaining their goals and contributing to the success of the company, by setting clear expectations and regularly checking on performance (Armstrong, 2011). Performance management also gives employees useful feedback on how they are doing, and helps them know where they can improve. Performance management is an important tool for recognising and rewarding top performers, which in turn can build a sense of loyalty and commitment. By giving feedback on an employee's performance and having them set their own goals, organisations can create a place where people are always learning and growing. However, Maley et al. (2021) discuss the most obvious, but ignored, issue with performance management,

which is the low level of employee acceptance of the procedure. Organisations need to get commitment from employees to support the initiative. They can also create an ethos of continuous professional learning and development through performance management. This maintains employees' interest in their work and keeps them motivated, making them feel loyal and committed to the company. Performance management can also ensure that employees are doing what the company requires them to do, while remaining on track to reach their goals. It can also help employees to see where they might be able to move up in the company, as posited by Ali et al. (2019), which can give them a sense of job security and career growth. Performance management can help create a culture of rewards and recognition, of high performance and employee growth, which can make employees more engaged and motivated.

Therefore, performance management is a strong instrument that can be utilised to improve the overall performance of an organisation, if delivered correctly and is accepted by employees, as mentioned by Maley et al. (2021). In alignment with the perspectives of other authors, Mone and London (2013) posit the significance of goal-setting and feedback in organisations. They suggest that these practices enable businesses to identify areas of potential improvement and expansion. This idea supports and extends the previous assertions about organisational growth strategies.

Performance management is a useful instrument not only for enhancing the performance of an organisation, but also for making it a good place to work (Armstrong, 2021). Earlier discussion highlight that timely feedback and goal-setting contribute to enhanced job satisfaction. Performance management can also help create a culture of responsibility by making sure employees are held accountable for their actions and rewarded for their successes. This can forge an environment where employees feel appreciated, which can lead to more engagement and loyalty on their part. Performance management serves as an instrumental tool in the realm of succession management. This approach allows for the systematic evaluation and development of employees, thereby facilitating the identification and preparation of potential leaders for future organisational roles

and building the leadership pipeline. Through performance management, organisations can strategically align individual capabilities with long-term succession planning, ensuring a seamless transition and continuity in leadership and critical positions.

Performance management is also helpful because it helps find ways for each employee to improve by receiving more training. By looking at how well individuals perform in their jobs, organisations can see where more training or resources are needed to help employees reach their performance goals, which can ensure that employees also have the capabilities and tools they need to do their jobs well (Schraeder & Holman, 2012). Moreover, performance management can identify and reward top performers, which creates a motivating environment for employees. By recognising and rewarding employees for their successes, companies can encourage them to do their best and help the company do well. Staff can also discover much about their own performance and skills through performance management. This helps them identify their strengths and areas of opportunity, while better understanding their role in the organisation. Performance management can also help to make sure that employees work from their strengths and improve their skills as much as they can. Organisations can determine what skills and resources employees need to reach their full potential by evaluating their performance. For example, if an employee is good at customer service, they might get more training or resources to help them improve their skills in that area.

Performance management can also uncover employees who are improving and are willing to learn and grow, while rewarding them for it. Rewarding employees for their successes can encourage them to reach for higher goals and create a culture of excellence within the organisation. As conferred by Schraeder and Holman (2012), performance management can give employees useful feedback about how they are doing and where they need to improve. This can help them understand their role in the organisation and help them grow in their careers. Overall, performance management can be a powerful instrument for organisations to improve employee performance, drive growth, and improve organisational success.

As discussed in-depth in the preceding paragraphs, the significance of employee benefits, employee recognition, and performance management has been thoroughly explored. These factors are not merely peripheral elements but are central aspects of retaining employees. Organisations should thus work to make sure that they are in place to ensure the sustainability of their business over a long duration of time. Singh (2019) posits that retaining employees is a key part of a business strategy and advocates for a balanced approach that integrates a robust mix of benefits, recognition of employees' contributions, and good management of performance. However, employee retention is a complicated issue that needs a whole-systems approach by organisations. This implies that organisations must not only focus on these individual aspects but also consider the broader organisational culture, leadership styles, and the overall work environment. A comprehensive strategy, which incorporates both the micro-level elements of employee satisfaction and the macro-level organisational dynamics, is vital to address the complexities of retaining employees effectively.

One approach is for organisations to create a good work environment that encourages engagement, loyalty, and, most importantly, motivation among employees. Motivation acts as a catalyst. To get the most out of their team members and ensure employee retention, managers and team leaders must consistently inspire them (Ngozi, 2022). Sawaneh and Kamara (2019) theorise that inspiration includes offering competitive wages, flexible work schedules, enough training and development opportunities, and clear roles and expectations for each job. In concordance with the suggestions made by the above authors, Armstrong (2021) reinforced the notion of the inclusion of reward programmes, awards for good work, and other ways to show appreciation.

Cloutier et al. (2015) have suggested that good working relations with seniors, opportunities for leadership roles, and a sense of belonging influence positive working conditions. This would also result in the retention of employees. Future leaders might arise from an environment that is encouraging and supportive, values leadership development, and offers growth opportunity (Ilham, 2017). However, an unfavorable or rigid culture could deter workers from aiming for

leadership positions and impede advancement in the leadership development pathway (Maamari & Saheb, 2018). In addition, Festing and Schäfer (2014) have discussed the importance of a clear understanding of the various generations in the workplace to help organisations improve upon their retention strategies. Organisations are thus responsible for ensuring that performance management is consistent and effective, by giving regular performance feedback and reviews, setting clear and measurable goals for performance, and creating an environment that encourages and rewards excellent performance. A comprehensive approach to keeping employees has the best chance of success.

Shifting the focus to another critical concept in any business is employee engagement, because it affects how well employees do their jobs and how well the business does overall. Antony (2018) provided an analysis of engagement and its drivers, and postulated that it is defined as employees feeling emotionally connected to their work, which makes them more likely to do their jobs well and invest in the company's goals. This illustrates a force that encourages staff to reach greater levels of performance. Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) explored the term "work engagement", which refers to a favourable, contented state that is connected to work and is typified by vigour, devotion, and absorption. Green et al. (2017) argued that when employees fulfil their expected needs, they feel a happy emotional state that is energetic, and this energy is demonstrated in their behaviours at work. The authors further suggest that, according to a different line of research, engagement is a unique and unrelated concept that is not solely the result of removing the root causes of burnout, which contrasts with the idea that involvement arises from the reduction of burnout. Other research has demonstrated that persistent engagement might potentially cause burnout. In the ensuing discussion, three important parts of employee engagement are addressed: job satisfaction, communication, and building a team, and how these three aspects of engagement can be used to create a positive work culture that does not result in burnout.

The first aspect of employee engagement is job satisfaction and is a big indicator of how engaged an employee is. Beaudry and Crossley (2019) suggested that a job that makes one happy can make one more motivated and increase productivity. It is thus essential for any organisation to ensure that their employees are happy and satisfied in their roles. To do this, employers should give people work that they care about, a good place to work, praise for hard work, and chances to grow. In addition, employers should also make the workplace feel like a community and make sure their employees' voices are heard. This can be done by holding regular feedback sessions and asking employees for their ideas and opinions. Employees are generally more likely to be engaged and productive if they feel valued, respected, and supported by their employers.

If creating a sense of community at work is a way to make people happier there, employers should craft a culture that encourages employees to communicate with each other and build relationships. This can be facilitated via team-building activities, an aspect discussed more extensively later, celebrating successes, and social events. These events can help employees feel part of a team, which can boost their job satisfaction (Alegre, Mas-Machuca and Berbegal-Mirabent (2016). In other words, a productive and engaged workforce needs people to be happy with their jobs.

Aside from community, another aspect of job satisfaction is for employers to create an environment where workers feel that they have the power to make decisions and act on their own. This kind of culture makes it possible for employees to feel that what they do matters, which can make them happier at work (Saks, 2006). This is further supported by Demircioglu (2021). Employers should also look for ways to thank workers for their hard work and loyalty. This can be done with the help of rewards, bonuses, and other kinds of incentives as this will encourage employees to take the initiative make independent decisions advancing a sense of autonomy.

Finding a balance between work and leisure is also something employers should strive for, so that employees can take time off and take care of themselves (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998). Giving employees time off for vacations, illness, or other

reasons can help them feel less stressed. Flexibility in work arrangements is supported by Aziz-Ur-Rehman and Siddiqui, D. A. (2019), who stated that it significantly correlated with work-life balance. Moreover, employers should make sure that their workers feel safe and secure at work. This may mean giving employees the right training, tools such as the latest software and technology, and support so they feel that they can do their jobs optimally, which also encourages collaboration and new ideas. When employers focus on creating a space where employees feel valued, safe, and in control, job satisfaction can increase. This can make workers more interested and productive, which can lead to a more successful business in the long run. Employers should also try to make a place where workers can take breaks to take care of themselves, and keep a healthy balance between work and life (Van Dyne & LePine, 1998).

For employees to be happy and satisfied at work, it is also important to provide opportunities to move up in their careers. Singh and Jain (2013) concur that employers should make sure that their workers have the tools and help that they need to do their jobs well through emphasis on creating a supportive and empowering environment for their workers, job satisfaction can increase, enabling a more productive and successful business.

However, a good work culture, as suggested by Sahni (2019), helps employers in more ways than just making workers happier with their jobs. It can be good for the culture and morale of the company as a whole, and lead to better customer service and satisfaction, as posited by Kurdi et al. (2020). When employees feel valued, they are more likely to work harder, and with commitment to the aims of the company. Employers should also try to create a trusting and respectful environment where employees feel free to share their thoughts and concerns. A last point regarding work satisfaction is that, regardless of age, gender, race, or sexual orientation, employers should try to provide a space where all staff feel welcome and respected. Employee engagement tactics can thus provide a pleasant and rewarding work environment where employees thrive, while leadership coaching can assist in the development of leaders who can inspire and empower their teams. These strategies work together to improve overall company

success, employee retention, and productivity (Turner, 2019). Lee et al. (2018), suggest that effective leadership styles are associated with higher levels of employee engagement and satisfaction. In addition to offering advice on how to establish a supportive and inspiring work atmosphere that encourages employee engagement and happiness, coaching may assist leaders in understanding how their leadership styles affect the people on their teams.

A second aspect of employee engagement, is being able to talk to each other well. Communication between employers and employees helps to build trust and makes people feel like they belong. Antony (2018) underlined the importance of communicating and mediating with employees for their affective involvement and engagement. Communication should be open and honest, and it should include both “what you say and how you act”. Employers should also be aware of the different ways in which their employees communicate, and be clear about what they expect in this regard. Employers should use the notion of effective communication, not only to build trust and a sense of belonging, but also to make sure employees are interested in their work and motivated to finish tasks (Bovee & Thill, 2010). For example, employees should get feedback regularly and should feel safe to be able to share what they think and feel. Employers should also let their workers know about any changes to the workplace or rules of the company. This will help to create a sense of openness, which will minimize confusion and help employees to stay focussed.

The leadership should also use a variety of ways to talk to their employees, such as face-to-face meetings, emails, text messages, and video calls, to make sure their messages get through on time. Leaders can thus enhance communication and establish a common language that promotes efficient collaboration and teamwork, by including language or references that appeal to various age groups. More explicit instructions, greater engagement, and enhanced productivity may result from this. For instance, Myers and Sadaghiani (2010) highlight the significance of understanding millennials from a communication viewpoint. All of these aspects of effective communication will make the workplace both productive and enjoyable for the people who work there.

Collaboration between coworkers also depends on how well they can talk to each other. Employers should encourage workers to help each other, share ideas, and work together. This can be done by organising team-building activities and giving employees time to talk freely to each other (DeJong & Berg, 2010). Employers should also make the workplace a place where employees feel comfortable talking about their problems in a polite way. Therefore, employers should give their workers the tools and training that they need to improve their communication skills, to be better able to work together, share ideas, and solve problems. In support of this, Singh (2016) cited that factors such as good communication and teamwork will make the workplace more productive with an engaged workforce.

Mayo (2020) concurs that teamwork is important for good performance at work. It reduces conflict because employees will be better able to deal with problems in a respectful and helpful way. In fact, collaborative environments have been linked to higher job satisfaction and morale. This is because employees are able to talk to each other more easily and build relationships with one another. The establishment of a workplace that supports interpersonal interactions and teamwork not only advances a positive work culture but also significantly contributes to the efficacy and productivity of the organisation

Studies that show how collaboration affects job satisfaction and motivation also emphasise the importance of encouraging it in the workplace. The research underscores the positive impact that cooperative working relationships can have on employees job satisfactions and motivation. Collaboration can help to break down the hierarchical structure of an organisation, making power and responsibility more evenly distributed, and giving employees a greater sense of psychological safety (Whelan-Berry & Storck, 2010). Because of this, employees are more likely to feel that they can express what they think and feel, which can lead to greater job satisfaction and more motivation. Additionally, when employees can work together well, they are more likely to come up with new solutions to problems. Chowdhury and Murzi (2019) propose that teamwork and collaboration is a critical skill due to the complexity of problem solving in the engineering sector. This can lead to better performance and greater productivity and efficiency, and of course, make people

happier at work and boost their morale.

Studies have also shown that when people collaborate, they talk to and trust each other more. This improved communication is good for both employers and employees, because it makes the workplace more cohesive, giving the team a stronger sense of unity. Better communication between employees benefits employers because it can lead to more efficient work processes, a better ability to solve problems, and better customer service. In sum, collaboration has a wide range of positive effects on job satisfaction, knowledge sharing, and motivation, which is beneficial for both employers and employees (Usmanova et al., 2021; Ismail et al., 2020).

The third important part of employee engagement is team building, which assists employers to make their employees feel part of a team and encourages them to collaborate. Team-building activities can include trips, lunches, and even activities that help solve problems (Bock, 2017). In addition, through team meetings and social events, employers also give their employees chances to get to know each other. Activities that bring people together as a team have been shown to increase employee engagement and morale. Studies like those by Salas-Vallina et al. (2021) and Clifton and Harter (2021) have shown that team-building activities help coworkers feel more trust and friendship, which improves both individual and team performance. Team-building activities can also help people feel more comfortable at work and get to know their coworkers better. These activities can also make employees happier and better at their jobs, while helping with retention in the company. The authors further posit that staff members are more prone to be stimulated and productive if they feel that they belong to a team. Team-building activities can also give people a sense of purpose and identity at work, which can make them more committed and loyal to the company.

Dyer et al. (2017) found that team-building activities have positive impacts on employee engagement and morale leading to greater job satisfaction and performance. They showed that team-building activities help to improve people's ability to work together, communicate, and solve problems. This can lead to more job satisfaction and better performance.

In addition to making people better at working together, communicating, and solving problems, team-building activities can change the way a team works, or the dynamics. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Chanana and Sangeeta (2021) cited the importance of team building and employee engagement as critical. Team dynamics are how team members interact and work together and can have a major impact on how well the team does as a whole. Teams can be more productive and effective if they work well together, which can lead to better overall performance. Team-building activities can also help break down silos and craft a culture where individuals are eager to work together and share ideas. With creativity and innovation, teams can come up with new ways to solve problems, which can help them do a better job. Therefore, team-building activities can improve, not only collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills, but also the team strategy, creativity, and ability to come up with innovative concepts (Bock, 2017). This can enhance job satisfaction, efficiency, and performance.

Through teambuilding there is an observable increase in employee engagement. Engagement of employees has been the subject of considerable research, and the results show that it is good for an organisation's overall performance. Hussein et al. (2017) did a study that showed that when employees are engaged, they work harder and are happier in their jobs. This greater level of satisfaction has been linked to higher customer satisfaction and profitability. It has also been found that organisations that put a high priority on employee engagement have lower employee turnover and more employee loyalty. Talebzadeh and Karatepe (2020) showed that when employees are engaged, they are more likely to be innovative, derive new ideas, take on new tasks, and help their coworkers. This makes for a very productive and highly motivated workforce. Mancuso (2018) suggests that organisations can create a synergistic approach to producing strong leaders and high performing teams, by integrating leadership coaching into team building initiatives.

Team-building activities can be a good way to get employees more involved in their work. Team-building activities can help coworkers feel more united and trust each other, which can make it easier for them to work together. These activities can also

help employees get to know each other better, which can lead to better communication and a sense of belonging, as suggested by Kaur and Sharma (2022). This, in turn, can improve employees' understanding of each other's strengths and weaknesses, and make them feel more cohesive. In conclusion, team-building activities can help create a place where people can work together, while being creative and interested.

Employees are the most important part of any business. They are the ones who bring their skills, knowledge, and experience to work, which makes an organisation do well. So, it is essential for companies to ensure that their staff works in a positive and productive environment. An employee value proposition (EVP) is a way to achieve this. An employee value proposition is a set of benefits and services that set a company apart from its competitors, while helping it attract and keep the best employees. As discussed in Brown (2015), the main parts of an EVP that affect employee loyalty and happiness, are quality of work, autonomy, career development, and salary and benefits, as outlined below.

Part of what makes an employee valuable is how well they do their job. Organisations should try to make the workplace a place where employees can be productive and do their best work (Brown, 2015). This can be done in several ways, such as by giving employees the right tools and resources, letting them choose how they work, encouraging collaboration and communication, and giving them chances to learn and grow. Quality of work is also closely linked to job satisfaction, since employees are most likely to stay with a company if they can do meaningful work that they enjoy. Research has shown that the quality of an employee's work is strongly linked to how happy they are at work, and how much they care about their employer as a whole. Studies have shown that employees are most likely to stay with an organisation for a longer time if they are given the chance to do meaningful work that they find personally rewarding (Albrecht et al., 2021). Also, giving employees the right tools and resources, letting them work in different ways, and giving them training and development opportunities can all help improve the quality of the work that they do. By making these kinds of investments, companies can make sure that their workers can produce their best work and are happier at

work. Creating a workplace that encourages collaboration and communication can help people work more effectively and efficiently, which can lead to better work. To sum up, a key part of an employee's value is the quality of their work, so organisations should take this seriously.

In addition to giving their employees the right tools, flexible schedules, and opportunities to learn and grow, organisations should also try to give their employees a sense of independence in their work. Research has shown that when employees are given freedom at work, they are more likely to take responsibility for their tasks and do better work than when they are not given this freedom. Giving employees freedom can also improve their mental health because it gives them a sense of autonomy in their work, while making them feel that they have accomplished something. Employees who have more freedom may result in them holding a longer tenure with a company because they tend to be happier with their job roles and feel loyal to their leader (Tansley, 2015). Because of this, it is important for companies to realise the importance of giving employees freedom as it affects their quality of the work.

The concept of autonomy in the workplace can also be extended to other areas of work, such as decision-making. Providing employees with the choice to make decisions at the workplace can lead to improved role performance and job role satisfaction (Ismail, 2017). One result of employees having the freedom to make decisions at work is that they may be more likely to take the initiative and think of new ways to solve problems. This can lead to better solutions that work more smoothly and faster, as well as more work being done overall. Furthermore, providing employees with the autonomy to make decisions can also improve their feelings of job security, as it gives them a greater sense of control over their job. Giving employees the power to make their own decisions can not only improve the quality of their work, but it can also make them more interested in their jobs and improve relationships between coworkers and management. Therefore, it is clear that autonomy in the workplace is not only beneficial to the quality of work produced but also to the psychological wellbeing of employees and the organisation itself.

Autonomy in the workplace can also be extended to other areas of work, such as decision-making. Autonomy in decision-making has been found to have a direct positive effect on employee engagement. Ismail et al. (2019) suggest that giving employees the freedom to make decisions at work can lead to more job satisfaction, better job performance, and more job interest., Giving people the freedom to make their own decisions can also make them better at solving problems because they are more likely to take the initiative and think innovatively. Nikolova and Cnossen (2020) proposed that meaningful work reduces absenteeism. Moreover, competence and autonomy have a strong association with meaningfulness at work.

Autonomy at work has benefits that go beyond the quality of the work. Enabling people to make decisions on their own can improve relationships between coworkers and management, while making people happier at work. Research has shown that giving employees more freedom at work can also improve their mental health because it makes them feel more independent, competent, and connected. Niebuhr et al. (2022) pointed out that the experience of autonomy is associated with health and job satisfaction. So, it is clear that giving employees some freedom at work is good for both them and the organisation. Several studies have shown that, how autonomy is good for psychological health. For example, Brown et al. (2015) found that employees who said they had more freedom at work were also happier with their lives. In a similar vein, Gagné et al. (2017) found a positive link between autonomy at work and psychological wellbeing, and a positive relationship between job satisfaction and the latter., It was found that employees were also most happy with their jobs and psychologically healthy when they had both freedom and supportive supervision. These results make a strong case for how important it is to have freedom at work. By letting employees make their own decisions, organisations can give them a sense of independence and belonging, which makes them happier at work and is better for their mental health.

Career development is another key component of an effective EVP. Organisations should strive to offer opportunities for growth and development for their employees, such as mentorship programmes, educational opportunities, and career

advancement programmes. A strong career development programme can provide employees with the opportunity to improve their skillset and gain new skills and knowledge, which can bring improved job satisfaction and loyalty to the organisation. In addition to these tangible benefits, career development programmes can also help to increase employee engagement and motivation. Career development can provide them with a sense of purpose, and provide opportunities to build a career that is meaningful to them. A study by Desjardins (2018) found that employees who participated in career development programmes reported higher job satisfaction and commitment to the organisation compared to those that did not. Furthermore, research suggests that career development programmes can improve job performance, as employees are more likely to stay in their current position and to take on challenging tasks. Career development programmes can foster an employee-centric culture, which can lead to increased trust and collaboration among employees.

Studies have indicated that career development programmes can also lead to improved employee retention. A study by Tabone (2020) found that employees who participated in career development programmes reported increased degrees of job satisfaction, and were significantly less likely to leave their organisation than those who did not. This suggests that these programmes play a pivotal role in retaining valuable employees. In addition, research indicates that career development can help to foster increased morale among employees, leading to improved job performance and satisfaction. As alluded to earlier, the study published in the *Journal of Applied Psychology* in 2011 observed that individuals who took part in career development programmes reported greater job satisfaction, commitment to their organisation, and improved performance. Therefore, these programmes can have a positive impact on employee engagement and job performance.

Further research (Soares & Mosquera, 2019) has explored the impact of career development programmes on employee engagement. Specifically, studies have suggested that they can lead to greater levels of employee engagement, particularly when they are tailored to the needs of the employee. Employees who

are given the opportunity to partake in career development activities such as job shadowing, mentoring, and skill-building workshops, are more likely to feel more connected to their organisation and more invested in their job. Furthermore, research has found that these programmes can have a positive influence on job satisfaction, as employees are more likely to feel more fulfilled and valued in their roles. Moreover, they can lead to increased engagement with the organisation as a whole, with employees feeling more connected to its mission and vision, as well as feeling more empowered to contribute to it. Ultimately, this suggests that career development programmes can be an effective instrument for improving employee engagement and retention (Nikolova et al., 2019).

Research has also suggested that career development programmes can have a direct impact on employee performance. For example, employees who participate in career development activities may be more focused and motivated to perform well in their role, as they are more likely to feel that their job is important and valued. Additionally, these programmes can lead to employees developing a greater comprehension of their job responsibilities, and can provide them with the knowledge and skills that they need to be successful in their role (Baruch & Holtom, 2008). Research has also suggested that career development programmes can lead to better communication skills between employees and managers, as the former can better comprehend what is expected of them in their role, and, accordingly, can more effectively communicate their needs to their managers. Ultimately, this suggests that career development programmes can be an effective instrument for improving employee performance and productivity.

The EVP is an important part of any organisation's success. It is essential for organisations to create an EVP that is attractive to potential employees and that helps to retain existing ones (Boyd, 2017). The key components of an EVP include quality of work, career development, salary and benefits, work-life balance, job security, and employee recognition. When these components are effectively implemented, it can lead to increased employee satisfaction and loyalty. Research has shown that a strong EVP is correlated with employee performance. Organisations with an effective EVP tend to have lower attrition rates, higher levels

of employee engagement, and improved productivity. Additionally, organisations with an EVP that focuses on career development are more likely to have employees who are committed to the organisation. This is because employees are more likely to invest in their career when they know that the organisation is interested in their professional growth and development. Furthermore, organisations with a strong EVP are more likely to attract and retain highly qualified employees (Clark, 2017). This is because potential employees are more likely to be attracted to an organisation that offers competitive salaries, benefits, and career development opportunities. By creating an EVP that is attractive to potential employees, organisations can increase their chances of recruiting and retaining a highly qualified and motivated workforce. Another important aspect of an EVP is a competitive salary and benefits package. Organisations should try to offer salaries and benefits that are on par with those of other companies in the same industry. An above-market salary and benefits package can help a company find and keep the best employees, as well as make them happier and more loyal to it. Research has shown that for a company to stay competitive in its industry, it needs to offer a competitive salary and benefits package (Boyd, 2017). This will enable companies to attract and retain the best employees, while reducing the number of people who leave their jobs. Giving employees a competitive salary and benefits package can also make them feel that their employer cares about and supports them, which can boost their productivity and morale. Studies have also shown that giving employees a competitive salary and benefits package can make them more loyal, happy, and committed to the business. Furthermore, offering a competitive salary and benefits package can help cut down on the costs of recruitment, as well as of training and development of new employees, and reduce the period it takes to fill vacant positions (Brown, 2020; Gomez-Mejia, Balkin & Cardy, 2001; Johnson & Tregaskis, 2008). Lastly, a competitive salary and benefits package can help an organisation's reputation with prospective customers, which can generate more business and more revenue, leading to greater financial sustainability.

Overall, the body of research suggests that organisations can stay competitive in their industries by offering a multifaceted approach encompassing employee benefits, recognition, performance management, team-building, employee value

propositions, effective communication, all supporting the leadership pipeline is crucial for employee retention. This can help a company find and keep the best employees, cut down on employee turnover, and boost morale, productivity, job satisfaction, and commitment. It can also save money for the organisation and improve its public image and reputation. When put together, all these aspects can help businesses stay competitive in their fields.

2.3.4 An examination of leadership styles

It is claimed that leaders need a leadership style which will enable them to build a picture of the future of the organisation, drive the agenda, and sell the vision to the employees in a meaningful way that will ensure buy-in from them (Ehigie, Okang, & Ibode, 2011; Jones, 2020). Motivating employees to move in a particular direction and, in particular, leading multigenerational organisations requires leaders to use different leadership styles. Traditionally, as discussed in Elkhwesky et al. (2022) and Abasilim et al. (2019), leadership styles are classified as autocratic, participative/democratic, laissez-faire, transactional, transformational, and servant leadership. Each leadership style is further examined.

Authoritarian leadership hinges on positional control to realise influence, which works as command-and-control influence. The importance of this leadership style is to produce a different professional relationship between leaders and group members. They are dominant leaders and engage in one-way and downward communication with controlling discussions. Authoritarian leaders generate a culture of fear and tend to be unapproachable. They provide clear expectations of what, how, and when something is supposed to be done. This style is focused on both the commands given by the leader and control of the followers. Authoritarian leadership provides a clear distinction between the leader and the members. Under this leadership style, the leaders are independent and make decisions with little or no input from the followers. Decisions made under authoritarian leadership tend to lack creativity (Thompson et al., 2020).

In contrast, democratic leaders lead by agreement, meaning that they share decision-making capabilities with all members of the group by promoting the

group's interest. Sacavém et al. (2019) indicate that democratic leadership is one of the most effective leadership styles, creating higher levels of productivity and morale, and inviting better contributions from group members. The effects of democratic leadership can lead to better ideas and creative problem solving from participants.

Laissez-faire leaders assign all the responsibility and accountability to make decisions to group members. As such, these types of leaders offer group members full autonomy and freedom to make decisions concerning completing their tasks, whilst also providing the necessary support and guidance when requested. Laissez-faire leadership is only effective when group members are extremely skilled and experienced, take pride in their work, and have the ambition to do it successfully on their own. Amanchukwu et al. (2015) discuss that this type of leadership can be the best or the worst, depending on the context of the organisation. Followers of laissez-faire leaders are usually experts, trustworthy, and educated for this style to work.

Transactional leaders provide strategic leadership that is important for an organisation's development. A transactional leadership philosophy is based on the effects of emotions on team productivity and innovation. A survey conducted on the connection between transactional leadership and how actions can be initiated by team emotions, exposed that there is a connection between emotions, labour behaviour, and transactional leadership that influences the team. Transactional leaders are task-oriented and therefore set emotions aside to foster an environment of team innovativeness, as alluded to by Amanchukwu et al. (2015).

Transformational leaders' primary focus is to change or transform group members to become better. Their group members' perceptions do not limit them; instead, they inspire and motivate them to achieve results through purpose. Transformational leaders offer a compelling vision for followers to aspire to achieve and communicate the idea succinctly. Some of the key traits of transformational leaders are having high energy levels and being willing to explore unconventional strategies to stimulate their followers' thinking.

Servant leadership, as stated in Amanchukwu et al. (2015), is based on the philosophy that leadership is only effective when it is focused on serving the needs of others. Servant leaders do not utilise positional power to deliver results, but establish co-dependence structures amongst group members that leverage the team's skills, experience, and expertise to deliver the desired outcomes. Research reveals that servant leadership is at the apex of effective leadership, and has a positive all-round impact on morale, productivity, innovation, job satisfaction, and organisational sustainability. The effect of servant leadership is the creation of a harmonious corporate culture where employees feel valued and make meaningful contributions towards the organisation's overall performance. Lumpkin and Achen (2018) also affirm that servant leadership is the predominant leadership style. Hoch, Bommer, Dulebohn, and Wu, et al. (2016) submitted that servant leadership inculcates more variations than other styles. However, Donia et al. (2016) called for greater empirical research on this style.

The leadership styles of Lewin are participative (democratic), authoritarian (autocratic), and delegative (laissez-faire), as discussed by Mensah & Qi, (2016). Democratic leadership is the most effective leadership style because it allows the participation of the group members in the selection of leaders and the leadership strategies that should be used. The people in a democratic group perform less effectively than the members of an authoritarian one, but the contribution of the former is of higher quality. Democratic leaders allow the group members to contribute, but the main decision remains with the leaders (Thompson et al., 2020). Allowing members to contribute allows them to grow from the experience. The challenge for a participative leader is the need to ensure that he or she is an enabler in allowing the employees to make the decisions, and is not controlling them (Wolor et al., 2021). Delegative or laissez-faire leadership is where the leader shares some of their responsibilities with the team members. Lewis found that employees under this form of leadership were less productive than under the other two leadership styles. The team members under the delegative leadership style make more demands, cannot work independently, and need to be more cooperative. Delegative leaders leave the decision-making process to the team members, and offer little or no guidance to them. The main problem with this

leadership style is that it leads to less defined roles, meaning that the team members may be confused about the tasks they are supposed to perform within a given organisation (Thompson et al., 2020).

Hershey and Blanchard (1969) developed the situational leadership model, which focuses on the willingness and ability of individual employees. The model suggests that organisations should adopt leadership styles that adapt to the unique circumstances of every workplace. The model describes four groups of followers: unable and unwilling (D1), unable and willing (D2), able and unwilling (D3), and able and willing (D4). The D1 followers do not have the proper skills that will enable them to succeed; they are not motivated enough, and they lack confidence in their skills. The D2 followers cannot complete tasks because they lack the necessary skills and experience. However, they are willing to attempt the task. The D3 followers have the necessary skills to perform the tasks but are unwilling to attempt them. The D4 followers have the experience and skills required to perform the tasks, and are willing to use their skills for the benefit of the organisation (Thompson et al., 2020).

in the post-pandemic era, the effective leadership styles and characteristics are the flexible fellow, the empathetic, open communication, and transparent leadership styles, and the hybrid manager, as alluded to in Thompson et al. (2020). Firstly, the flexible fellow will 'go with the flow and win the show', meaning that they will look for a strategy that will suit the current circumstance in the organisation. Modern times have brought about unique challenges that require flexibility in dealing with them. Secondly, the empathetic leadership style involves listening to the team's views and problems, and then including them in the leadership process. Notably, many people are still grieving due to the losses experienced during the pandemic; hence, a leader needs to identify such challenges and empathise with the team members effectively. The third style, open communication leadership, involves having clear and objective communication with the team members, and ensuring that their input is included in the business processes of the organisation. The post-pandemic era has opened avenues that expose people to information that enables them to contribute positively to an organisation. Leaders should be willing

to take advantage of such ideas for the organisation's benefit. Fourthly, the hybrid manager leadership style involves one boss overseeing many teams, where they must meet the needs of all teams. It is essential to understand that different teams have different needs, and therefore management must be flexible enough to deal with the challenges in the best way possible. Lastly, a transparent leadership style involves sharing all the information that pertains to a team and ensuring that the leader is open and honest (Thompson et al., 2020).

In the current context, the importance of leadership styles and the way a leader's skills are viewed has changed (Johansen, 2012). In a VUCA context, these styles need to be viewed differently. A combination of leadership styles, and therefore a situational leadership style, is what could be required in the current context. It has been suggested that companies should be required to adapt quickly and implement relevant leadership styles to manage the millennial generation. Cited in Wolor et al. (2021), it was suggested that a leader is required to achieve the company's vision, and to direct, motivate, and have the ability to empower the team below. Thus, they would need to adapt a leadership style to the range of generations in the workforce.

Goleman and Cherniss (2000) stated that when a change requires a new vision or new direction, the visionary leadership style has a positive effect on the organisational climate, as it provides long-term direction and vision for Gen-Y employees. This generation is not independent and needs structure and guidance with some autonomy and flexibility, as stated in Bennett et al. (2012). However, Goleman et al. (2001) suggested that if one were to overuse the visionary leadership style with employees who were as experienced as their leader, this style would not work. As Generation Xers are more experienced and prefer autonomous work, according to the literature in Goleman et al. (2001), they may require a coaching leadership style. This style looks at a long-range planning and goal setting view. Goleman et al. (2001) went on to state that Gen-Xers and Gen-Ys appreciate the commanding leadership style, as it sets direction,

requires immediate obedience from subordinates, and is suitable for employees who need clear direction.

The leadership of an organisation needs to manage the differences between these generations and be able to adapt their styles of leadership to their varying needs, as this will increase productivity and efficiencies as well as delivering on job satisfaction, resulting in engagement and retention. Other factors, such as teamwork and corporate communication, can account for the impact of leadership style on job performance (Yudiawan et al., 2017; Mahdinezhad et al., 2017). Yudiawan et al. (2017) discovered that organisational formalisation, internal contentment, and the support of competent individuals were the ways in which leadership affected work performance. According to Mahdinezhad et al. (2017), there may be a correlation between work performance and leadership styles, meaning that varying leadership styles may impact performance.

An adaptation in leadership styles during times of change has already been explored in the literature review above. Leadership styles may need to change with the generation one is leading or dealing with. As alluded to in the above subheading, Schroth (2019) emphasised that leading a multigenerational team is a challenging task, which requires leaders to adopt an effective leadership style and acquire new skills to lead the team successfully.

2.3.5 New world skills required for leaders

New skills need to be developed to succeed in this VUCA world. Now more than ever, leaders need to have good emotional, mental, and interpersonal preparedness for uncertainty and risk. Organisations are faced with dynamic changes, and executives need to cope with the impact of this new scenario in their daily lives. Often, executive leaders need a safe space to have growing and learning conversations. They need a sounding board where they will not look incompetent, but can explore new uncharted waters without the fear of being embarrassed. They need to bring potential energy into the workplace and support

employees' kinetic energy.

Having entered the 4IR with artificial intelligence (AI) and the internet of things (IoT), and with five generations working together for the first time, executive coaching for leaders needs to facilitate a new way of thinking. Work is more automated, and a need to humanise the role is critical. "We need emotionally intelligent leaders who can model and champion cooperative working. They will coach rather than command; they will be motivated by empathy, not ego. A more people kind of leadership is required in the digital revolution" (Artley, 2018). Executive coaching needs to consider the intersection of the technological, biological, and physical worlds. Lappalainen (2015, p. 12) stated, "It is evident that traditional intelligence does not predict leader success, nor high leadership, competition, or focused achievement motives. In contrast, a manager's sociability, assertion, emotional availability, and inspiration explain the variance in subordinate perceptions, all of them qualities manifested and implemented as emotive communication in inter-human interaction."

It is no longer 'one-size-fits-all' situation. While VUCA is a fitting way of viewing the world, Johansen (2012) emphasises the importance of viewing overall leadership skills differently. A profoundly new set of leadership skills will be necessary to cultivate millennial leadership, while being mindful of all generations of leaders. A mindful leader who responds strategically to the situation is required. Intrinsically, executive leaders will need to be aware of themselves, as well as of their strengths, opportunities, and challenges that could be brought to bear in different contextual shifts.

Moreover, the executive leadership team must cultivate a robust pipeline of future leaders to remain competitive, and these leaders need to be coached on cultivating millennial leaders as future leaders. Hargrove (2015) posited that the qualities of good communication and economic management experiences are the most important leadership skills. The executive leadership team will need to display these attributes to the younger generation in a manner that they will accept. Hagen

(2010) focused on a positive relationship between managerial coaching and project management that results in projects meeting deadlines within budgetary constraints. Coaching improves job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and citizenship. It was also suggested that those employees who have a coach are less likely to leave an organisation.

Leadership thus has a huge responsibility in the current VUCA world and moving into the 4IR. As posited by Loures et al. (2018), there is much complexity and speed that comes from digitisation, and a lack of understanding of the impacts of actions taken in various regions or countries. Cultivating millennial leadership and responding to the environment will mean developing new leadership skills. Change is now the only constant. The fast-paced development of AI and the digital age require a new look at how coaching will cultivate millennial leadership, as well as the need to harness executive leaders' capabilities to navigate the 4IR and their ability to cultivate millennial leaders. Leaders are required to have learning agility and be adaptable. Tutar and Güler (2022) posit that a revised view of leadership that differs from conventional organisational structures and management thinking is necessary to inculcate all these talents. Al-Habsi et al. (2022) suggest that the future pipeline of leadership will be required to cultivate conceptual and strategic thinking, exhibit high intellectual integrity, and be open to new ideas in order to influence and inspire their workforce. Joiner (2006) stated that leaders need to work and manage in uncertain times, for instance, navigating the pandemic and economic crisis, while being more resilient, agile, and adaptable through being able to make effective decisions more quickly in an uncertain landscape. That executive coaching and a coaching model can assist them in developing new leadership skills and provide an avenue to bridge the generational workforce is in question.

Executive leaders now need to be more self-aware, understand that they do not have all the answers, and trust their decision-making. Joiner says that executive leaders need to grow their capacity as human beings and leaders, while ensuring

they stay energised and impart these skills to others. Leaders will require an improved understanding of emotional intelligence (EI) to demonstrate leadership traits. Bradbury (2020) posits that EI was rated in the top ten skills required in the workplace. During the pandemic, two of the top ten skills were regarded as leadership and social influence, according to Bradbury (2020). This encompasses EI attributes. Some of the other top skills that also encompassed EI were reasoning, problem solving, and ideation.

This research aims to add to the existing body of literature by revealing whether current executive leaders are indeed harnessing new leadership skills to embrace and cultivate the new millennial workforce. As far back as 1997, Russels and Yao (1997), cited by Farr and Brazil (2009), posited that any practising engineer would affirm that an engineer was employed for technical ability, dismissed for poor person skills, and advanced for leadership and management skills. Farr and Brazil (2009) further argued that in addition, critical thinking is an essential leadership skill, besides good people skills and leadership skills, for advancing in one's career.

Lappalainen (2015) explored workplace trends in engineering industries and discussed the complexity in social conditions, disengagement, and a work environment that is more chaotic and emotionally exhausting, resulting in threat, uncertainty, and emotional issues. The complicated actual circumstances have exposed engineering people to societal and social forces that need modern leaders to accept responsibilities that are divergent from those of their modern predecessors.

2.4 Examining a multigenerational workforce

A generation, as defined in Johnson and Johnson (2010), is a set of people born and living who have a common knowledge base and experiences that impact their thought processes, attitudes, value systems, behaviours, and belief systems. The engineering sector currently has five generations working together. Due to a lack of a skills set and skills transfer from older generations, there is a gap in

professional skills in the younger generation, and the sector has had to bring in professionally registered engineers from the older generation to transfer knowledge to the younger ones. Dwyer and Azevedo (2016) postulated that one would need to understand the difference between the generations in order to effectively motivate and manage them. The author further suggested this would benefit the organisation in the fulfilment of its goals.

Zemke et al. (2000) presented the timeline to indicate the generations:

- Veteran (Silent) Generation: 1928 – 1946 (76 years old – 94 years old)
- Baby Boomers: 1946 – 1960 (62 years old – 76 years old)
- X Generation: 1960 – 1980 (42 years old – 62 years old)
- Y Generation (Millennials): 1980 – 1995 (27 years old – 41 years old)
- Alpha Generation (Gen-Z): 1995 – 2010 (12 years old – 27 years old)

The authors also considered that perspectives can vary according to race, gender, and education. One would need to be aware that these are all broad outlines of the generations, and that a person on the cusp of one generation to the next could have characteristics of the prior generation. Therefore, several generalisations and slightly varying dates appear in the literature. For this research, the researcher has adopted the generational timeline outlined above.

The current leadership team at NCE consists largely of millennials, also known as Gen-Y. The term millennial was first termed by Stauss and Howe (2000), who pointed out that the members of this generation were confident individuals, team-oriented, and high achievers; however, they were also sheltered. Their high maintenance and high risk were offset by their high output. Martin and Tulgan (2006) suggested that the millennial generation wanted instant gratification of making an impact through being given meaningful work. Marston (2007) cited key differences in terms of the work perspectives of the different generations. The author suggested that the silent generation/traditionalists demonstrated company loyalty. The baby boomers lived to work, whereas the Gen-Xers worked to live and

believed that work should not define their lives. The millennials (Gen-Y) desired meaningful work and were devoted to their own careers and not to the company they worked for.

Bencsik et al. (2016) postulated that knowledge sharing, which is a critical component at NCE, will vary according to the generational characteristics, as shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2: Generational characteristics of knowledge sharing

Veteran	Baby Boomers	Gen X	Millennials	Gen-Z
Unknown	Willing	Mutual co-operation	Self-interest or forced	Virtual, easily, no stake, publicly

Source: Bencsik et al. (2016)

Bencsik et al. (2016) went on to organise in a table the challenges seen according to the behavioural characteristics of these generations. There was no mention of the characteristics of the veteran generation.

Table 2.3: Behavioural characteristics challenges of generational age groups

	Baby-Boomers	Gen X	Gen Y	Gen Z
Viewpoint	Communicative, unified thinking	Thinks about self and medium term	Egotistical, thinking short term	Not loyal to stay at the company, be comfortable with what you have and live for the now
Relationships	First and foremost, personal	Personal and virtual	Principally virtual, network	Virtual and superficial
Aim	Solid existence	Multi-environment, secure position	Rivalry for leadership positions	Live for the present
Self-Realisations	Conscious, carrier builder	Rapid promotions	Instant	Questions the need for it all

IT	It is used with instruction and incomplete	Uses with confidence	Part of everyday life	Intuitive
Values	Patient, soft skills, respect for traditions, EQ, and difficult work	Difficult work, openness, respect for diversity, curiosity, practicality	Flexibility, mobility, broad but superficial knowledge, success orientation, creativity, freedom of information takes priority	Live for the now, fast reaction to everything, initiator, brave, fast information access, and content search
Other possible characteristic	Respect for hierarchy, exaggerated modesty or arrogant inflexibility, passivity, cynicism, disappointment	Rule abiding, materialistic, fair play, less respect for hierarchy, has a sense of relativity, need to prove themselves	Desire for independence, no respect for tradition, quest for new forms of knowledge, inverse socialisation, arrogant, flexible work, part time management, no value of soft skills and EQ	Differing viewpoints, lack of thinking, happiness, pleasure, divided attention, lack of consequential thinking, no inclination to make sense of things, the boundaries of work and entertainment overlap, feel at home anywhere

Source: Bencsik et al. (2016, p. 46)

The above table demonstrates the differences in characteristics of the multigenerational workforce, which are currently being encountered by NCE. Through coaching leadership, leaders at the company may gain a stronger knowledge of the generational age groups. This insight can improve empathy and encourage cross-generational communication to deal with the complexity of these generational differences. Auerbach (2022) posited that in the future, there would be an increased demand for leadership coaching as complexity is expected to continue (Auerbach, 2022). Furthermore, leadership coaching can assist in developing inclusive cultures that value diversity among all generational age groups. Most importantly for NCE, through understanding the generational nuances through coaching, the leadership can identify transferrable talents, overcome obstacles at work, and establish individualised growth plans. Assisting younger generations in preparing for leadership roles and encouraging knowledge transfer between generations can help the organisation with succession planning,

which is a gap due to lack of professionally registered engineers at the current organisation being studied.

The current context of NCE is shared leadership within a multigenerational workforce with project and sector teams. Martins and Martins (2019, p.67) mention that shared leadership is regarded as group-orientated leadership. Citing O'Toole et al. (2002), Martins and Martins (2019) stated that over the last half century, there has been a tendency to look at enhancing the capability for leadership at the top occupational levels, while moving away from focusing on one individual in a company. In NCE, shared leadership is evident and knowledge sharing in multigenerational work groups is essential. For the leadership at the organisation, this would be an opportunity to transfer critical learning from the older generation to the younger one, enabling a pipeline of future, professionally registered engineers. While it has been observed that bridging the generational gap may have benefits, difficult obstacles can be faced in efforts to do so. According to Martin and Tulgan's (2013) research, age-related stereotypes can exacerbate miscommunication and obstruct it. Furthermore, putting intergenerational initiatives into action frequently takes a significant investment of time, money, and effort, which can take focus away from other crucial organisational priorities. Therefore, the leadership at the organisation will need to be mindful of this stereotyping, and comprehend the challenges of intergenerational efforts to bridge the gap, but also recognise the benefits of doing this.

2.5 Coaching

Organisations may develop a more resilient and effective leadership that can thrive in a VUCA landscape by expanding their attention beyond generational disparities and looking at other techniques, such as coaching, which may complement an understanding of the generational workforce.

Coaching, defined in Kombarakaran et al. (2008), is a short-term intervention between a coach and a leader, focused on improving leadership effectiveness through implementing new behaviours and demonstrating self-awareness. Hamlin et al. (2008) discuss a range of thirty-seven definitions of coaching. According to Grant (2006), research on coaching can be found as far back as 1937. Coaching, as cited in Schutte and Steyn (2015), is broadly defined as a method of developing leaders. The authors mention that definitions arose in the literature from 1987 to 1992, which highlighted that coaching enhances individual and organisational performance. Schutte and Steyn (2015) drew findings from the literature that showed a strong connection between coaching, learning and development, while more recent research, suggests that coaching is a personal and organisational activity that also deals with systematic tasks; these are centred around complexity, pluralist perspectives, unpredictability, and contextual factors, and seek to attain a balance to find stability.

Paulo-Pons (2022) suggests that executive coaching improves performance by supporting time management, goal setting, motivation, interaction with others, communication, and managing the work environment. As observed on their website, the ICF (2022) describes coaching as “partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximise their personal and professional potential. The process of coaching often unlocks previously untapped sources of imagination, productivity, and leadership”. Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA), who are a professional body for coaches and mentors of South Africa and a SAQA-accredited organisation, outline coaching as “a professional, collaborative and outcomes-driven method of learning that tries to grow an individual and increase self-awareness in order [for] the individual to achieve specific goals and perform at a more effective level”. Paulo-Pons (2022) explored the definition of coaching from the IAC further, which states that coaching is a progressive method of communication that attempts to benefit a person individual, organisation, or team to yield an anticipated result through the co-creation of awareness and solutions to problems. Coaching is also a positive growth experience for the coachees.

Observing these definitions, one can determine that coaching is an interpersonal method that helps one achieve constructive and positive change and growth. Coaching nurtures new self-generated insight, clarification of goals, and vision by harnessing inborn strengths, discovering intrinsic motivations, and inquiring with empowering questions. Therefore, the maximal outcomes of coaching would be self-awareness and learning through insight, ideation, and potentiation. The distant outcomes would be a return on investment of human capital in the organisation, through increased performance and retention of skills and as Paulo-Pons (2022) suggest, the creation of a more trustworthy environment across various hierarchical levels, facilitated by the adoption of effective communication models. An additional outcome of this coaching approach is the enhancement of communication skills, particularly in the realms of inquiry and confirmation. This is evidenced by a greater emphasis on asking relevant questions and paraphrasing responses, which demonstrates a deeper level of listening and understanding.

Lappalainen (2015) suggested that engineering managers are no longer promoted based on technical skills, but more so now on social skills and self-leadership ability. This would suggest that the element of inter-relational competence and EI should be explored in coaching the leadership teams as, according to Lappalainen (2015), the leaders need to be technically, relationally, socially, emotionally, intelligently, and conceptually adept. For the coachees, one would see improved performance, increased resilience, agility, and greater interpersonal skills. The philosophy underpinning the model would include preparation for the next level role through improved performance, better communication, emotional intelligence, reflection, self-regulation, and self-directed learning, as the coachees would have already acquired the technical abilities.

COMENSA defines coaching as a professional, collaborative, and outcome-driven method of learning that strives to grow an individual and increase self-awareness,

so that the coachees may accomplish goals set out and increase performance. Coaching creates change, which adds to improved performance and learning. Coaches emphasise new competencies, learning, and goal achievement. They further support the notion that coaching is a private guide for the passage of life that the coachees envisage. Everything in coaching centres on listening with the client's plan in mind. McCarthy and Milner (2020) cite the definition of coaching as cited in the study by Ladyshevsky and Taplin (2018, p. 5) as, "helping employees to develop themselves for improving performance, elevating potential, and increasing their vitality for the work they do".

COMENSA (2022) goes on to define mentoring as a learner learning from a mentor through the latter sharing personalised, domain-specific knowledge. As stated in the research by Kianto et al. (2016), knowledge sharing and retention result in positive job satisfaction. Ultimately, the mentor should have experience in the field of expertise that the mentee is in. Law et al. (2014) mentioned that employees should have mentors at different phases of their careers. It was found in the Penna Survey (2014) that 70% of Fortune 500 companies surveyed had some form of mentoring intervention.

There has been much debate around coaching and mentoring being similar. Jones and Smith (2022) posited that both mentoring and coaching are interventions used to enhance personal outcomes and to realise potential. They also state that mentoring is used specifically for careers, whereas coaching aims specifically at enhancing performance. Whether one can separate the two in the context of an organisation, and would it be beneficial to add both coaching and mentoring into a coaching intervention for leadership coaching in a business context, is open to debate.

2.5.1 Coaching leadership

Halliwell et al. (2022) postulated that organisations that wanted to enhance performance in leadership, through improvement of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy, should realise the significance of leadership coaching. Leadership coaching, therefore, is a mechanism of development processes that helps leaders

reach their goals and improve their leadership skills. It helps them figure out what their strengths are and how to make the most of them, while assisting them in determining what their weaknesses are and how to handle them. According to social learning theory, individuals pick up knowledge by watching and copying what others do. To speed up their learning process and encourage behavioural change, leadership coaching offers leaders a singular opportunity to witness effective behaviours and receive feedback.

2.5.2 Goal setting

Setting goals is an important part of coaching leaders. Short-term and long-term goals and planning to reach them are all part of goal setting. The goals set should be clear, measurable, attainable, realistic, and have a deadline or be time-bound (SMART). Leaders should be probed to think about their goals in detail and define the steps they can take to reach them (Judge & Ilies, 2004). This helps them keep their attention on the task at hand as they work to reach their goals. Setting goals is a powerful way to improve motivation and performance, according to research (Tabone, 2020). Leaders who set goals are more likely to stay focused on the task and break it down into more manageable steps. This helps them develop a plan that will help them stay on track and achieve what they want. Setting goals also helps leaders become more self-aware and confident as they think about their own performance and take credit for their successes.

Locke and Latham (2019) highlighted that setting goals can improve team performance. When leaders set clear goals, they give their teams a sense of direction, which helps them stay on track and in line with the mission of the organisation. Goals also help team members feel that they have to do their part, since they are more likely to collaborate to reach their goals. Setting goals can therefore make it easier for people on a team do this and achieve their goals. This is because they can overcome any problems together.

Overall, leaders need to set goals to keep them on track and help them reach their goals. Leaders who use SMART goals are more likely to break down their goals into steps that they can handle. This helps them stay focused and motivated (MacDuffie, 1995). Setting goals can also help a team do better because it encourages people to work together and take responsibility. It should be a big part of any leadership coaching programme for this reason because research has shown that it has a big effect on how well leaders do their jobs in many different situations. Schuster and Zingheim (2000) suggest that setting goals can have a positive effect on how leaders act, because high-level goals make leaders more likely to encourage new ideas and creative thinking, since they are more likely to take risks. Therefore, goal setting should be incorporated into leadership coaching programmes, to make leaders more effective and help organisations innovate.

2.5.3 Mentoring

Another important part of leadership coaching is mentoring, which is when someone with more experience or knowledge gives advice and direction to a leader. It gives them a chance to learn from the mistakes or successes of others and determine how to be a better leader, as discussed in Gagné et al. (2017). Therefore, mentors should be carefully chosen, and be able to give honest and well-thought-out advice. Studies have shown that it can help a leader improve their skills and confidence (Guenzi & Di Cagno, 2011). Mentoring can be especially helpful for people who in their first leadership role. Studies have shown that it can give a sense of direction and clarity, because they receive advice and support from someone with more experience or expertise. Guenzi and Di Cagno (2011) add that the bond linking a mentor and a mentee can be very personal and it is thus important to choose a mentor carefully. The mentor must be someone trustworthy, who can give honest and helpful feedback in their advice. Research has shown that if mentors are carefully chosen, the relationship between them and their mentees can be a good one, with both parties learning useful things that can help them become better leaders (Chapple, 2017).

Mentoring has become a big part of programmes that teach people how to be leaders, to develop personally and professionally. Baran (2018) supports mentoring and employee engagement and suggests that mentoring can help people gain the skills and confidence they need to be good leaders. It also provides a safe space for them to talk about the problems they face and find solutions (Kaur & Sandhu, 2018), resulting in job satisfaction and better performance. Jyoti and Sharma (2015) suggest that mentors who are respected by their mentees can help to forge an environment of trust and mutual respect, which is important for good leadership. Mentors can be a source of inspiration and motivation, when leaders are trying to reach their goals.

Research has also shown that a mentoring relationship is good for both the mentor and the mentee in several ways. Firstly, for the mentor, it is a chance to impart skills and intrinsic knowledge with the next generation of professionals, and to feel good about helping others reach their full potential (Sun & Zhou, 2018). From the mentee's perspective, mentoring gives more self-confidence, better problem solving and communication skills, and a better feeling about their job. In addition, the mentee can also learn from the mentor's past experiences, which can help them develop their own style of leadership. Moreover, as discussed by Sun and Zhou (2018), it is evident that mentoring relationships lead to more effective and cohesive teams, which can improve the performance of an organisation. Lastly, mentors can help their mentees through hard times and difficulties, by giving them support, advice, and direction. This can be very helpful for the mentee to learn how to be a leader and reach their goals, and can result in retention of the younger generation, Gen-Y, as stated by Naim and Lenka (2017, p. 293). Judges and Ileas (2004) explored mentoring relationships in the workplace, which were found to be especially helpful. For example, in their study of mentoring programmes in the United States, it was found that mentoring relationships led to higher levels of job satisfaction, organisational commitment, and job performance. Mentoring can also lead to more engaged employees, which can improve the performance of the organisation as a whole. It further encourages people to stay in their jobs longer. Mentoring relationships are also linked to reduced rates of staff turnover, which can make an organisation more stable and save it money.

Mentoring can also help both the mentor and the mentee move up in their careers. Research has shown that mentoring can help mentors learn new things and see things from different points of view because it exposes them to different ideas and thoughts. Thus it can improve their own leadership skills, by letting them observe how their mentee solves problems and learns new skills (Judge & Ilies, 2004). Mentoring can help the mentee develop their leadership skills, boost their self-esteem, and gain access to useful resources. Employees who have a mentor are more likely to get a promotion and move up in their careers than those who do not.

In summary, research has shown that mentoring relationships can assist both the mentor and the mentee to grow and improve their skills and performance. Mentoring can help a person feel better about themselves, improve their ability to solve problems and communicate, and make them happier at work. It can also give the mentor the chance to impart skills and knowledge to a new generation of professionals, and feel good about helping others reach their full potential. Mentoring relationships can also improve how well a team operates and how well an organisation performs. This also results in retention due to engagement and lower levels of employee turnover. Lastly, mentoring can help both the mentor and the mentee improve their leadership skills and give them the chance to move up in their careers.

2.5.4 Feedback and evaluation

Key parts of leadership coaching are feedback and evaluation. Leaders should regularly get both positive and negative feedback. This allows them to see their progress and determine where they need to make changes. Leaders should also be evaluated to determine if they are meeting or getting closer their goals. This can be done in several ways, such as through surveys, interviews, and self-evaluations.

Feedback and evaluation is important to the success of leadership coaching, according to research. By giving leaders feedback on a regular basis, they can

learn more about their own performance and make changes where needed (Ismail, 2017). It also helps leaders make sure that they meet their goals and objectives on time. Evaluation can also discover places for improvement, and advise on the best solutions. Feedback and evaluation can be done in several ways. Surveys, interviews, and self-evaluations are all tools that are often used, but it is important to make sure that these tools fit the needs of the leader and the organisation as a whole. When used well, feedback and evaluation can help both the leader and the team improve their work.

In addition to the methods mentioned, research has shown that 360-degree feedback can also be a useful way to get feedback and evaluate something. This method involves getting feedback from many different people, such as peers, colleagues, and clients, to get a more complete picture of how well the leader is performing (Johnson & Tregaskis, 2008). This kind of feedback can also help leaders identify what to improve, and give them a clearer idea of how others see them. It can thus help to build a culture of trust and openness. Because of this, it can be an important part of a programme to help people become better leaders. The importance of a leader's capacity to enthuse and encourage their people is emphasised by transformational leadership theory. Through specialised advice and feedback, leadership coaching aids in the development of transformative leadership traits such as charisma, vision, and individualised consideration. Ellinger et al. (2011) posited that improving these capabilities through coaching could result in increased organisational effectiveness.

Mone and London (2013) explored feedback and evaluation through their study, and concluded that feedback and evaluation can help both the leader and the organisation as a whole. Leaders who receive feedback and evaluation on a regular basis are more likely to do well in their jobs and help the organisation (MacIntyre, 2016 p. 313). This is because feedback and evaluation can find any possible weaknesses and solutions quickly. It can also help the leader make sure they are attaining their goals and objectives in a timely and effective way. In sum, feedback and evaluation can play a major role in making sure an organisation is successful.

Aside from the benefits of feedback and evaluation for both leaders and the organisation, there are also many benefits to evaluating the organisation itself on a regular basis. This can include finding places to improve, setting benchmarks for performance, and determining how well current practices work. Regular evaluations can help an organisation stay competitive, improve operational efficiency, and make the changes it needs keep up with the constantly changing business world. They can also help the organisation keep its competitive edge by pointing out places where it needs to improve, and the right steps to make the needed changes. Regular evaluations can be a big part of how well an organisation performs and how much it grows.

Organisational evaluations can in addition help companies learn more about how well their employees perform. Through these evaluations, companies can discover each employee's strengths and weaknesses and where they can improve. Using the information gathered from evaluations, organisations can then formulate and carry out plans to deal with any problems. For instance, a company may decide that its workers need more training in a certain area. Using the results of their evaluations, they can then create a training programme to help their employees better understand the issue and undertake the necessary tasks. Efforts to increase the effectiveness of organisations are carried out with a solid employee performance evaluation system to identify the necessary training programmes (Sinambela et al., 2022, p.56).

Evaluations of an organisation can also identify risks and possible threats. By looking at their processes, policies, and procedures, organisations can discover where they might be weak and make changes in those areas. This can include where a process needs to be improved or plans to reduce possible risks. Evaluating the organisation itself can also ensure that it can keep up with the business world, which is always changing. Organisational evaluations can show where the organisation is not meeting its goals and objectives, and where it may need to make changes to stay competitive.

An organisation can ensure that its goals and objectives are being met by regular self-evaluation. They can do this by looking at how well their current policies and practices work (Clark, 2017). By evaluating how well the organisation's processes and procedures work, its leaders can ensure that they are still relevant in the modern business world, and that they are achieving the desired results. To sum up, regular evaluations of an organisation can ensure that it stays competitive, improve operational efficiency, and implement the changes needed to keep up with the constantly changing business environment.

Leadership coaching is thus an important tool to assist leaders improve at what they do and grow in their positions. Setting goals, having a mentor, getting feedback, and being evaluated are all important parts of leadership coaching. These elements help leaders determine their strengths and how to make the most of them and their weaknesses and how to solve them. Ultimately, through leadership coaching, specific issues and differences between a multigenerational workforce in relation to communication, motivation and working styles can be addressed. It must be mentioned that according to Gregory (2017), there is inconclusive evidence concerning the long-term effects of coaching interventions, and often leadership coaching focuses only on the individual and not the systemic organisation. Brotman and Liberman (2017) further argue that there can be an overreliance on a coach, instead of the leadership developing their own problem-solving capabilities.

The literature review underscores the potential advantages of coaching in diverse settings. However, also stressed is the necessity for additional research to bolster empirical support, comprehend fundamental mechanisms, and investigate particular circumstances and elements that augment the efficacy of coaching interventions (Anthony, 2017; Tanskanen et al., 2018). However, the research does suggest that leadership coaching supports leaders in improving their overall leadership style. As a result of this, they can be more effective and develop strategies for effective communication, collaboration, and employee engagement amongst the multigenerational workforce (MacIntyre, 2016 p. 313). This will assist in bridging the generational gap, as well as assisting in navigating the VUCA

landscape faced by the current organisation being studied.

2.5.5 Benefits of coaching

The benefits to coaching, as cited in the literature, are empowerment and learning, improved entrepreneurial behaviour, alignment, improved performance management, and improved employee performance and social relatedness (McCarthy & Milner, 2020). Solomon and Coller-Peter (2019) found through their study that coaching also improves communication, imparts a better understanding of managers by employees, and leaves a greater sense of self-awareness (Solomon & Coller-Peter, 2019). Gyllensten and Palmer (2014) stated that coaching a leader increases their capacity to handle and deal with stress, as well as to learn constantly.

The benefits of coaching, according to Watson (2020), are outlined in Table 2.4.

Table 2.4: Benefits of coaching

Benefits to the Organisation	Benefits to the Employee
Skills and leadership	Confidence
Relationships with employees and at board level	Less stress
Managerial development skills	Work-life balance
New ways of working	Communication skills improvement
Retention of employees	Increased self-awareness
Performance improvement	Goal setting and career planning

Source: Watson (2020, p. 65)

According to Auerbach (2022), many organisations cited the benefits of leadership coaching to include greater engagement, higher productivity, an ability to retain staff, and increased leadership bench strength. Kumaran (2015) posited that for employees to feel engaged, they need the ability to develop and progress in their professional careers. It is important to mention that coaching results may differ based on the coachees, and the goals that they set out to accomplish through the coaching.

2.5.6 The coach

As alluded to in Watson (2020) and Bennet and Bush (2013), the several different coaching types are internal professional coaches, coaching conducted by supervisors and managers, external coaches, peer coaches, and a group coaching element. The authors suggest that internal professional coaches are generally found in larger organisations, and are typically credentialled and employed to coach executives. The rationale behind appointing an internal professional coach is that it can be more cost effective. McCarthy and Milner (2020) cite that a manager who coaches mostly concentrates on performance coaching and behavioural coaching. These coaches are generally not credentialled. External coaches, as explored in Bennet and Bush (2014), are hired because the executives want to maintain trust and there is a perception of a lack of confidentiality in having an internal coach. Group coaching is primarily aimed at employees as a cost-effective method of coaching. The authors further discuss peer coaching as an excellent means of facilitating problem solving.

Throughout the literature review, it is evident that there is no one-size-fits-all approach with regard to the type of coach one would require in an organisation. Jones et al. (2016) cited better results for internal coaching, but later on, said that external coaching was preferable (Jones et al., 2018). One can establish from the literature review that an internal professional coach is more cost effective, and understands the context and system within which the coachees operate.

Nadeem and Garvey (2020) argued that the coaching process defines coaching terminology and process itself, while the coach's competencies are not considered to be as important. Bachkirova and Lawton Smith (2015) suggested that there is a growing divide between academia and professional bodies regarding the assessment and credentialling of coaches. Professional bodies do not have an underpinning theoretical basis, while the coaches do not have an understanding of the linkages between the instruments and techniques that they use. However, Bachkirova and Lawton Smith (2015) pointed out that the ICF challenged this view, in that their 2019 competency model was evidence-based and validated. The authors additionally stated that, according to their study, a skilful coach may not be

sufficiently well trained to produce inspired insights for the complex task of coaching senior staff in an organisational context specific to that industry. The authors could have examined the various coaching qualifications, since a credentialed coach is required to comply with the professional bodies' coaching competency. In addition, the credentialed coach would have needed to qualify by going through a coaching course as well as having completed a number of hours coaching clients. The complexity of this authors' claims may be resolved by supplementing the coaching intervention with a mentor who has dealt with such complexities. This would need to be explored further. Coaching models for leadership development

The coaching models that were explored for leadership development, which could possibly be applied in the study as a leadership intervention, are outlined in this section. One of the most effective coaching models could be identified as the GROW coaching model, which Whitmore initially explained in 1996. Various individuals have used this model to develop company leaders (Panchal & Riddell, 2020). The acronym GROW, depicts four main stages in the coaching conversation which are: Goal, Reality, Options, and Will. This specific model is used as a coaching framework, which is implemented in meetings, conversations, and everyday leadership, to allow individuals to optimise their potential and possibilities. The model is being widely used today for problem solving, performance enhancement for individuals, and goal setting. It is regarded as a leadership tool that works for all cultures and disciplines.

The first element of the model explains the goals and aspirations. There are varying levels of goals based on how far in the future an individual is aiming for (Anthony et al., 2018). An imperative element related to this is to gain an understanding of the behaviour that needs to be changed, and structure the change as a goal that the person wants to attain. What an individual wants to achieve and attain is a significant part of their goals and aspirations, and this element is highly imperative in this coaching model. Another significant attribute of this model is reality, which focuses on where the individual is at present. Assessing

the current reality is vital, as this assists in reaching the main objective (Panchal & Riddell, 2020). If individuals unable to assess or understand where they are presently standing, it may become daunting to lead towards success in the future.

Describing what could be done and the available choices is regarded as another element of the model. Once it has been understood what the current reality is, determining what is possible, becomes essential. All the available choices that could be optimised at this stage need to be considered. The opportunity costs must be evaluated at this stage, by conducting a critical evaluation and choosing the best option (Flückiger et al., 2017). The last element is the will, which determines the activity that needs to be taken to move towards the goal and achieve the targets. This aspect also includes all those elements that need to be committed to, along with specifying how the change needs to be carried out (Francis & Zarecky, 2017). While all parts of the model are essential, the element of will is critical, allowing the coach to specify how specific objectives will be worked on to deliver the required results and outcomes.

The second coaching model, OSKAR, can be identified as an effective and useful framework that assists the coaching sessions to concentrate on solution finding rather than issues or problems (Passmore & Sinclair, 2020). The different stages of OSKAR are Outcome, Scaling, Know-how, Affirm and Action, and Reviews.

The outcome focuses on understanding the results that are desired along with the long-term goals of individuals. The primary attention needs to be placed on the person receiving the coaching, defining what they want to achieve, and considering the long-, short-, and medium-term goals (Kirill, 2017). The coach also needs to focus on the requirements of the individual and what achievement is desired from the session. The other aspect is scaling, which is equally imperative. Once the desired outcomes have been considered, the coachees should have understood where they are currently positioned. Know-how is another vital element and includes information regarding the coachee's current skills or attributes, whether something similar has been done in the past, and other similar data (Crosse, 2022). This particular stage is more about digging deeper, and gathering as much data as possible to develop a more robust overall understanding.

Affirming and action concern providing positive reinforcement regarding what has been heard, identifying the improvements that could take place, and how to work towards them. This part of the coaching is when the coach reflects on the performance, and identifies the key strengths and attributes that the individual has revealed. Another part involves assisting the person receiving the coaching to determine what actions they could take immediately, so that the results can be optimised further (Alabdali, 2020). Lastly, review involves conducting regular reviews or feedback to be provided to the person receiving the coaching. This stage is related to reviewing progress against actions, and giving feedback as to what improvements have been made and the other areas of attention. The stage of feedback is highly useful and imperative in the model, as this explains what worked best and what has been done that made change effective and successful (Passmore & Sinclair, 2020). To further develop effective leaders, it is important that the coaches are skilled in their area of expertise, as they can provide necessary and useful information that may assist the coachee to further pursue their goals in an effective way.

A third coaching model, CLEAR, was developed by Hawkins in the year 1985. This framework is regarded as an alternative to the GROW model. It could be said to be an extension of it, involving more aspects and elements that are considered essential (Connor, 2017). The acronym CLEAR stands for Contracting, Listening, Exploring, Action, and Review. Contracting is the stage that initiates the coachee's attention and focuses on developing desired outcomes. The main focus is not only on outcomes, but also on assisting the coachee to establish what results they wish to attain, along with setting the ground rules. This aspect further reveals how the coach and process can be tailored to be valuable to the needs of the individual (Wrede & Wiesenthal, 2019). The desired outcomes are both shared and individual, depicting how the coach and the overall process can be carried out to be as valuable and essential as possible to the needs of the individual. Listening is the other stage, which puts ample emphasis on the coach allowing a coachee to share their reality, feelings, and thoughts (Stout-Rostron, 2018). Listening is important, as it allows the coach to better understand what the individual is thinking, what attributes they share, and what strategy would be the most useful in their

particular case. Exploring is the third stage of the model, after the individual has outlined the present situation, the coach then needs to go deeper and obtain as much information as possible regarding the areas of focus. Probing further regarding the depths and context of the situation is essential, enabling the coachee to establish an emotional connection to their behavioural change (Cooper & Allen, 2018). Another stage is action, where the focus is to obtain a commitment to the changes that are required, and have the intention to internalise the new outlook. The last stage is review, which concerns following up on the progress of a coachee, understanding how specific techniques and strategies have been developed, and what improvements have been made to the implementations taking place (Connor, 2017). It is imperative to ensure that the individuals are on the right track, by providing them with the required information.

A fourth coaching model is STEPPA, that was developed by McLeod in 2003. The model focuses mainly on the emotions around an issue, or varied situations that may take place in a company's environment, and how these emotions can be used to further focus on new goals and improvements. This particular tool is mainly used when a daunting situation needs to be resolved, in which there are various emotions influencing its improvement (O'Connell, 2019).

The STEPPA model includes the following aspects: Subject, Target Identification, Emotion, Perception, Plan/Pace, and Action. Firstly, the subject is about understanding the main context and the particular subject that is under discussion. It is about what the individual wants to focus on during the process of coaching and what results are expected. Target identification is regarded as arriving at a clear outcome or goal, and assessing what exactly has to be achieved. Emotion explains the feelings that are either going to block or boost the overall progress towards the objectives. Embracing the emotions eventually assists in reaching the ultimate goal that needs to be attained. Perception is associated with exploring the bigger picture, and identifying how the goal is situated within the broader context of the individual's life. The work of the coach at this stage is to guide the individual to decide on the best choices to reach the goal (Yarborough, 2018).

The plan/pace explains a series of steps that are required to reach a goal and the timescale on which this is based. This makes it easier to critically evaluate the implementation process, providing the opportunity to improve it. Lastly, action is set in motion following the developed plan step-by-step so that the desired outcomes can be attained (Korac & Österling, 2019). Moreover, it allows the coach to assess if the developed plan is sensible for implementation or not.

The brain-based coaching model, the fifth coaching model, a theoretical concept based on brain function. It covers the neuroscience of attention, insight, reflection, and action. “Focus your attention on something new, and you make new neuro connections ‘neuroplasticity’. Focusing attention allows one to rewire the brain in brain-based coaching” (Rock, 2006). Rock (2006) discusses the veto power effect described by Libet (1983), which is the control one has over voluntary behaviour only immediately before enacting that movement.

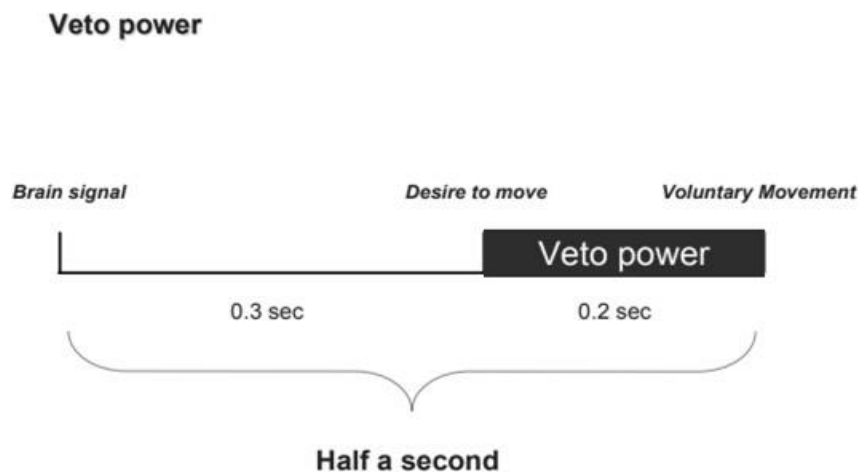


Figure 2.1: Veto power source (Rock, 2006)

This concept has been known to leaders for many years and is also known as self-control or self-awareness. Rock’s findings were that changing behaviour means that one needs to deepen one’s ability to choose what to focus attention on, with emphasis being on focus. Furthermore, Rock (2008) stated that there is a growing need to improve how people work together. Social neuroscience has explored the biological foundations of how humans engage with one another. As such, the

SCARF (Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness, Fairness) model in Figure 2.2 involves the five domains of human social experience. This model simply allows people to adapt their core social domains that drive human behaviour. Tagging and understanding these drivers unearths conscious awareness of otherwise subconscious practices, which allow individuals to plan engagement that will create a rewarding rather than a threatening outcome. Ultimately, at its foundation, brain-based coaching is supported by contemporary neuroscience.

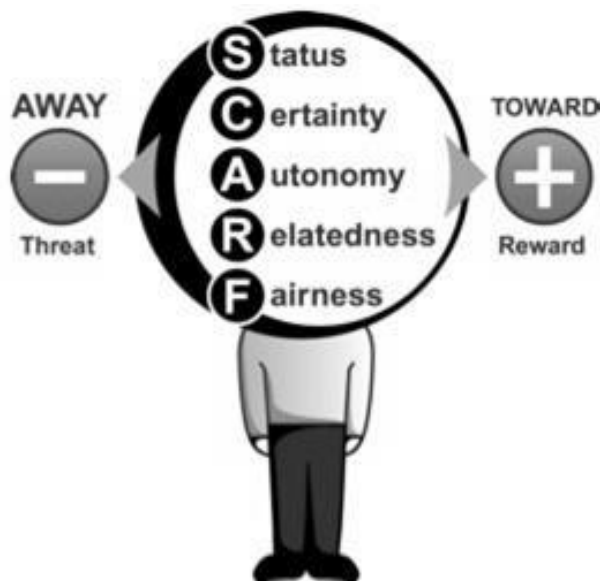


Figure 2.2: The SCARF model

Source: Coaching Systems (2009): Neuroleadership Institute

Whittington (2014) defines systemic coaching as a method that sees the coachee within a system's context. Therefore, exploring the sum of the whole and the part of the sum ensures that each element can function effortlessly. Hawkins and Turner (2019) discussed the value systemic coaching brings to all stakeholders of the coaching intervention, from colleagues, investors, customers, partners, community, subordinates, and the self. They work within a systemic environment and this form of coaching looks at a broader ecosystem instead of the immediacy of the one-to-one coaching relationship.

Rousseau (2015) posited that because the workforce crisis is systemic in nature, one would need to think systemically to overcome such a crisis. The author

describes systemic coaching as a mindset, not a set of skills or techniques. Rousseau also suggests that one needs to look at a system from the outside. One can determine from the literature review that this type of coaching is centred around achieving rapid results for significant organisational ambitions under complexities such as a VUCA environment.

As no model exists currently in the NCE organisation in the civil engineering industry, a coaching model would make a significant contribution, as it would lead to the retention of employees, in turn, leading to a return on investment for both the organisation and the individuals therein. This model could be further expanded to the industry as a whole. There has been transformation in this sector, following the promulgation of legislation on affirmative action, the Employment Equity Act, and the Skills Development Act, which is aimed at the combination of skills from a diverse cultural talent pool. High-level employees are constantly sought after and millennials have a habit of job-hopping. Ultimately, an executive coaching model (including mentoring) will assist in the retention of such employees (HST, 2007) by being an added EVP. If coaches are to be successful, they are required to comprehend the system within which all stakeholders operate.

All of the models have similarities in that they attend to the current reality and the setting of goals towards the ideal reality. These models are quite specific to the individual, but the element of EI seems to be lacking, as they are mostly structured around goal setting and crafting, and actions to reach those goals. Although EI can be one of the goals of coaching, in the described models it is not an added element toward attaining one's goals. The models discussed appear to have a performative agenda. The STEPPA model, as discussed in O'Connell (2019), includes emotion as an element but not specifically EI. Furthermore, the brain-based coaching methodology, as discussed by Rock (2006), includes tapping into the coachee's energy, but again, not specifically EI, which can result in the coach merely focusing on goal setting and reaching the goals, but not on improving EI. In the models outlined, mindset is important and mental processes are thus key; how this is linked to EI is explored in a later section. Through exploring the various coaching models, it is evident that coaching offers a broad personal choice to leaders and senior

team members. Curiously, there are not many uncontested opinions on coaching models in the literature review. Nadeem and Garvey (2020) suggest that one needs to further consider knowledge-based coaching models. It has furthermore been concluded in various authors' studies, that leaders who have had coaching demonstrate an improvement in performance (Halliwell et al., 2022; Van Coller-Peter & Van der Walt, 2020).

Peters and Carr (2013, p.18) defined team coaching as “a comprehensive and systemic approach to support a team to maximise their collective talent and resources to effectively accomplish the work of the team”. This definition was modified from Hawkins (2019), Hackman and Wageman (2005) and Hackman (2005). Hackman and Wageman (2005) also described the tasks of team coaching as a method that blends performance and approach. The authors suggested that team coaching comprised of interventions that prevent losses and promote an increase in each of three performance processes: i) the determination that an individual brings (motivation); ii) the performance strategies (consultation); and iii) the amount of expertise and skill (education).

In a team, behavioural differences are diversity, varied personalities, and varying degrees of energy levels and motivation. Clutterback (2013) held the view that a team coach is required to demonstrate coaching skills of a high level in a team setting by actively listening, using silence effectively, understanding learning styles, facilitating skills, managing sub-groups, and exercising powerful questioning skills. A group becomes a leadership group when it sets its intention not just on its current job, but also on how it can collaborate with all of its stakeholders to co-create improved performance for both its own outputs and outcomes, and those of its various stakeholders, as discussed in Kets de Vries (2014). Ultimately, this is a systemic perspective.

There are a few primary variances between team coaching and associated forms of development (IES, 2010), as presented in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Main difference between team coaching and related forms of development

Team Coaching	1:1 Coaching	Team Facilitating	Team Building
Emergent within a team	Coachee driven	Led by a facilitator	Led by a consultant
Longer process of intervention	Number of coaching sessions	Shorter intervention	A 1-2 day workshop
Thought based	Includes cycles of feedback and actions to do. Covers business, job, and personal issues	Conversational	Action oriented
Focus on developing long-term skills and capacitation	Focus on improvement	Focus on specific / current dilemmas	Focus on teamwork, collaboration, and relationships

Source (IES,2010)

2.6 Emotional intelligence

Salovey and Mayer (1990) first defined EI as the capacity to observe one's own and others' emotions and feelings, and to use these to guide one's own actions. Daniel Goleman then popularised Salovey and Mayer's model in his book, "EI: Why it can matter more than IQ". Brackett et al. (2011) then discussed Goleman's attributes of EI, ranging from political awareness, self-confidence, conscientiousness, and achievement motives, which are what one should focus on rather than on intelligence to solve problems alone.

Boyatzis et al. (2000) explored EI in connection to productive and managerial performance. Crucial to cross-examining leadership, is understanding the knowledge that various outlooks provide. Coaching and executive coaching

provide the context for learning new behaviours and competencies, and linking emotions with new neural pathways. An essential part of EI is establishing associations with relationships and workplace contributions. Sadri (2012) suggested that EI has significant connections to leadership.

2.6.1 Emotional intelligence and leading a multigenerational workforce

According to Schroth (2019), today's workplaces are becoming more diverse regarding different generations of employees, with multigenerational teams made up of individuals of different ages, having a variety of levels of capabilities and expertise. Leading a multigenerational team is a challenging task, which requires leaders to follow an effective leadership style and have skills to lead the team successfully. In this context, EI not only provides the ability to understand emotions, but, according to Sharp (2020), it allows one to assess and generate emotions to understand thoughts. Besides this, EI brings ease in regulating emotions and makes organisations promote intellectual growth. However, emotions in the context of EI refer to the emotions and moods of individuals. Making sense of emotions can be facilitated effectively by using EI. A study conducted by Issah (2018) described four significant aspects of EI. The study highlights that the critical aspects of EI are: the expression and appraisal of emotions, the use of emotions in decision-making and to enhance the cognitive process, knowledge of emotions, and the management of moods or emotions. According to this research, EI plays a vital role in making close relationships and improving organisational growth. It helps to ensure effective leadership by developing a complete set of goals. This ability assists in identifying the measures that are required to achieve these goals when there is a diverse workforce. The ability promotes knowledge and appreciation at the workplace so that multigenerational teams can improve their work activities.

Ihamäki and Heljakka (2021) suggest that emotions play a crucial role in changing the behaviour of multigenerational teams. In such teams, the individuals have different levels of enthusiasm, excitement, and confidence. Thus, EI allows for an understanding of their emotions and moods, enabling leaders to maintain and generate confidence, excitement, and enthusiasm among the team members. Understanding others' emotions effectively means that such leaders can deal with

the individual according to their expectations and emotions. This requires the development of trust and co-operation among the team members, and between the leaders and team members.

Furthermore, Usmani et al. (2019) emphasise the importance of organisations in understanding the value of generational diversity, and how each generation places importance on various values, attitudes, skills, and performance, so that leaders can craft suitable tasks and rewards strategies for these different generations. Through coaching, leaders can expand their EI regarding these broad concepts. Leaders have to be flexible in decision-making and instilling change. Besides this, they should encourage their multigenerational teams to play their role in the decision-making and innovation process. Through EI, leaders can manage their emotions and use them to improve their own decision-making skills (Alkozei et al., 2019). Leaders can then use their emotions to direct their attention to the priority tasks that need their full attention. Studies have shown that emotions play a vital role in prioritising the demands of a project (Khosravi et al., 2020).

Problems and opportunities being part of a business, it is necessary for leaders to analyse them and make their multigenerational team work on these accordingly. It is EI that helps leaders to identify when emotions are linked with opportunities, problems, and solutions. This kind of information is fruitful for making decisions for the organisation and leading a multigenerational team. It is evident that leaders who display high EI can self-regulate and manage their emotions, recognise and empathise with what is displayed or expressed by the multigenerational team, and use this ability to comprehend and close the generational gap (Mayer et al., 2000).

Aside from the positive studies, there is not much recent literature that critiques EI. However, Sadri (2012) postulated more than a decade ago that EI was too broadly defined, while even earlier, Davies et al. (1998) called it an “elusive concept”. In Sadri’s (2012) study, although not recent, the author mentioned that all the criticisms were around the definition of EI and its broadness. EI was later unpacked and further tweaked into four proposed capabilities of perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions. These capabilities are separate yet related. To improve thought and knowledge of interpersonal dynamics, EI also

encapsulates the ability to connect intelligence, empathy, and emotions. However, substantial disagreement over EI, with respect to both its terminology and operationalisation, still seems to exist.

Nevertheless, further studies on the impact of EI in more recent literature reviews are positive and promising. Goleman et al. (2002), Lowell and Morris (2019) and Sims (2018) all support the argument that EI leaders are able to effectively manage change, bridge generational gaps, and adapt their strategies to suit the needs of various audiences. Leaders can maximise the potential of a multigenerational workforce by fostering a peaceful and productive work environment through the development of EI.

2.6.2 Emotional intelligence in the workplace

A definition of EI, as mentioned by Pinos (2013, p. 76), is “one’s ability to manage and monitor one’s own emotions; recognise different types of emotions in others; distinguish the difference between one’s emotions and those of others; and possess the ability to direct information towards one’s decision-making actions.” From this definition, one can ascertain that a well-functioning business is one where emotions are managed, while taking into consideration employees’ feelings, as well as the context within which the organisation and its employees are operating. Pinos (2013) suggests leaders self-reflect and are self-aware. In fact, Farr and Brazil (2009) stated that EI can be explored through self-assessments, 360-degree assessment tools, and EI quizzes. These give the participants a baseline to work with.

Employee morale in the areas of performance, retention, and emotional wellness are favourably influenced by increased EI. This then increases employee engagement, efficiency, and productivity. For example, Zelinski (2019) reports that a manufacturing firm transformed its business model entirely by including EI into its ethos. Profits surged by 60% as a result of the increased employee productivity.

Cignac (2010) investigated more complex models derived from the GENOS EI inventory model that specifically rates EI in the workplace. Palmer and Cignac (2012) researched the relationship between managers' EI and the engagement levels of their employees. Their findings positively correlated employee engagement with manager EI. Palmer et al. (2009) suggested that EI is critical for every position and at every level in an organisation. The more emotionally intelligent people are, the better they cooperate, communicate, engage, and produce. Most importantly, the authors proposed that EI is essential for those managers and leaders who lead the organisation, as they are responsible for managing return on investment from the most investment-intensive asset in an organisation: the employees.

Furthermore, Palmer and Cignac (2012) also posited that EI would enable organisations to improve their retention and productivity. The GENOS EI inventory was crafted for use as a learning and development tool in the workplace, to be used for the selection and recruitment, and development of employees (Palmer et al., 2009). Palmer et al. (2009) described EI as a set of abilities that help one to perceive and understand how one feels and the way others feel – a set of abilities to do with how effectively one regulates and manages emotions. Thus, these EI abilities help an individual to determine how they are feeling, and from there, modify decisions, behaviour, and performance at work accordingly to perform their best (GENOS International, 2015). Sadri (2012), cited 25 sources of learning for leaders, and determined that the most critical were self-awareness, individual reflection, executive coaching, and personal development plans.

2.6.3 Emotional intelligence models

GENOS International created a model of EI applied to leadership consisting of six competencies. Depending on how these competencies are displayed in the workplace, either productive or unproductive states will be produced. The competencies are detailed in Table 2.6.

Table 2.6: GENOS EI competencies applied to leadership

Competency	Productive State	Unproductive State
Self-Awareness	Present	Disconnected
Awareness of Others	Empathetic	Insensitive
Authenticity	Genuine	Untrustworthy
Emotional reasoning	Expansive	Limited
Self-Management	Resilient	Temperamental
Inspiring Performance	Empowering	Indifferent

Source: GENOS International (2015)

Mayer et al. (2000) stated that the mixed model of EI includes both abilities and traits. Goleman (1995) suggested that developing EI earlier in a person's life is linked to an area in the brain that oversees fight-or-flight reactions, called the amygdala. As people grow, they develop responses to all sorts of threats that they face in their lives. Goleman's model uses "The Five Components" to describe EI:

- Self-awareness (confidence, recognition of feelings).
- Self-regulation (self-control, trustworthiness, adaptability).
- Motivation (drive, commitment, initiative, optimism).
- Empathy (understanding others' feelings, diversity, political awareness).
- Social skills (leadership, conflict management, communication skills).

Self-awareness is an individual's ability to focus on how actions, thoughts, or emotions align or do not align with their internal values. Self-aware people can evaluate themselves, manage their emotions, align their values with their behaviour, and understand how others perceive them. They can objectively interpret their feelings, thoughts, and actions. An example of self-awareness in leadership, on the one hand, is that of a manager who is in a bad mood but does not have self-awareness; as a result, he is likely to make bad and biased choices. On the other hand, a self-aware manager will isolate negativity and focus on the task at hand when they are in a bad mood.

Self-regulation is the ability of a person to monitor and manage their energy states, thoughts, emotions, and behaviours in acceptable ways that will provide positive results such as learning, loving relationships, and wellbeing. An emotionally

charged environment is distracting, tense, and fraught with unresolved conflict. Self-regulation enables the leadership in a company to be calm in the face of adversity.

The third component is motivation for enjoyment instead of a promotion or money. A person should determine their motivation for enjoyment, which includes understanding why they are passionate about their job, realising how much they want to lead, and having an optimistic outlook. Motivated people will find a silver lining in the face of a bad day. Such people find ways to feel energised. They can fix problems and cheer up the people around them to achieve much-needed success. Self-motivation enables leaders to achieve their needs and goals, while driving performance.

Empathy involves understanding other people's emotions and relating to them. It involves seeing problems from all perspectives and making the necessary objective decisions. Empathy diffuses bias and enables a leader to treat all followers equally. Being empathetic means that a leader is a good listener and interpreter and can express good body language.

Concerning social skills, people develop the ability to sustain good interpersonal relationships that enable them to interact with each other, and make it possible for them to solve the conflicts that they face as they live and interact with others. Leaders are supposed to build a strong rapport with their team as part of good leadership, and as a way of getting the staff to perform better in the organisation.

There are a number of EI assessment instruments, such as the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-I), the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso EI Test (MSCEIT), the Six Second Emotional Intelligence Assessment (SEI), and the GENOS Emotional Intelligence Inventory. The Personal Development Analysis (PDA) instrument is a psychometric test with over 50 years of studies grounded on established theories and statistics. It informs and analyses an individual's behavioural profile, together with an evaluation of the requirements of a job role's sought after competencies and behavioural traits, using an element of EI linked to the self-control and decision-making measurements. The PDA theoretical model is the result of a publication by Dr William Moulton Marston in 1928. Marston's theory combines consensus reality

and personal reality, showing how an individual's personal reality (the inner experience of their feelings and emotions) is displayed in the world setting they share with others. This principle is also found in psychoanalysis and is called 'projection'.

Other instruments which measure similar elements to PDA are the Big Five Questions and 16PF (Cattell's research model). The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and PDA Assessment are competitors in the marketplace for those individuals wanting to develop more self-awareness and awareness of others. The PDA instrument can also be compared to the DISC tool from the behavioural profiling section. The MBTI Tool, developed by Katherine Briggs, and based on the typological theory of Carl Jung first published in 1962, measures how one behaves naturally, perceives the world, and makes decisions. PDA measures how one does what one does, how one adapts and responds to people and situations, and one's aptitudes (PDA International, 2014).

Terblanche (2020) discusses a coaching model derivation process and explores five stages: identifying the problem space boundaries; conducting a foundational research phase; developing a preliminary coaching model based on the findings from stage two; implementing an application stage using canonical action research to refine the initial coaching model; and lastly, formulating the final coaching model that addresses the needs of the identified problem space from stage one.

2.7 The theoretical and conceptual frameworks explored through the study

The purpose of examining the theoretical and conceptual frameworks in a research study is to give the investigation a strong framework and foundation. These frameworks act as guiding principles for researchers as they attempt to comprehend and explain the phenomenon they are studying. They provide a methodical method for compiling and evaluating data, developing hypotheses, and interpreting results.

Theoretical frameworks come from theories or bodies of information that already exist, and offer a thorough comprehension of the subject. They aid researchers in

locating pertinent factors, connections, and mechanisms that affect the research issue. In order to describe the phenomenon under study, theoretical frameworks frequently include well-established theories from numerous disciplines and fields.

On the other hand, conceptual frameworks are more focused on and unique to the research project in question. They provide an overview of the main ideas, factors, and connections that the study will look at. Conceptual frameworks translate abstract ideas into quantifiable variables and hypotheses, bridging the gap between theory and actual research (Saunders et al., 2012).

The literature review explored the current landscape of the engineering sector in a VUCA context, current leadership challenges in the context of the geographical region, and the recent pandemic. A review of the multigenerational workforce was undertaken, and the need for better communication and how to bridge the gap between varying generations in the workplace were deliberated upon.

In the literature review, the various generations were discussed in terms of differences in leadership styles and values brought to the workplace by the different generations. The prevailing workplace values demonstrated by Gen-Xers were independence, lack of formality, cynicism, task orientation, and work-life-balance. The Gen-Y demonstrate values of multi-tasking, goal-drivenness, realism, and technology dependence, while the Gen-Zs, who are now entering the workplace, demonstrate values of flexibility, transparency, authenticity, and place even more value on technology.

The literature reviewed further explored the terminology of leadership development and coaching to gain an understanding of these from the extant literature. Various models were explored with a view to implementing the participatory action research.

Through the literature review, EI was found to be critical in building close relationships and improving organisational growth. Furthermore, it was stated that emotions play a vital role in changing the behaviour of multigenerational teams (Ihamäki & Heljakka, 2021). Emotional intelligence and various models were further explored.

Table 2.7: Conceptual frameworks explored in this study

AREA	Literature Covered			References
Leadership Challenges in the current landscape at organisation being studied (VUCA world) - Uncertainty	Covid 19	Economic Crisis	5 th Industrial Revolution (5IR) (Noble et al., 2022, p. 199).	Chong, et al., 2020; Gallup, 2020; Chen & Sriphon, 2021; Noble et al., 2022
Multigenerational Workforce	Communication	Leadership Styles	Leadership Attributes Required	Al Saidi, et al., 2020; Ballesteros-Sanchez et al., 2019; Lorenz et al., 2015; Roberts, 2020
Emotional Intelligence	Coaching and Mentoring	Self-awareness	Behavioural Change	Ashford & DeRude, D.S., 2012
Coaching	Contracting	Models	Benefits	Ashford & DeRude, D.S., 2012

Table 2.8: Theoretical frameworks explored in this study

AREA	Literature Covered	References
Leadership Development	Coaching is one of the most noteworthy enablers of developing leadership.	Passmore, Brown, and Csigas (2017).
Coaching Models	SCARF model GROW model OSKAR model CLEAR model STEPPA model GENOS EI model CARE model	David Rock. Bishop, 2016; Fulmer and Brock, 2014; Neupane, 2015; Korac and Osterling, 2019; Connor, 2017; Cooper and Allen, 2018; Anthony et al., 2018; Kirill, 2017; Issah, 2018
Action Research		Bachkirova T, 2019; Kates, 2008
Leadership Theories		Loures et al., 2018

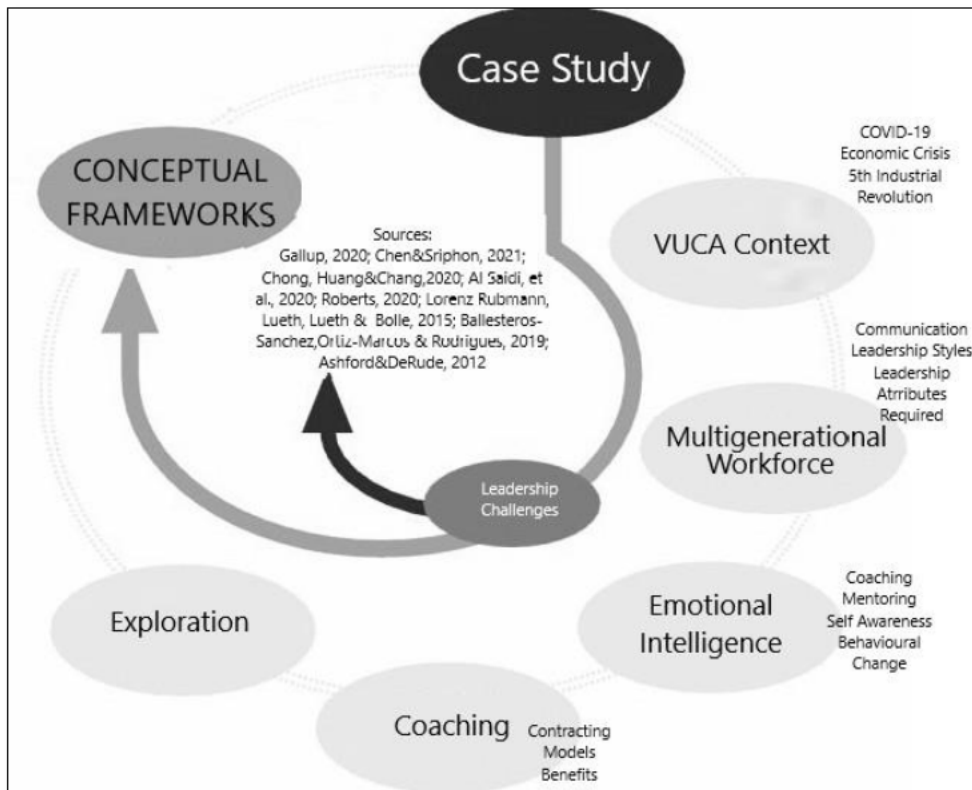


Figure 2.3: A diagrammatic overview of the conceptual frameworks explored in the study

Adapted from the literature review study in terms of the conceptual frameworks explored by the researcher. Source: Own.

The conceptual frameworks were split into four areas: VUCA context, multigenerational workforce, EI, and coaching models. Through the conceptual frameworks, the researcher was able to set the foundation for the problem statement and research objectives.

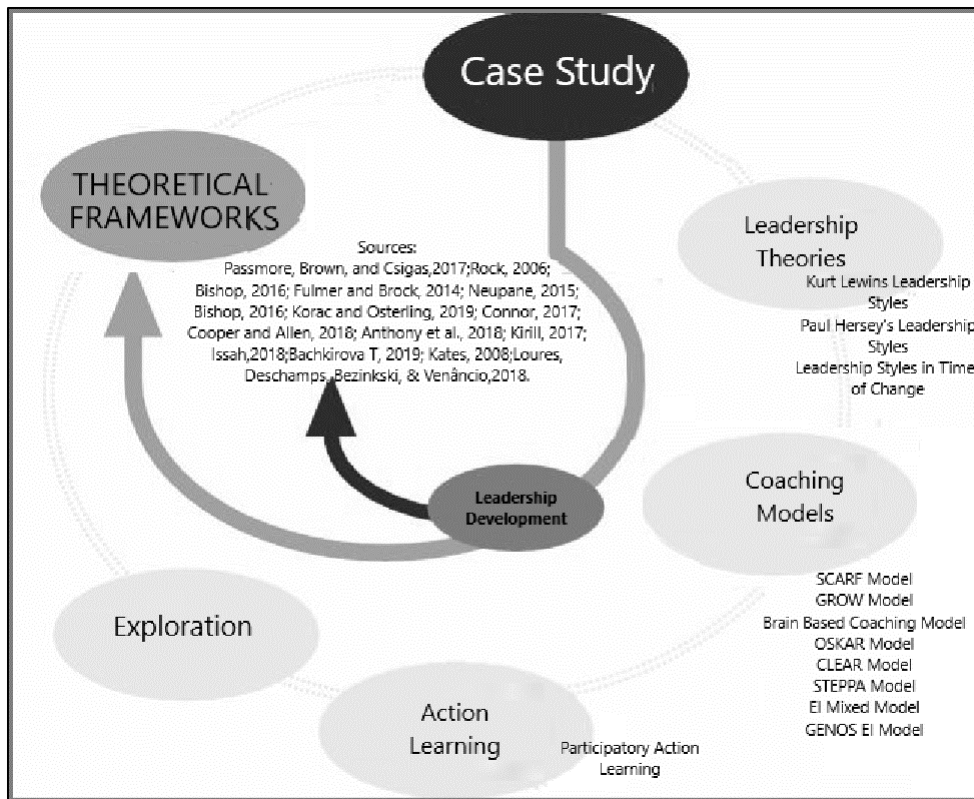


Figure 2.4: Theoretical frameworks explored in this study

Adapted from the literature review study in terms of the theoretical frameworks explored. Source: Own.

The theoretical framework involved a critical analysis of specific theories to outline the framework of the study, in order to investigate and critique the relevance of this study. The theoretical framework explored was grounded in leadership theories and styles, coaching models, and action research. This allowed the researcher to examine existing theories that were relevant to the research purpose.

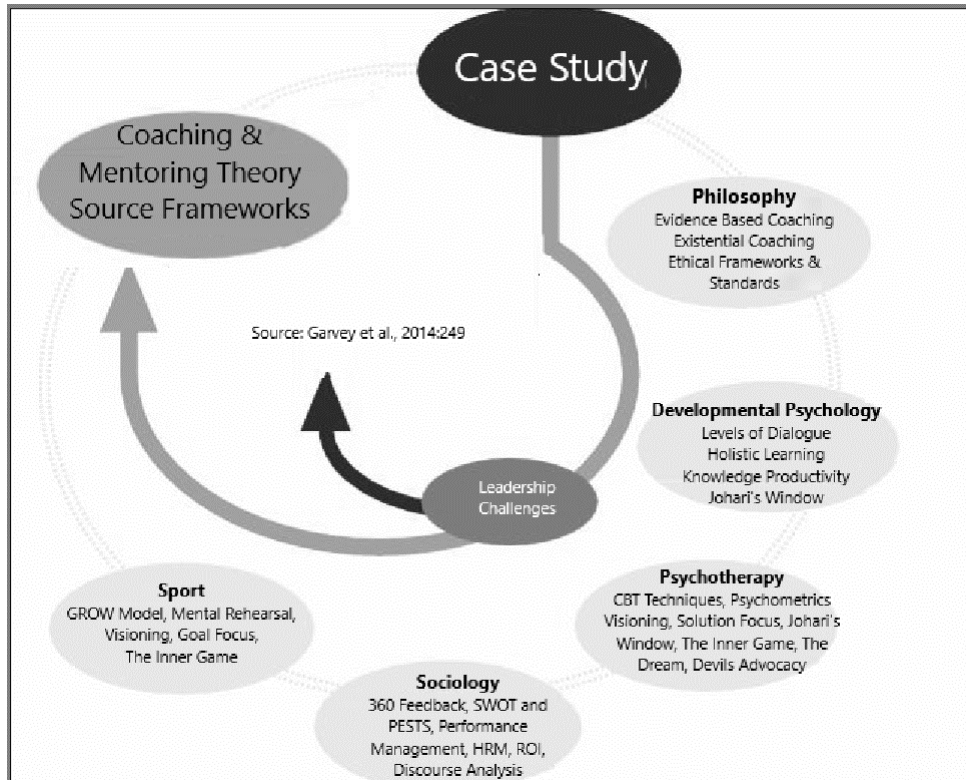


Figure 2.5: Coaching and mentoring theoretical frameworks explored in this study
Adapted from the literature review study in terms of the coaching and mentoring theories' conceptual frameworks. Source: Own

The coaching and mentoring framework involved a critical analysis of specific theories specific to coaching and mentoring. The coaching and mentoring framework theories explored were grounded in philosophy, developmental psychology, psychotherapy, sociology, and sports coaching. This enabled the researcher to further explore and examine these theories to add to the development of the coaching intervention.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

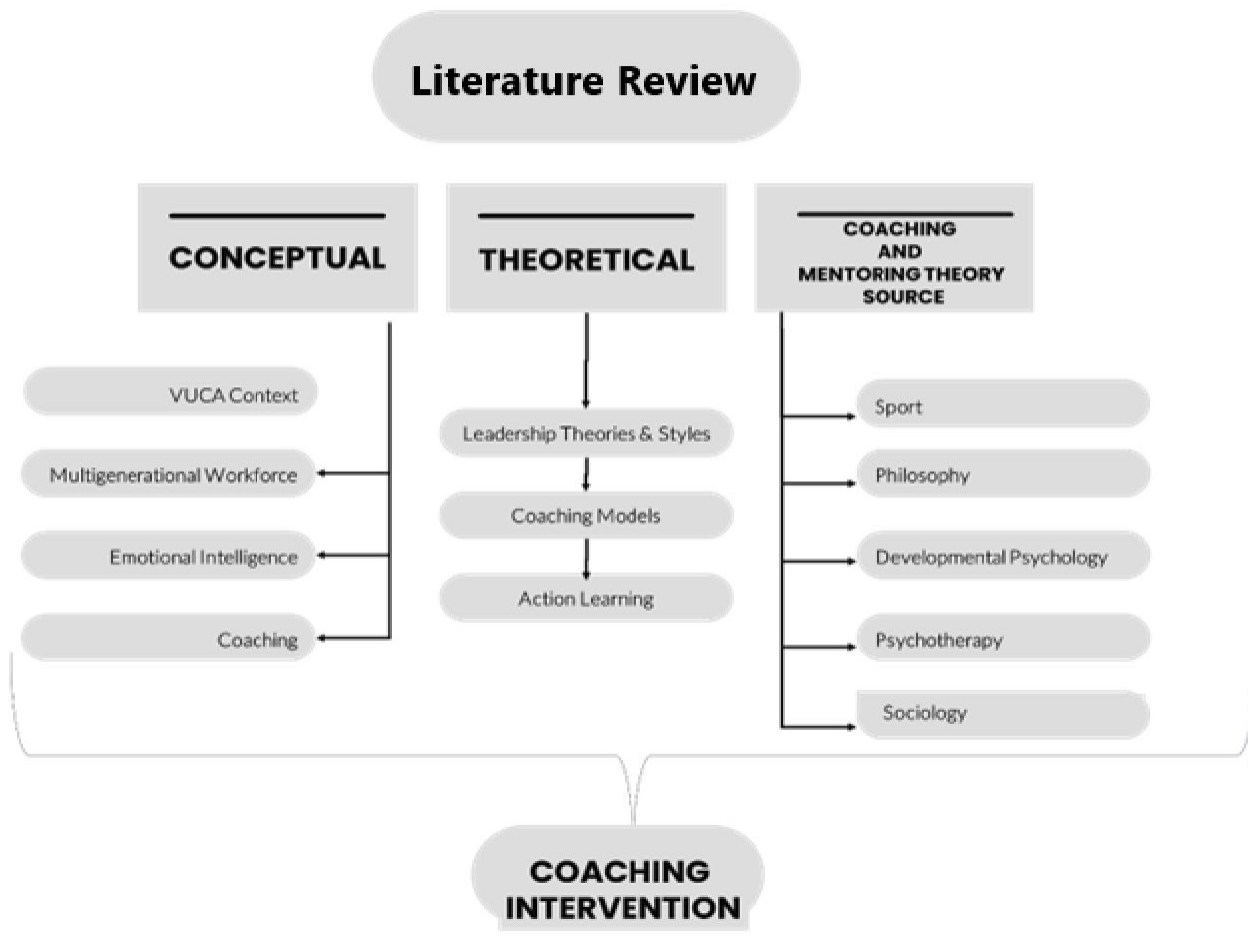


Figure 2.6: The conceptual and theoretical frameworks

Adapted from the literature review study in terms of the conceptual, theoretical, and coaching and mentoring frameworks explored by the researcher anchored to the literature of the disciplinary base in the study.

Figure 2.6 represents the linking of the conceptual, theoretical, and coaching and mentoring frameworks in one diagram. The conceptual and theoretical frameworks improved the objectivity and reliability of the research process. They gave the research design, data collection, and analysis a defined structure, ensuring that the study was methodical and coherent. They also provided the research a prism through which to study and comprehend the data gathered, enabling the

researcher to reach relevant conclusions, as corroborated by Saunders et al. (2012).

2.8 Conclusion

In the current VUCA landscape, the leadership of organisations in general requires a different leadership, management, and support approach. Leaders are required to manage their expectations of employees, while still steering the business in the correct direction during this uncertain, complex, and ambiguous era. These are unfamiliar challenging times, and leaders need to be adaptable, agile, and resilient in the face of adversity. Furthermore, a pipeline of next-generation future leaders is required in this engineering sector.

Definitions, leadership styles, coaching models, EI, and the multigenerational workforce context were explored in this chapter. Some benefits were identified in the literature review in this chapter, which are viewed against the backdrop of the study's qualitative and participatory action research. The literature review's overall goal was to provide an understanding of VUCA, leadership, differences between generations in the workforce, coaching, EI, and the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that support these themes. In the context of today's complex and quickly evolving business landscape, this study has integrated existing research, identified gaps, and offered suggestions for future research and practical applications in the recommendations. The ensuing chapter presents the research methodology adopted in the empirical study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter concentrated on the literature review on leadership styles, a broad range of results of leaders, coaching models, generational differences, and EI. This chapter covers the research methodology, which is viewed as a systematic, organised, data-based, objective, and critical process (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). The goal of a research study is to answer questions and acquire new knowledge (Marczyk et al., 2005). Where coaching of leaders has been used as an intervention to develop leadership skills, this research investigated the coaching model's pertinence and practicality, which is discussed in this chapter. This chapter explores the assumptions made and referred to in this research. It further outlines the research philosophy, design and methodology approach taken, strategy, data collection, target population, sample, data assurance, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research aim, research objectives and research questions

This study sought to investigate leadership coaching readiness at a senior level at NCE, an engineering consulting organisation based in KwaZulu-Natal, by determining whether leaders could use their EI and interpersonal effectiveness to reach business goals, while also bridging the generational gap between millennials and executives and senior management.

The research objectives of the study were as follows:

Research Objective One: To determine whether executive leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.

Research Objective Two: To identify the type of executive coaching programme required in the current landscape.

Research Objective Three: To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior and mid-level leaders, and result in a retention strategy.

Research Objective Four: To explore the influence of a coaching model in terms of building a positive and sustainable organisation.

The research questions applicable to the study were:

Research Question One: To what extent are leadership skills required for leaders in a VUCA world and post-COVID-19 world?

Research Question Two: How will the criteria be determined to unpack whether leaders are ready to harness new skills?

Research Question Three: How can a coaching model/programme best fit the organisation?

Research Question Four: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

3.3 Research philosophy

Research is based on worldviews and what one can understand and realise through it. Different researchers have different ideas about the problems they seek to address. By considering the context of the business from a systemic view, the researcher attains a more complete understanding of the reality (Saunders et al., 2012). Scotland (2012) discusses four components of paradigms: epistemology, ontology, methods, and methodology. Working from the perspective of a case study and a qualitative phenomenological ontology enabled the exploration and understanding of the participants' lived experiences, and what they derived from the experience. Neubauer et al. (2019, p. 93) postulate that epistemological phenomenology is entrenched in "What is it for an individual to know or to be conscious of a phenomenon" and "experiences of thought, memory, imagination, or emotion".

Çelik and Köksal (2019) suggest that understanding a study's perspectives on the nature of being and knowledge through ontology and epistemology, is important

for the study's rationale to be coherent. Ontology is about the nature of being and epistemology concerns the nature of knowledge. Cohen et al. (2018) state that ontology is about the nature of being of reality. Scotland (2012) describes epistemology as the link between knowledge and the knower. Ontology and epistemology are interlinked and inform each other.

Interpretivism is an epistemology that postulates that the researcher must understand differences between humans in their role as social actors. Phenomenology refers to how humans view the world around them (Saunders et al., 2012). Alharahshe (2020) makes the presumption that humans cannot be studied in the same way as physical phenomena. As a result, research in the social sciences must be distinguished from research in the natural sciences. Interpretivism considers the differences in cultures, situations, and past periods that have led to the formation of various social realities. Positivism differs from interpretivism in that it seeks to add depth to the learnings. In terms of this study, the researcher favoured observable social reality (Saunders et al., 2012), which is a qualitative interpretive approach. A phenomenologist focuses on the participant's experience. In this case, participants' experience and the impact of coaching was explored using reflection from the participatory action research.

The essential determinant of the research philosophy adopted for this study was action research within an aim of exploratory research, thus enabling the researcher to ensure that the research questions could be answered (Saunders et al., 2012). Smith and Osborn (2018) confer that exploratory research gives the researcher freedom to examine complicated and dynamic social nuances, enabling them to come up with novel insights to generate original theories. A qualitative phenomenological study was appropriate and possible within the confines of a single case study, namely NCE. The researcher was immersed in the study through the action research, which enabled her the ability to grasp the richness and diversity of the participants' experiences. Creswell (2011) posited that this type of research enables light to be shed on complex social dynamics, while making a significant contribution toward social science through the use of qualitative data gathering techniques, observation, interviews, and an understanding of the participants' beliefs and lived experiences.

3.4 Research approach

The researcher used a qualitative inductive approach in this study. Inductive research, as discussed in Saunders et al. (2012) and Creswell (2011), posits that researchers perform their study more thoroughly because it focuses on understanding human experiences and opinions around a specific occurrence. Broadly speaking, three research approaches are recognised: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods.

The quantitative approach (positivist) uses numerical data primarily from surveys, statistics, graphs, or questionnaires (Saunders et al., 2012). The qualitative approach (interpretivist), as argued by Basias and Pollalis (2018), is beneficial in understanding the intricacy of the phenomenon in question in its natural environment. It is broadly achieved through interviews, focus groups, and observation, as cited in Saunders et al. (2012), but can also make use of pictures and video clips.

Table 3.1: Qualitative data vs. quantitative data

Qualitative data	Quantitative data
Founded on meanings articulated through words	Based on meanings derived from numbers
The data that is collected in a non-standardised format requires the data classification into categories	The data here is gathered in a standardised format and numerical
Conceptualised analysis	Statistical analysis by means of diagrams and statistics

Source: Adapted from Saunders et al. (2012, p. 482).

The qualitative inductive research approach adopted in this study refers to the overall perspective guiding the research process, in order to explore and understand the meanings that participants attached to their experiences. The researcher was part of the research process and was able to gather data through interactions, which allowed for collaborative participatory research, through using the tools of interviews, focus groups, and participatory action research for the coaching interventions. This led to the development of trust between the researcher and participants, allowing the data to be meaningful. Knowledge about

the organisation being studied was gained through the interactions and personal experiences of the participants and through observation.

3.5 Research design

Saunders et al. (2012) postulate that the research design is a broad plan of how the study answers the research questions, through tools employed to acquire and analyse data, including questionnaires, observation, and interviews, from a qualitative perspective. This study adopted a single case study strategy with participatory action research on the organisation being studied.

Creswell (2011) defines qualitative studies as an inquiry method that explores a central phenomenon. The advantage of a qualitative method is the use of open-ended questions in the semi-structured interviews and of probing, which enable the participants to provide feedback in their own words. The open-ended questions draw out meaningful and culturally salient replies from the participants, and are deep and descriptive (Saunders et al., 2012; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013).

The research design will answer the research questions through the tools employed to acquire and analyse data, including questionnaires, observation, and interviews from a qualitative perspective. The research methodology must connect to the research problem and the objectives. As alluded to earlier, for this study, the research design was qualitative. Creswell (2011) defined qualitative studies as an inquiry method that explores a central phenomenon. The epistemological and ontological stance behind the study, as discussed in Berryman (2019), is what is considered necessary. For this study, the researcher favoured observable social reality (Saunders et al., 2012), which is a qualitative approach. A phenomenologist focuses on the participant's experience. In this case, participants' experience and the impact of coaching were explored.

The qualitative method answered the research questions through interviews and focus groups. The research design chosen, that of participatory action research, was to ensure that the researcher obtained evidence that would provide answers to the research questions as unambiguously as possible. It should be pointed out

that qualitative research, together with action research, enabled the researcher to gain an understanding into the nature and complexity of the phenomenon in question; both enabled the researcher to reflect on and adapt the coaching model, and triangulate the data. As discussed in Marshall and Rossman (2011, p. 52), triangulation “is the act of bringing more than one source of data to bear on a single point”.

An advantage of the qualitative method for the researcher in this exploratory research was the use of open-ended questions in the semi-structured interviews and of probing, which enabled the participants to provide feedback in their own words. The open-ended questions can draw out meaningful and culturally salient replies from the participants, and are deep and descriptive (Saunders et al., 2012; Sekaran & Bougie, 2013), thereby allowing patterns and themes to come through from the data.

The ontological stance was related to subjectivism, as the participants are part of a systemic organisation, impacted by realities outside their system, and have their own individual perceptions of where they fit in the system. This study adopted philosophical pragmatism as an overarching theoretical framework, as pragmatism suggests that development is the ultimate purpose, as discussed below. For NCE, organisational coaching may benefit the participants with career development, leadership development, and personal development, while bringing organisational sustainability. Furthermore, NCE could build on relevant ideas and concepts from other fields by using philosophical pragmatism as an overarching theoretical framework, suggesting theoretical propositions uniquely relevant to organisational coaching. Through action research, each stage during the qualitative study was planned, evaluated, and actioned. The case study looked at the company and participants as a systemic organisation, which was thus the object of observation to understand the ontology (what really exists) and experiences of the participants (epistemology). Participatory action research was conducted, with the researcher being involved in the process as a credentialled coach and facilitator, and needing to be impartial in the process. The paradigm (ontology, epistemology, and axiology) is intricately intertwined, as detailed in Figure 3.1.

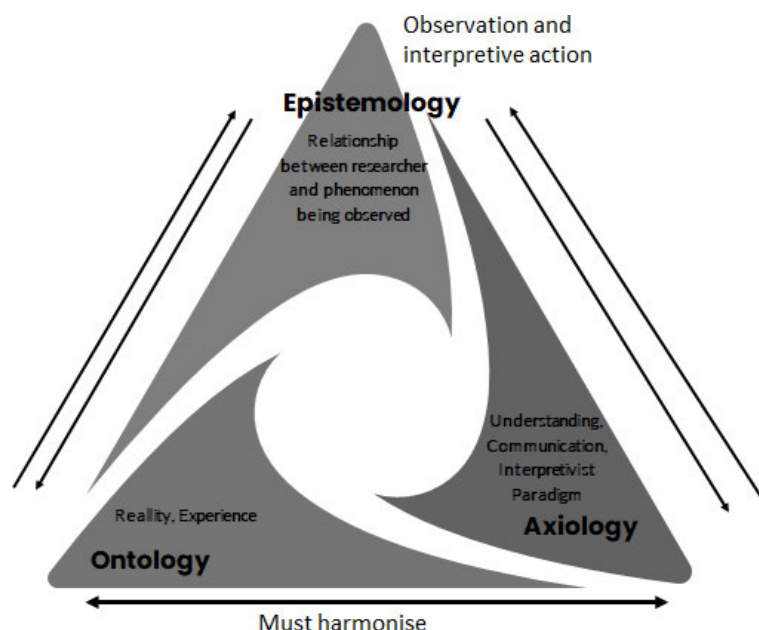


Figure 3.1: Triangle of ontology, epistemology and axiology

Source: Adapted from Patterson and Williams (1998, p.286-288)

Saunders et al. (2012) stated that the pragmatist approach's most crucial factor in the research philosophy is the research question. This determines whether one approach may be better than the other for answering particular questions. However, if the research question does not propose unambiguously that either a positivist or interpretivist philosophy is assumed, then this confirms the pragmatist's view that working with both philosophies is possible.

Pragmatism and interpretivism are described as worldviews or meta-theoretical paradigms. The choice of which worldview is determined by how one defines truth, reality, and knowledge. Interpretivism uses a top-down approach, and how one defines truth determines how one collects and interprets the data, which is always qualitative. The interpretive methodology requires the researcher to understand the system, persons, and coaching frameworks to develop a systemic coaching model that may answer the research questions.

Pragmatism accepts that there are both single and multiple realities, and the

purpose of the research determines how the data is collected and analysed, by possibly using a mixed methods approach. For example, one can use quantitative methods to analyse qualitative data further (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010).

Ontology is the philosophy of reality; as such, ontological and epistemological assumptions can be challenging to interpret, as discussed in Sieler (2003), the authors specifically noting perception, cognitive ability, language, and communication. Thus, through the study, the researcher will note any perceived change or shift in these three areas through the coaching intervention. The ontological position that the researcher has taken in this study is the subjectivist view, in that all participants will attach their own interpretations and individual meanings to social phenomena, as discussed in Saunders et al. (2012). David and Sutton (2011) submit that ontology focuses on reality and is based on the viewpoint or opinion of the individual within the reality that they perceive.

The epistemology (what we know) employed coalesces interpretivism with pragmatism, ontology (what is there), and subjectivism (Saunders et al., 2012).

This epistemology is applied here to the business research, which may be difficult and is particular to a specific context, in this case, the study of an engineering consulting organisation based in KwaZulu-Natal, in which the sample is made up of senior managers and future leaders. The epistemological stance undertaken in this study is the interpretivist philosophy. This enables the understanding of the social roles of others in accordance with our own collection of connotations, and the construal of everyday social roles with their own set of sense, as cited in Saunders et al. (2012). The assumption here is to understand the participants' perceptions in relation to the coaching intervention, leadership skill readiness, and a multigenerational workforce.

The emphasis in this study was on the inductive approach, as it was a means to understand how the employees attached meaning to events. The researcher was also a part of the research, as it was participatory action research, and was immersed in it alongside the participants from NCE during the qualitative data collection. The topic inferred that the study would unpack personal stories,

cultures, and experiences within a workgroup of executives, together with their values, and explore this further. Thus, an inductive, exploratory method was employed, enabling an understanding of issues in the engineering profession, especially within the context of executive coaching in a post-COVID-19 world and cultivating a millennial leadership pipeline.

The researcher used an inductive approach in the study, by allowing the findings to emerge from the data of the significant themes, which were not imposed by structure without explicitly generating theory. Furthermore, this allowed for flexibility, which further enabled changes in research emphasis, as the study progressed through the stages of focus groups, observation, and interviews. This further enabled clear links to appear between the objectives and data through the answering of the research questions.

As highlighted by Saunders et al. (2012), there are significant differences between the inductive and deductive approaches and are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Deductive versus inductive emphasis

Deduction emphasises:	Induction emphasises:
Scientific principles	Gaining an understanding of the connotations people attach to events
Moving from theory to data	Understanding the research situation closely
The necessity to explain causal relationships between variables	The collection of qualitative data
Gathering of quantitative data	Allows flexibility in the structure which enables changes in research emphasis as the research progresses
Controls applied to ensure the validity of data	A realisation that the researcher is part of the research process
The organisation of concepts to ensure clarity of definition	Less concern with the requirement to generalise
An approach that is extremely structured	

The researcher is not part of what is being studied	
It is a requirement that to enable the ability to generalise the conditions enough, samples must be selected	

Source: Adapted from Saunders et al. (2012, p.127)

From Table 3.2, one can draw inferences that deductive research starts with theories and tests them through data collection, as opposed to inductive research, which proceeds from specific observations to general theories. This study in particular used an inductive approach, which enabled the researcher to gain a contextual understanding of the research problem, and also allowed the findings to emerge out of the significant themes from the data, which were not imposed by structure without explicitly generating theory.

3.6 Classification of research

Saunders et al. (2012) discuss the classification of research as threefold: exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory which assists in clarifying the understanding of a problem through questioning and revisiting the issue in a new light. Three main mechanisms of performing exploratory research are reviewing the literature, interviews, and focus groups. As posited by Saunders et al. (2012), the advantage of this type of research is that it is flexible and adaptable. In this study, where exploratory research was used, data was gathered through interviews and focus groups. This complemented the participatory action research, which was more transformative in nature and action oriented in terms of reflection and monitoring.

Kumar (2014) suggests that due to the exploratory nature of the research, some sections may be descriptive, while others may be explanatory and correlational. Combining these would result in a strong research study. As cited in Saunders et al. (2012), Adams and Schvaneveldt (1991) support this fact by arguing that the flexibility essential to exploratory research does not imply a lack of direction for the inquiry, but rather that the research had been broad in scope but then narrows as it develops, much like a funnel. Saunders et al. (2012) propose that exploratory

studies are essential in saying, “what is happening; to seek new insights; to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light” (Robson, 2002, p. 59). Furthermore, they will shed light on the particular problem. The researcher used exploratory research so as to gain new knowledge on the objectives at NCE, and to better understand the experiences of the participants in this systemic organisation, which had not been previously investigated. Through reflection, change was actioned so that the objectives could be met.

Descriptive research is used “... to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations” (Robson, 2002), as discussed in Saunders et al. (2012, p. 171). The researcher would have to have a clear understanding of the phenomenon prior to data collection. Generally, descriptive research is a precursor to explanatory research. The study was also based on a single case study, namely, the organisation being studied. Saunders et al. (2012), citing Robson (2002), noted that case study research is “a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence”. Case studies become the strategy of choice when the ‘how’ and ‘why’ questions are being asked, and the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon with a real-life context (Saunders et al., 2012; Yin, 2012).

The literature review also brought to life the complexity of the variables inherent in the phenomenon being studied. As discussed by Saunders et al. (2012), a significant characteristic of using a single case is defining the actual case. This case study informed the research in terms of the participants’ truths and experiences in their context (a systemic organisation), through the qualitative research tools of interviews, focus groups, and observations. The data from each source was then triangulated. This particular research at NCE, which was complemented with participatory action research, enabled the researcher to gain a thorough understanding of the research objectives and the challenges the organisation faced in the VUCA landscape it was navigating. Kumar (2014) suggests that the case study is predicated on the idea that since the case under investigation is typical of the industry, it can, therefore, shed light on issues and

circumstances that are common in the sector.

The researcher complimented the study by following participatory action research. Saunders et al. (2012) cite that Lewin first used action research terminology in 1946. Johnson (2011) stated that action research studies could vary in length, complexity, and process, and that this process was pre-planned and systematic in order to enable observation and findings. Johnson (2011) concluded that there were five integral steps in such research: first choosing the appropriate data collection method; collecting and analysing data; deciding how the results can be applied; communicating results; and then forming an action plan with others.

Lewin advocated for action research, which is a cyclical, iterative approach to research involving planning, taking action, fact-finding, and resetting. Action research is “research in action rather than research about action” (Coughlan & Coughlan, 2010, p. 4). “Action is taken to improve practice, and the research generates new knowledge about how and why the improvements came about.” Furthermore, action research is participatory in nature, and is a partnership between the researcher and participants for improvements through further action. The researcher in this case study took on the role of a management researcher to be able to develop valuable knowledge in order to support organisational problem solving. Many models are in use, as observed in Pardede (2018); however, the stages in each are similar.

Table 3.3: Stages of action research

Stage	Kemmis& Taggart (1990)	Saggar (1992)	O'Leary (2004)	British Council (2015)
1	Planning	Problem formulation	Observation	Identify the issue and plan
2	Acting	Gathering of data	Reflect	Teach/act
3	Observing	Analysis of data	Plan	Observation
4	Reflection	Results reported	Action	Reflection

Source: Pardede (2018)

The case study focuses on gathering information in a real-life situation. Thus, the case study included an empirical investigation of a phenomenon in its natural setting through various data methods: interviews, focus groups, observation, and action research through the various coaching interventions. The foremost advantage of case study research, as stated by Saunders et al. (2012), is that it can increase one's knowledge of the differences in people's behaviour. Through the action research cycle, the researcher can plan, act, observe, reflect/evaluate, and change as the study progresses. In participatory action research, the participants and researchers construct the information as the study progresses. Moreover, based on Kolb's Reflective Model (1984), the following aspects were taken into account: participant involvement through the coaching; the participants and researcher having had the concrete experience; reflection after each coaching session (identified in Kolb's reflection cycle as reflective observation, Figure 3.2, of what the participant experienced; and reflection of what the researcher observed. Reviews and reflection in terms of the AI coaching model were also reflected upon to determine whether to take this forward or not. The participants found the AI coaching to be onerous in relation to their daily workload.

The face – to - face coaching was onboarded and for coachees appeared to more meaningful. Patterns were identified and literature was reviewed in terms of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. At the abstract conceptualization stage, experiences were analysed. This occurred after each coaching experience. Active experimentation took place, with the participants developing personal development plans to try and implement what they had learned through the coaching intervention. Furthermore, during the process, emotional intelligence assessments and workshops formed part of the coaching to review. The workshops also seemed to be more effective than the participants all taking part in the assessments. This knowledge portrays the voice and understanding of all the participants in the study through reflection. Kolb's Reflective Model is displayed in Figure 3.2 to illustrate the journey of the model undertaken in the study.

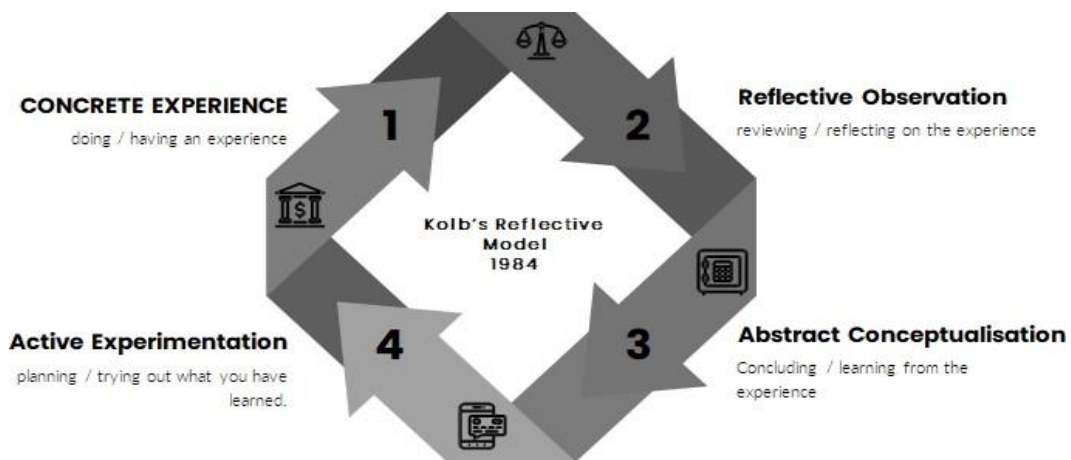


Figure 3.2: Kolb's reflective model (1984)

Source: adapted from Petkus (2000, p. 65)

Participatory action research is heavily intertwined with an organisation's focus on action and promoting change. Reason and Bradbury (2008, p. 1) advocated that participatory action research is what occurs when "people try to work together to address key problems in their communities or organisations". It is useful for answering 'how' questions.

Thus, action research differs from other research strategies because of its explicit focus on action, and in particular on promoting change within the organisation. The researcher is, therefore, part of the action for transformation and change. Figure 3.3 illustrates the spiral used for action research, as described by Saunders et al. (2012).

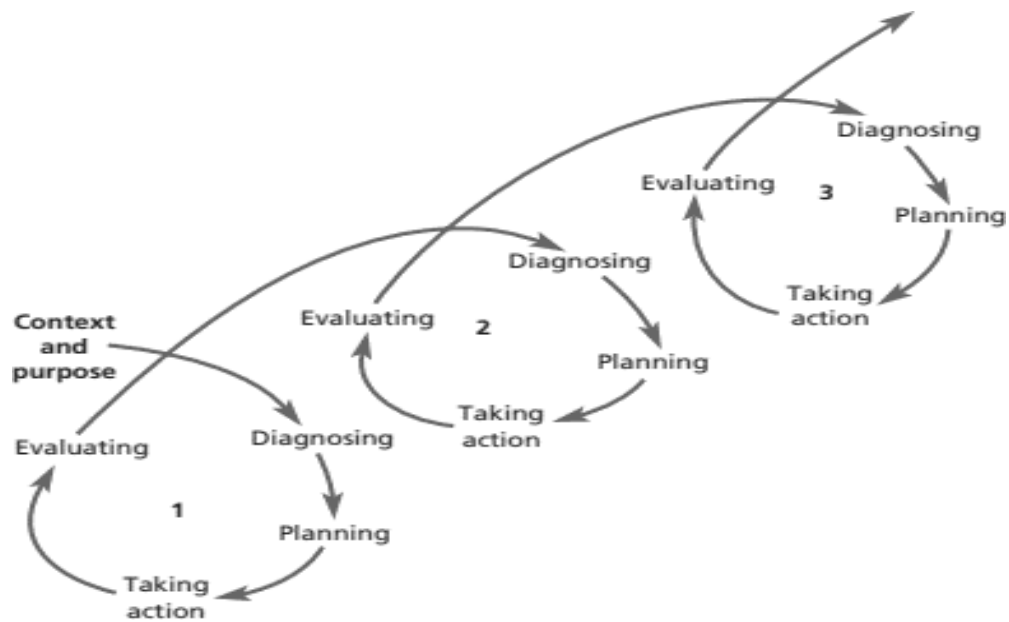


Figure 3.3: Action research spiral

Source: Saunders et al. (2012, p. 179)

Table 3.4 presents an overview of the sample and research method for each section of the action research cycle at the organisation studied. This is explained in detail in Chapter four. The departure point of the action research was linked to the creation of the proposed coaching model. The research strategy was then used to answer the research questions. Saunders et al. (2012, p.153) affirmed the following research strategies, to name a few as examples: “experiments, surveys, case studies, action research, grounded theory, ethnography and archival research.” The strategies that were used in this study were case study research with action research used for exploratory research. Triangulation of the data collected, the qualitative data from semi-structured interviews and focus groups, was concluded. Action research was used to gather primary data from the organisation studied, through the coaching model that was developed, as the study allowed for the researcher to be involved in the process. Table 3.4 is an overview of the cycle that was undertaken at NCE.

Table 3.4: An overview of the action research cycle at the NCE

Plan Context and Purpose		Gather information around the organisation	Understand the roles in the systemic organisation
		Review related literature. Developing appropriate research design including tools	Review literature regarding coaching models, the context of the industry, generational diversity, leadership skills
Observe / Diagnose		Address research questions	Journaling what is seen heard and felt through the process from observations
Planning / Reflection		Reflection in terms of the systemic organisation Monitor implementation and effects	Gap was no coaching model/intervention, no understanding of EI and then actioned EI Workshops and Face-to-face coaching. Reflect on ethical considerations
Taking Action	SAMPLE: Senior Leadership EXCO	The current landscape skills required EI. Re-enforce EI in practice. Debrief Assessments to EXCO	Ran EI workshops for leadership and assessed awareness in terms of EI and practice in the workplace within the context of leadership skills and bridging the generational gap.
	SAMPLE: Managers	Coaching 1:1	Senior manager and manager structured coaching
Reflection and Evaluating	SAMPLE: Managers	What else could support the managers in their coaching journey. Reflective practice in terms of the coach as being the researcher. Debrief coaching models and assessments to managers	Implement AI coaching. Review literature to support or negate reflective ideas Reflect on ethical considerations
Planning		What could be missing in terms of understanding of the multigenerational workforce	Implement EI Assessment
Action	SAMPLE: Managers	AI coaching for managers	To support the coaching process
	SAMPLE: Managers	EI workshop managers Reinforce EI in practice.	Ran EI workshops for managers and assessed through observation awareness in terms of EI

		Debrief Assessments	and practice in the workplace within the context of leadership skills and bridging the generational gap.
Diagnose / Reflection		Reflective practice in terms of the project thus far. What is missing what could be improved	Review literature to support or negate reflective ideas. Reflect on ethical considerations
Action and Reflection	SAMPLE: Managers	Focus Groups Triangulate thought from interviews, focus groups, workshops, and observations.	Focus group to answer the questions of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifying the type of programme required a model or coaching intervention tailor-made to the NCE, to bridge the gap between a diverse generation workforce, to ensure transfer of critical knowledge and to evaluate whether the model added value. Ascertaining whether a model would bridge the gap between senior leaders and mid-level leaders and result in a retention strategy. Reflecting on ethical considerations
Reflection	SAMPLE: Managers	Semi-structured interviews	Semi-structured interviews to establish what can be improved in the coaching model, is the coaching beneficial, does this coaching bridge the multigenerational gap and how. Review literature to support or negate reflective ideas. Reflect on ethical considerations
Action	SAMPLE: Less than age of 35	Group coaching future leaders	Group coaching for future leaders
	SAMPLE: Less than age of 35	Focus group	Focus group to answer the research questions
	SAMPLE: Less than age of 35	EI coaching	Ran EI workshops for future leaders
Reflection		Semi-structured interviews Reflection Review literature review	Four future leaders to determine if coaching can bridge the gap and how. Reflect on ethical considerations.

3.7 Sampling strategy

3.7.1 Target population

According to Hair (2019), a population is defined as a full group of persons having common observable characteristics. Furthermore, Saunders et al. (2012) stated that a population refers to the whole grouping of participants in research. The population, thus, is the entire grouping that the researcher will obtain assumptions from. For this research study, the target population was the population at NCE, which was made up of 177 employees.

3.7.2 Sampling and sample size

Saunders et al. (2012) stated that the sample is a subset of the population. Including all members of a population is not practicable; thus, sampling is required especially with tight deadlines for a thesis, and is more manageable as fewer people are involved. The qualitative element of the research was determined based on whether any form of coaching had been implemented at the senior management level, at the organisation studied.

The two primary methods of sampling are probability and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is systematic in nature, is required when representativeness is crucial for generalisation, and is based on numbers. Non-probability judgement sampling was used, which can be referred to as purposive sampling. Figure 3.4 depicts the two types of sampling designs extracted from Saunders et al. (2012, p. 213).

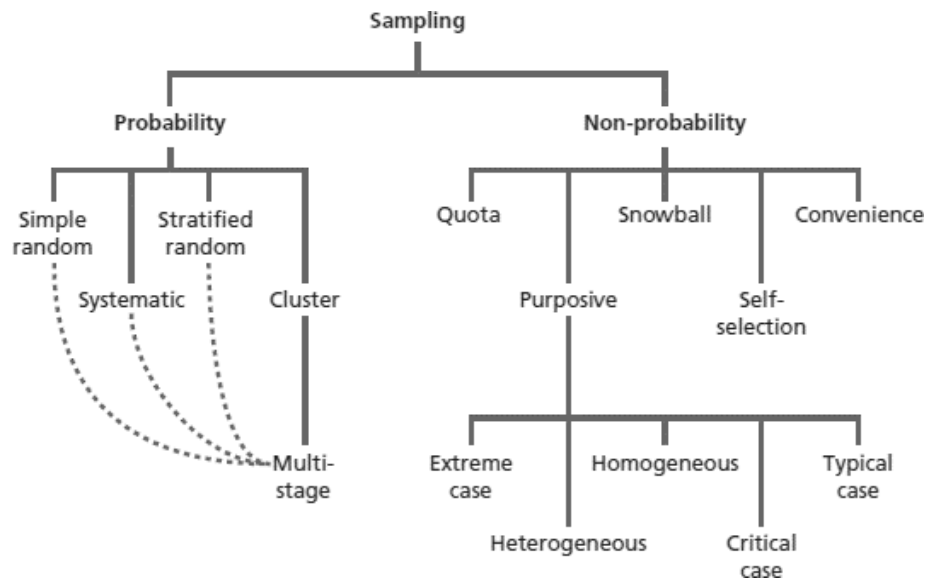


Figure 3.4: Sampling techniques

Source: Saunders et al. (2012:213)

For this particular study, non-probability, purposive sampling was employed, and the sample was 17. The rationale behind this selection was that occupational levels and generational differences needed to be considered. These preselected criteria included professional registration status, executive job title, millennial manager, and career pipeline in terms of employment equity at NCE. Boddy (2016) posited that a sample size of one participant can be meaningful in itself. Purposive sampling was carried out on group participants, according to preselected measures related to the research sub-questions (Saunders et al., 2012). Boddy (2016) mentions that, generally as a helpful guide, theoretical saturation can occur with 12 participants before reaching data saturation. The researcher also considered data saturation amongst the group of participants. No new information and insights had come through the interviews. As such, it was found that even though this research study sample was not large, the sample remained adequate and meaningful. Smith (2004) posited that a smaller sample size can assist with enabling the researcher to delve deeper into the experiences of participants, which is corroborated by Gray (2017). Saunders et al. (2012) state that purposive sampling is very informative and can be expanded upon at a later stage. The selected participants met the characteristics required for the sample and allowed

the researcher to select a sample that enabled the research questions to be answered.

Table 3.5: Population and sample

The population of the organisation Under study	Purposive Sampling	Qualitative Sample
177	4 executives	2
	2 functional managers	2
	9 sector managers	9
	Future leaders of less than age 35	4

As explored in Sekaran and Bougie (2013), purposive sampling ensures that particular individuals are adequately represented; hence, the groupings of relevance were the management, which was a total of nine staff, and four future leaders. The study was conducted in KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, at an engineering consulting organisation.

Table 3.6: The research approach applied in this research study

PHILOSOPHY	Qualitative Epistemological Phenomenological Ontology Exploratory Research
RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN	Qualitative Inductive and Action Research
RESEARCH AIM	This particular study sought to investigate leadership coaching readiness to harness new leaderships skills at a senior level in the organisation, which through the crafting of a coaching model, could possibly enable leaders to improve on their emotional intelligence and interpersonal effectiveness to reach business goals and bridge the generational gap.
RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	1.To determine whether executive leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.

	2.To identify the type of executive coaching programme required in the current landscape.
	3.To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior and mid-level leaders and result in a retention strategy.
	4.To explore the influence of a coaching model in terms of building a positive and sustainable organisation.
RESEARCH QUESTIONS	1.To what extent are leadership skills required for leaders in a VUCA world and post-COVID 19 World?
	2.How will the criteria be determined to unpack whether leaders are ready to harness new skills?
	3.How can a coaching model/programme best fit the organisation?
	4.What can be changed by means of a coaching model?
STRATEGY	Case study, participatory action research
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION TOOLS	Literature review, interview protocol, focus group and observation
SAMPLING - NON-PROBABILITY SAMPLING PURPOSE	Population: NCE engineering firm 177 employees
	Sample: Senior management team (2 functional managers, 9 sector managers, 2 executives) and future leaders (4 millennial/Gen-X African employees)
PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION PROCESS	Pilot study: In-depth interview protocol (3 participants) and focus groups
	Study: Interview protocol. FULL SAMPLE
	Workshop – EI
	Focus Group
	Observation: Structured executive coaching using model
DATA QUALITY AND ANALYSIS	Trustworthiness: Credibility, conformability, dependability and transferability
	Thematic analysis
	Triangulation. Data collected within the same design/approach/method/inquiry triangulated, e.g., interview with observation data or focus group interview data, and so forth.

3.8 Pilot study

A pilot study is a preliminary study that determines the feasibility of the main study (Saunders et al., 2012). A pilot study was conducted to ascertain the validity of the interview protocol and focus group. As discussed by Saunders et al. (2012), a pilot study informs the study further and ensures a meticulously mapped out process, and sound processing of this information. The pilot study was conducted on 25th February, 2022. and assisted the researcher in determining whether the data collection plan required further refining.

In this particular study, the pilot study was undertaken on three participants, one Gen-X manager and two millennial employees, who were as similar as possible to the sample of the target population, but not one who would make up the final sample, in order to avoid bias. The participants were advised that this was a pilot study and as such would not be included in the actual study, but rather used for clarity and to improve upon the questions that were used as the primary data collection tools. The interview protocol comprised open-ended exploratory questions and allowed for expansion of the questions. The interviewees suggested that they were adequate. Due to the possibility to expand through the open-ended questions, the researcher also sensed that the questions were sufficient and appropriate in terms of meaning. Clarity was sought concerning the generational workforce. However, no significant adjustments or modifications were made. The pilot study assisted with the mapping out of the timing of the interview protocols, with attaining further insights from undertaking a particular literature review, with regard to the younger generations learning from the older ones, and the differences between coaching and mentoring. Anonymity was maintained in the pilot study through the participants being allocated a number. All participants furnished informed consent to participate in the pilot study

3.9 Research instruments

Adosi (2020) defined a research instrument as a tool that is used in gathering data to satisfy the research questions. The research objective must be recognised to ensure that one chooses the correct research instrument. This will determine the

who, what, and how. For this study, for the primary data the tools were observation of the participants, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. Secondary data was also used, which required a comprehensive search, analysis, critique, and compilation of the literature review for the study.

3.9.1 Semi-structured interviews

Primary data at NCE was collected via semi-structured interviews. The interviews were completed in September 2022 and each had a duration ranging from 30 to 45 minutes in length. A semi-structured interview sheet was crafted and is attached as Annexure D. Standardised questions were used to ensure no bias, as all interviewees were asked the same questions. The researcher first asked closed questions for demographics pertaining to the generation and occupational level, and then moved to open-ended questions. The semi-structured interviews allowed for some structure in that the same questions were asked, but were sufficiently open-ended to allow reflection to occur, as supported by Saunders et al. (2012). Thus, the researcher gained rich insights into the experiences of the participants and acquired an understanding of their perceptions.

Permission was sought from the organisation before implementing the study. Before the interviews and focus groups, each participant was provided with an introduction to the purpose of the study as well as a written undertaking regarding confidentiality and their anonymity. The anonymity of participants was ensured throughout the coding process, as each respondent was assigned a code. Having just navigated the COVID-19 pandemic, the researcher could not complete all interviews face-to-face, but used MS Teams where they were not possible. The clear advantage of the face-to-face interviews was the ability to deal with nuances and reflections expressed. However, this was mitigated in the virtual interviews by the triangulation of the data from the focus groups and observation through the coaching interventions.

The semi-structured interviews and the focus groups were recorded, and the verbatim transcripts from the recordings were reviewed and coded. Key themes were identified, and conclusions and recommendations were drawn from the data analysis. Findings were reviewed against the literature. Triangulation of the data was examined through the variety of qualitative techniques employed to ensure the data's consistency and coherence. The data was scrutinised methodically and meticulously, as suggested by Saunders et al. (2012) and Kumar (2014).

3.9.2 Observation

Participant observation is about collecting data on the participants (coachees) in their usual environment and during the coaching process (Saunders et al., 2012). McKechnie (2008) stated that observation is “one of the oldest and most fundamental research method approaches. This approach involves collecting data using one's senses, especially looking, and listening in a systematic and meaningful way” (p. 573). For this study, the researcher observed the management team and the millennials identified for employment equity and fast-tracking who had been coached. The population was civil employees at NCE. Cohen et al. (2018) posited that observation enables a researcher to collect a variety of data in terms of research setting, communications, and non-routine occurrences. Kumar (2014) put forward that participant observation occurs when the researcher is immersed in the activities of the research. The researcher participated in the observation through the coaching sessions and workshop facilitation.

The observation in the coaching intervention was specifically aimed at gathering information, in terms of the coaching intervention and tools, in order to develop a model specific to the organisation being studied. Observing participants' actions after the coaching session and how they delivered on the action was taken into consideration, in addition to the use of the artificial intelligence coaching tool platform, if the participants used this, and their preferences. There were also observations of the application of EI techniques after workshops

and discussions in coaching feedback sessions, to see if these were meaningful to the coaching model and relevant to the organisation. Furthermore, in the focus groups, EI was discussed in terms of its relevancy to the participants, the organisation, and the research objectives of the study. The observations took place from February 2022 through to October 2022, during which time participatory action research and EI workshops were being completed to determine if these would be relevant for the coaching model.

Narrative descriptive recording was used through brief notes from the coaching sessions within 48 hours of their completion, in order to reflect on the outcome of the sessions. Thereafter, reflection by the researcher was concluded in terms of the influence of the session in the participants' natural setting. The learning gained from this observation through reflection was included in the crafting of the coaching model specific to the organisation, in the recommendations for the coaching model, and for future studies at NCE and in the industry at large.

3.9.3 Focus groups

Focus groups, described as interviews in Saunders et al. (2012), are typically used with an explicit viewpoint, and one can glean rich information from these sessions. Kumar (2014) states that in focus groups, one examines the perceptions, experiences, and understandings of a group of people who have some shared experience of a given scenario. All sector and functional managers participated in Focus Group 1, while millennials and Gen-Zs participated in Focus Group 2.

Focus groups considered: why and if there was a communication discord between millennials and senior management; whether EI coaching would bridge this discord and the skills required for this; and whether a coaching programme fit the organisation being studied. As the focus groups went along, salient discussion points emanated.

The benefit of the focus group was for the triangulation of the data from the interviews. Focus groups were held after the participatory action research during coaching and after the EI workshops. Focus Group 1 was completed on the 4th of May

2022, while Focus Group 2 was completed on the 20th of June 2022. The focus groups were recorded and transcribed within 48 hours, and the write-up was verified by participants. Focus groups are beneficial for the expansion of discussion when one participant adds on to what another participant has mentioned, as suggested by Creswell (2011).

3.9.4 Secondary data

Secondary data in the form of documentary data, as cited in Saunders et al. (2012), was extracted from publications, websites, eBooks, journal articles, and conference papers by means of desktop research. Sources included repositories from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (E-library, journals and research space) and Emerald Publishing, EBSCO, Sabinet, Google Scholar, Business Management, and documentary. This type of secondary documentary data may be helpful for research in a particular organisation. Furthermore, Kumar (2014) notes that secondary data can come from government or quasi-government publications, earlier research that has been done by others, personal records, and mass media.

In this research, the secondary data that was explored is also based on the current data from industry's sector, and on the various coaching models and leadership skills required in the post-COVID-19 pandemic within a 5IR context. The referencing style used in this thesis is the APA6 style, which uses the author-date citation system. This style was prescribed to be used in this research study by the university.

3.10 Data analysis

Once the primary data was obtained, it needed to be analysed. Saunders et al. (2012) states that data analysis reduces and displays data from the collection process. From the standpoint of an inductive approach, data for the primary study was extracted from the transcripts of the interviews and transcripts from the focus groups to answer the research questions, and from observation from the participatory action research and secondary data. The inductive coding involved extracting new themes and patterns from the data, which made it possible to interrogate.

3.10.1 The sample and instruments

Sixteen interviews were carried out. As the interviews progressed, no new information was coming through, and data saturation was observed in the qualitative interviews in that the same responses were being revealed. Boddy (2016) states that data saturation can even occur at twelve interviews. The first focus group comprised of nine managers, while the second one comprised of seven future female leaders. Observation through participatory action research was actioned to explore, examine, and analyse the face-to-face coaching model, AI coaching model, and emotional intelligence workshops and assessments.

3.10.2 Primary data collection process

Interviews and focus groups were audio-recorded to identify the participants and ensure the validity of the data collected. Notes during the observations were formulated encapsulating appropriate data. The information was then transcribed into MS Word and organised and labelled. The researcher conducted a qualitative analysis employing thematic analysis utilising NVivo Release Version 1.7 (1533), which enabled the researcher to organise, code and manage the data.

As alluded to earlier, the emphasis was on the inductive approach from the interviews, focus groups and observation, as it was a means to gain an understanding of how the employees attached meanings to their experiences. The data linked to significance or content was labelled and coded for each instrument. Statements pertaining to the research topic, objectives, and theoretical constructs were separated from the rest of the information. To improve the themes and guarantee their consistency, this procedure was carried out iteratively, with regular comparison of data from interviews, focus groups, and observation.

NVivo thematic analysis, as explored in Gues et al. (2012), was the principal analytic tool. Through NVivo software, key themes were recognised in the data by

identifying similarities, extracting themes, identifying relationships and connections, and highlighting differences between the generations. This is presented in detail in Chapter four.

Word clouds were also generated by Nvivo for a visual representation of the data exploration, and to reinforce the themes identified. Word clouds formed part of the comparative analysis and validation. Atenstaedt (2017) describes a word cloud as a sequence of words that, through the size of these words in the visual illustration, will identify the focus. The more a word is stated, the bigger it will look in the illustration. The word cloud is deemed valuable to measure the frequency with which a specific word recurs.

Huang et al. (2019) corroborate the meaning of a 'word cloud', also known as a text cloud or tag cloud, as a graphical representation of word frequency that is obtained from written text. The word cloud sorts keywords from English articles according to the word frequency or other rules, arranging them based on fixed laws and illustrating them with graphic attributions such as size, colour, and font. The greater the number of times a word appears in a segment under review, the larger it appears in the word cloud that will be formed.

The researcher was also a part of the research in terms of the action research at NCE. Through the researcher asking a set of pre-determined questions, recommendations were considered that spoke to the research objectives. The researcher played an active role in theme identification. It is significant to note that the thematic analysis used within the study was not totally neutral, which is a consequence of inductive analysis. Thus, the data was explored through a systematic and rigorous approach, as recommended by Saunders et al. (2012). This is explained in more detail in Chapter four. Figure 3.5 illustrates the process followed.

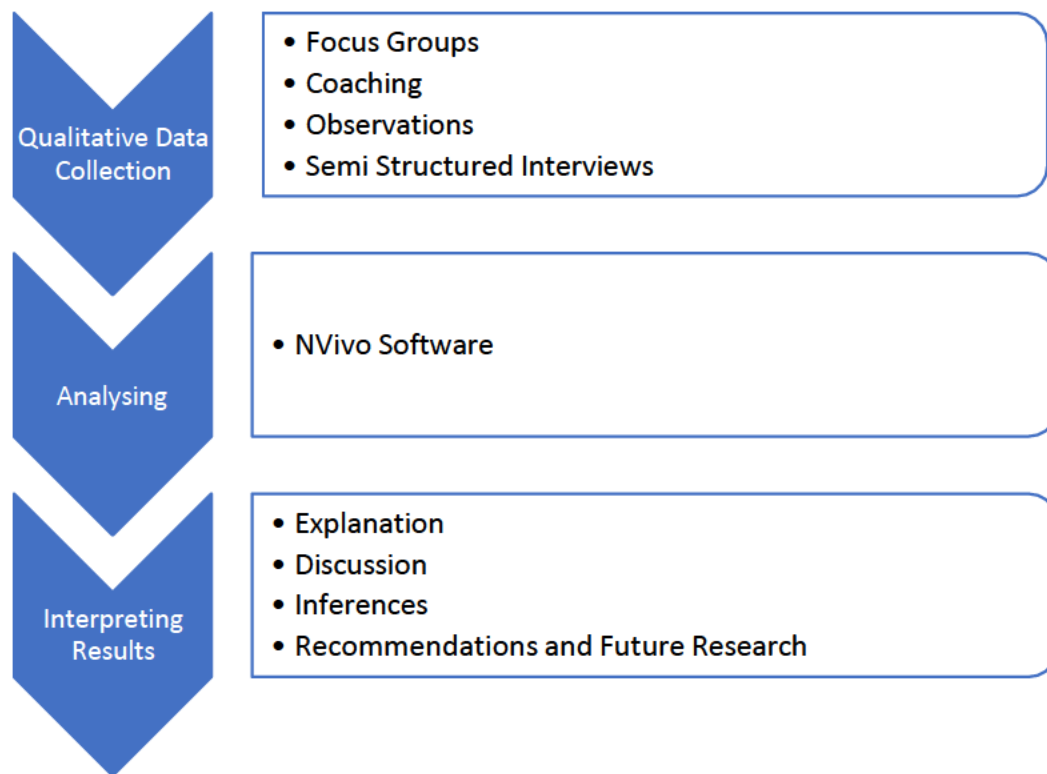


Figure 3.5: Data collection, analysis, and interpretation steps taken

3.11 Trustworthiness, credibility, and reliability

Saunders et al. (2012) postulated that to ensure trustworthiness, one needs to carefully design specific questions to be used in the interviews that are semi-structured. Total clarity and explanation of the reasoning behind the interview protocol and focus groups were explained to all participants. Observation bias can often be one of the biggest risks to the reliability of research. As such, the researcher used triangulation once the coaching intervention had been completed, using the semi-structured interviews, supported by the focus groups and the review of the literature. Anonymity was maintained through removing personal identifiers from the data that was collected in the participatory action research, interviews and focus groups, and observation. Coded respondent names were given. In addition, the researcher, who formed part of the participatory action research and is a credentialled coach, went through a supervision session with a

COMENSA and ICF-credentialed supervisor, to ensure there was no element of bias in the observation at the end of the coaching phase.

The researcher undertook a covert approach in the observation to avoid reactivity. The researcher gained permission/consent for the coaching and results to be used for the study, but only debriefed the participants on the observation after the study. In this way, the study yielded more reliable data, as discussed in Saunders et al. (2012), due to there being no 'reactivity' to the presence of an observer and greater scope in the consideration of ethical issues, which were unpacked when probing the explanations in the semi-structured interviews. "The greatest threat to the reliability of your research conclusions produced as a result of a participant observation study is that of observer bias. All one can do is to be aware of the threat to reliability it poses and seek to control it" (Saunders et al., 2012 p. 291). What can also be done here is that the observation records and interpretation can be reviewed by the participants. As pointed out in Saunders et al. (2012), this is a form of triangulation and will ensure credibility.

The interview data was recorded, coded, and kept separately from the interview notes, then written up within 48 hours of the interviews so as not to lose the essence of the experience. Furthermore, anonymity was maintained through secure communication methods and ensuring only the researcher had access to information. Saunders et al. (2012) mentioned that this can demonstrate trustworthiness and anonymity with the data and subjects.

The researcher needed to be objective throughout the process and needed to take into consideration measurement bias. As such, the researcher was also cognisant of data saturation through the semi-structured interviews, with no new concepts or ideations emanating, given the time available. According to Creswell (2011), data saturation occurs when gathering more fresh information does not produce fresh data.

Saunders et al. (2012) suggest that to improve validity and reliability, one needs to ensure the careful design of questions used in the semi-structured

interviews. Total clarity and explanation of the reasoning behind the interview protocol and focus groups were explained to all participants.

The researcher was cognisant of participant bias, as cited in Saunders et al. (2012). The authors state that interviewees may say what they believe their organisation and researcher may want them to say. To ensure that this was not the case, the researcher built a rapport with the interviewees prior to the interviews, to understand their roles and responsibilities, and involvement in the ecosystem of the organisation. The participants also understood that the researcher was bound by confidentiality aspects of the research and the credentials of being a coach in the participatory action research, and as such, trusted the confidentiality of the process. The data sources were also credible in that most were peer reviewed and recent.

3.11.1 Internal reliability

The researcher was cognisant of the following factors that could have influenced the study:

- Time constraints in that the participants worked in a high-paced environment and lacked time during the interview process. This was mitigated through the triangulation of the focus groups and the observation of participants.
- Informed consent was established upfront and also during the interview process and focus group interventions.
- All interviews were in a private setting to set the scene for open and transparent information gathering and to establish trust.

As part of the participatory action research process and a credentialed coach, the researcher checked in with an accredited coach supervisor from ICF and Coaching and Mentors of South Africa, to ensure reflection and discussion to explore types of bias that could come about in the research process, so as to mitigate this. The relationship between the coachees and the coach was one of trust, as the researcher was part of the participatory action research, and a

relationship of trust was developed . The responses provided consistency amongst the participants.

Through the triangulation of the interviews, focus group, and observation, it was evident that the data demonstrated reliability, credibility, and validity.

3.12 Validity

3.12.1 Construct validity

Construct validity refers to the coverage of the topic and the ability of the measuring tool to cover it thoroughly. As explored by Boddy (2016), the sample of twelve was enough, and as such, there was good coverage using the interview tool. An exploration into the extant literature review throughout the study, was also implemented before the study to ensure the measurement tools were suitable.

3.12.2 Content validity

Throughout this study, the literature review reinforced the semi-structured interviews and questions, and the relevance of the variables in the content. Furthermore, the participatory action research took place over a period of six to eight months and without major intervention from outside forces, enabling the researcher and participants to jointly investigate and tackle the study's questions and objectives, without unnecessary peripheral pressure or influence.

3.13 Limitations of the study

Due to time constraints of the participants, there was the possibility that they may answer interview questions in the way they felt they should be answered. This was somewhat mitigated with the triangulation of data from the focus groups and observations. The study also targeted a specific organisation, namely NCE, a civil engineering consulting organisation based in KwaZulu-Natal, and not the civil engineering consulting industry as a whole. The research design was a small sample size (qualitative research) of a larger sector, which meant that the findings would be specific to the

organisation studied, and therefore could not be extrapolated to the wider sector. Further research could delve into the industry at large to further explore transferability of the knowledge gained in the action research and coaching model crafted, which was named SUMUP. Creswell (2011) attests that small sample sizes are common in qualitative studies, which may restrict how broadly results can be applied. Furthermore, a mixed-methods research design may have added more depth into the research through cross-validating sources, albeit in this study, observation, interviews and focus groups were performed. Inductive analysis and the interpretation of data are common components of qualitative research, with the goal of producing detailed descriptions and insights. A qualitative study on its own may be a limitation, as a mixed-methods study with a statistical examination of quantitative data might support the qualitative conclusions, therefore, this may be a limitation.

3.14 Ethical considerations

Gathering information without permission from all stakeholders is deemed unethical. Kumar (2014) claims that “collecting information without the consent and knowledge of the participant is considered unethical”. Furthermore, Saunders et al. (2012) suggest that the research population must in no way be put at risk reputationally or suffer any other “material disadvantage.” Saunders et al. (2012) emphasise that the cornerstone of ethical issues is the avoidance of harm. It was suggested by Jowett’s (2020) blog that the health and wellbeing of participants must be considered ahead of research deadlines, as mental wellness was crucial post the COVID-19 pandemic. This was particularly important for the participants after having just navigated a time of significant isolation and uncertainty.

Furthermore, Saunders et al. (2012) discussed that the rationale behind ethical considerations is to avoid error, safeguard reliability, and uphold trust, confidentiality, and accountability. Ethical considerations at different stages of the research process needed to be considered, as depicted in Figure 3.6. Mohd (2018)

corroborates the criticality of considering ethical issues through all the stages of research.

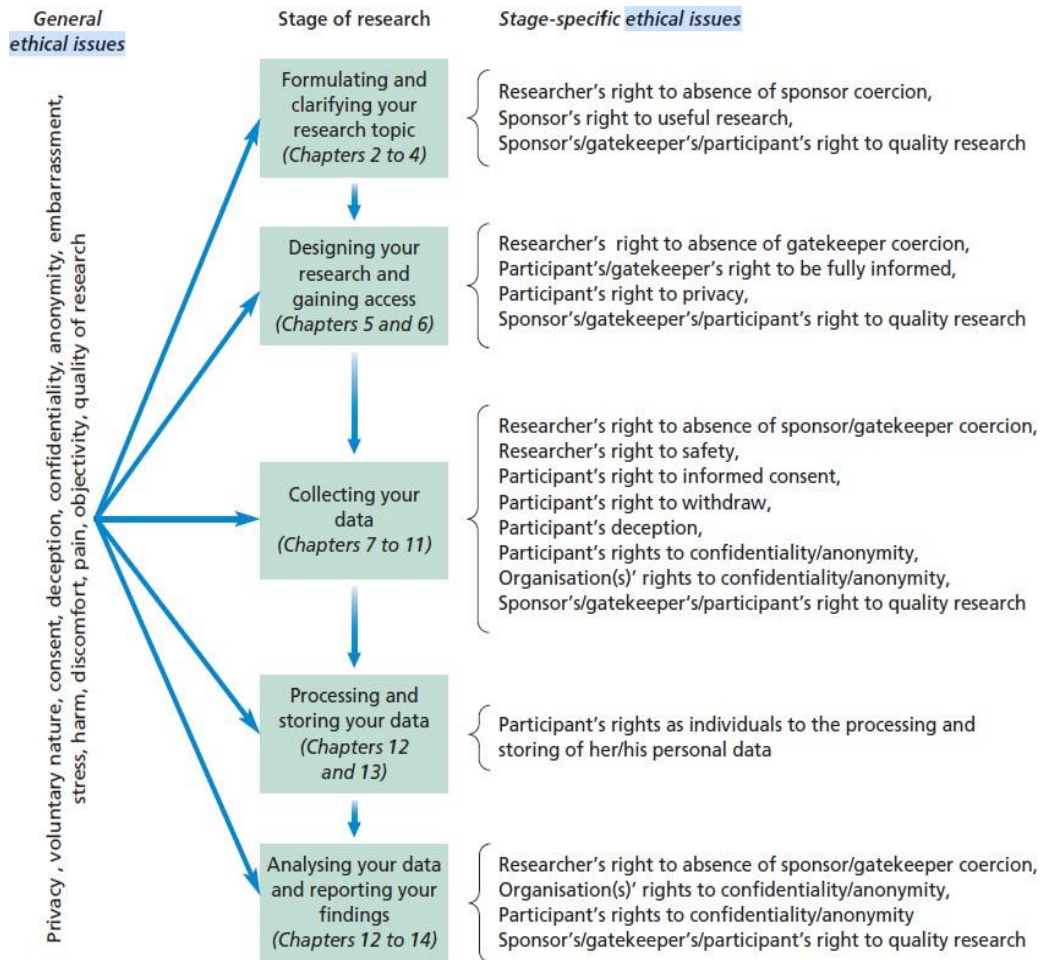


Figure 3.6: Ethical issues at different stages of research

Source: Saunders et al. (2012, p. 188)

The researcher gained permission from all the stakeholders, including the participants, for the pilot and the complete study, and the company gatekeepers' letter and permission from the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), before the research commenced. The ethical clearance number acquired from UKZN was HSSREC/00003704/2021 (Appendix F).

A detailed informed consent form (Annexure G) was provided to all participants before their interview and focus group sessions explaining the rationale behind the research. The autonomy of the participants was respected, ensuring any data or responses presented by them were regarded with strict confidentiality. They were guaranteed that their identities would be protected. The participants were also advised that they may withdraw at any stage during the research study.

Ethical considerations need to take cognisance of researcher bias, which occurs when the researcher interprets the data that supports a hypothesis (Saunders et al., 2012). Because the researcher was a credentialed coach, it was essential to ensure that bias toward coaching was limited. One method to avoid researcher bias in this study was that the researcher kept a journal of personal thoughts, and discussed it with an independent person. Because coaching is a confidential contract between coach and coachee, the researcher was able to discuss these thoughts with an accredited supervisor from the ICF and COMENSA, who was familiar with the need for confidentiality regarding the sessions to further ensure no bias in interpretations. Furthermore, the researcher endeavoured to keep a critical perspective during the reflective element of the participatory action research, ensuring that transparency, choice, and mutual exchange happened with participants during the research.

3.15 Conclusion

The aim of this study was to investigate leadership coaching at the organisation being studied, and to determine whether business leaders could improve on their EI and interpersonal effectiveness, to reach business and personal goals through a coaching model/intervention that was developed. The research was exploratory in nature with an interpretivist paradigm. The qualitative analysis was informed through a phenomenological approach. The research followed a purposive sampling strategy. The gatekeeper's letter from the organisation being studied was obtained before the commencement of the study, as well as ethical clearance from

the university (UKZN). The instruments used for data collection in the participatory action research were interviews, focus groups, and observation. Triangulation of these three instruments provided credible data for analysis. Data analysis was completed using the software program NVivo, and triangulation of the data sets was used. The findings of the research are presented and analysed in Chapter four.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, findings from the qualitative approach collected by way of interviews, focus groups, and observation carried out at NCE are presented. This chapter further serves as the foundation to findings in the following chapter, through the insightful analysis of the primary study reinforced by the literature review. The participants work in a systemic environment as mentioned in the prior chapters. Systemic organisations were explored by Campbell et al. (2019), who posited that connection, context, and communication can assist managers engaged in change to deal with concerns of leadership and learning faced by employees in today's complex landscape. The NCE participants were managers and leaders who were navigating the complexities of a VUCA landscape in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic instability.

All participants who formed part of this study signed consent forms, and understood that the interviews and focus groups would be held in the strictest of confidence. Furthermore, all participants would remain anonymous. Participants were also informed that in no way would there be undesirable consequences for either participating or not. Nvivo software was used to manage and organise the data for data analysis.

The qualitative findings helped to examine the objectives of the research, namely:

Research Objective One: To determine whether Executive Leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.

Research Objective Two: To identify the type of executive coaching programme required in the current landscape.

Research Objective Three: To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior and mid-level leaders and result in a retention strategy.

Research Objective Four: To explore the influence of a coaching model in terms of building a positive and sustainable organisation.

The research questions below further examined and gave insight into the objectives.

Research Question One: To what extent are leadership skills required for leaders in a VUCA world and post-COVID 19 World?

Research Question Two: How will the criteria be determined to unpack whether leaders are ready to harness new skills?

Research Question Three: How can a coaching model/programme best fit the organisation?

Research Question Four: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

4.2 Biographical data

Biographical data was used to determine the generation of a participant and their gender. This provides the context of the participants in the research study in terms of the multigenerational workforce and gender.

Table 4.1: Gender distribution by age and generation

Age Range in Years	Male	Female	Generation
18-25	0	1	Gen-Z
26-41	6	5	Millennials (Gen-Y)
47-57	4	0	Gen X
58-76	0	0	Baby Boomers
77-94	0	0	Silent Generation
95-121	0	0	Greatest Generation

The participants in the interviews were professional registered engineers or technologists, as well as those who had not yet attained professional registration.

However, all participants had achieved an engineering qualification at the NQF¹ level. The participants consisted primarily of the leadership team and potential leaders, as identified by the organisation being studied. Thus, their backgrounds at the organisation being studied and their qualifications made them suitable for this research.

The research process enabled the researcher to examine, explore, and analyse the research objectives and questions, in the first instance, through the primary data from the qualitative instruments used, and in the second instance, through the literature review. The aim of the study was to investigate leadership coaching at an executive/senior level at an engineering consulting organisation based in KwaZulu-Natal, and to determine whether business leaders could improve on their EI and interpersonal effectiveness to reach business and personal goals. Furthermore, the researcher aimed to develop an executive coaching model for implementation at the said organisation, and to determine if such a model would impact the organisation's bottom line. The NVivo data analysis software was used.

4.3 Coding and identification of the semi-structured interviews

Of the participants participating in the interviews, 11 had taken part of a coaching intervention and five had never received coaching. As discussed in Chapter three, Nvivo Release 1.7 (1533) software was used to analyse the data. Inductive codes (themes) were derived from the data inputted. Themes were recognised by inputting the verbatim transcriptions into the software. Running the “word frequency query” produced a word cloud, tree map, and cluster analysis, which are presented below.

Phase one comprised the first generation of codes from the qualitative data - a conceptual activity that must be re-examined regularly. Through the coding, the researcher could transform unstructured data into groups. Specific codes were allocated to quotes from the participants’ responses and the transcripts were

¹ The NQF is the South African National Qualifications Framework. NQF7 is the equivalent of an undergraduate degree.

coded line by line to arrange the data logically. Coding assisted the researcher in simplifying and focusing on specific data features, which is how data emanated from being unstructured to presenting logical concepts that arose in the data. Using an inductive methodology, the themes were linked effectively to the data, and were not manipulated to correspond with any prevailing coding frame or the researcher's preconceptions. Thereafter, phase 2 commenced, which was the axial coding. This stage was developed from the connections between the codes established during open coding, and found by the researcher during the previous stage, where axial coded categories were sought. Open coding you break the data into discrete parts, with axial coding you begin to draw connections between codes. With axial coding, you organise the codes you developed in open coding. These open codes were categorised by the researcher into useful groups, and thematic themes were derived in the third phase; here, the researcher examined the data and produced refined themes that recapped and answered the study's research questions. The aim was to gain an understanding of the data so that themes might be unpacked and developed throughout the interpretation stage of the research.

Atenstaedt (2017) described a word cloud as a sequence of words that, through the size of these words in the visual illustration, will identify the focus. The more the word is stated, the bigger it will look in the illustration. A word cloud is deemed valuable to measure the frequency with which a specific word recurs. However, its simplicity can obfuscate complex meanings and context, which can result in misunderstanding. Nevertheless, the word cloud that was generated from the Nvivo software assisted as a visual tool during the analysis stage. This also corroborated what the researcher reflected upon during the focus groups and interview sessions, as well as during the coaching sessions in terms of awareness of self, emotional intelligence, and improvement in thinking. Insofar as the qualitative techniques. The visual representation in the word cloud highlighted the significance of these words.

Furthermore, the tree map provided a hierarchical view of the data collected to analyse any patterns and trends. The large rectangles represent tree branches, while the smaller rectangles signify the sub-branches which would play a part that is relative to a specified measurement of the data. The tree map was crafted from the word frequency data inputted into Nvivo software from the qualitative interview responses, as shown in Figure 4.1 below.

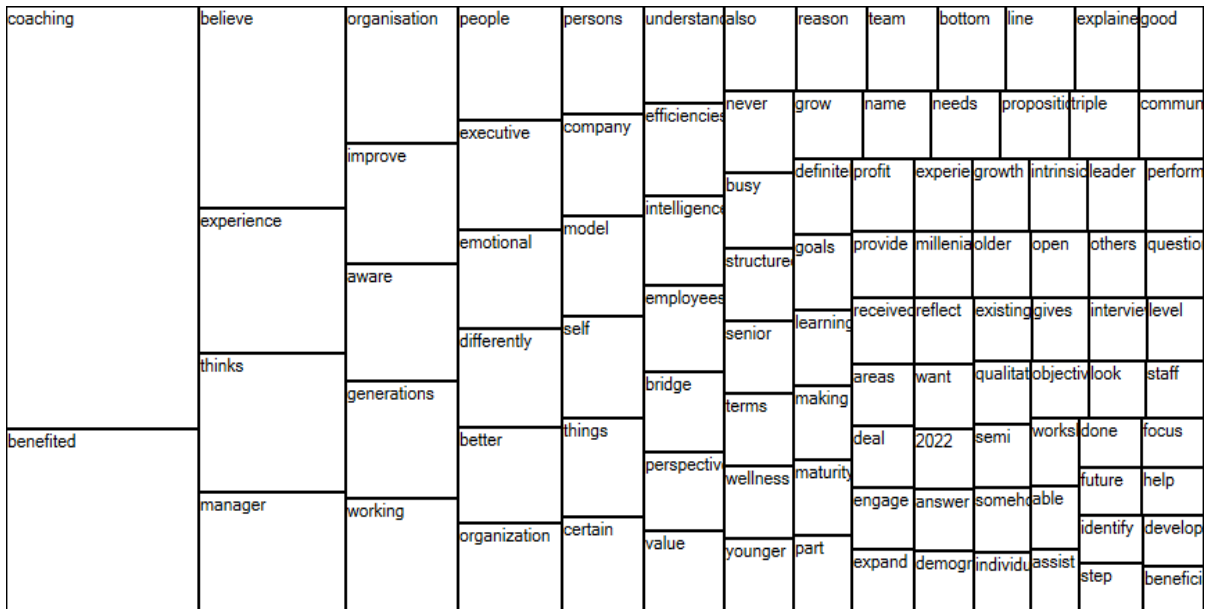


Figure 4.1: Tree map

The tree map in this instance demonstrated a comparison of several groupings within the dataset. The researcher could spot patterns, variations, and outliers easily throughout the many categories by encoding a quantitative feature (size) to represent a particular construct. This simplified the finding of patterns in the data, comprehending distribution, and locating clusters.

When clustering data in the Nvivo software program, the sets of information are separated into groups or classes of data constructed based on data similarity, resulting in relationships that exist between the groups. A cluster analysis further corroborating the word cloud and tree map, allowed the researcher to manage and organise the data, and find similarities and differences during the analysis stage.

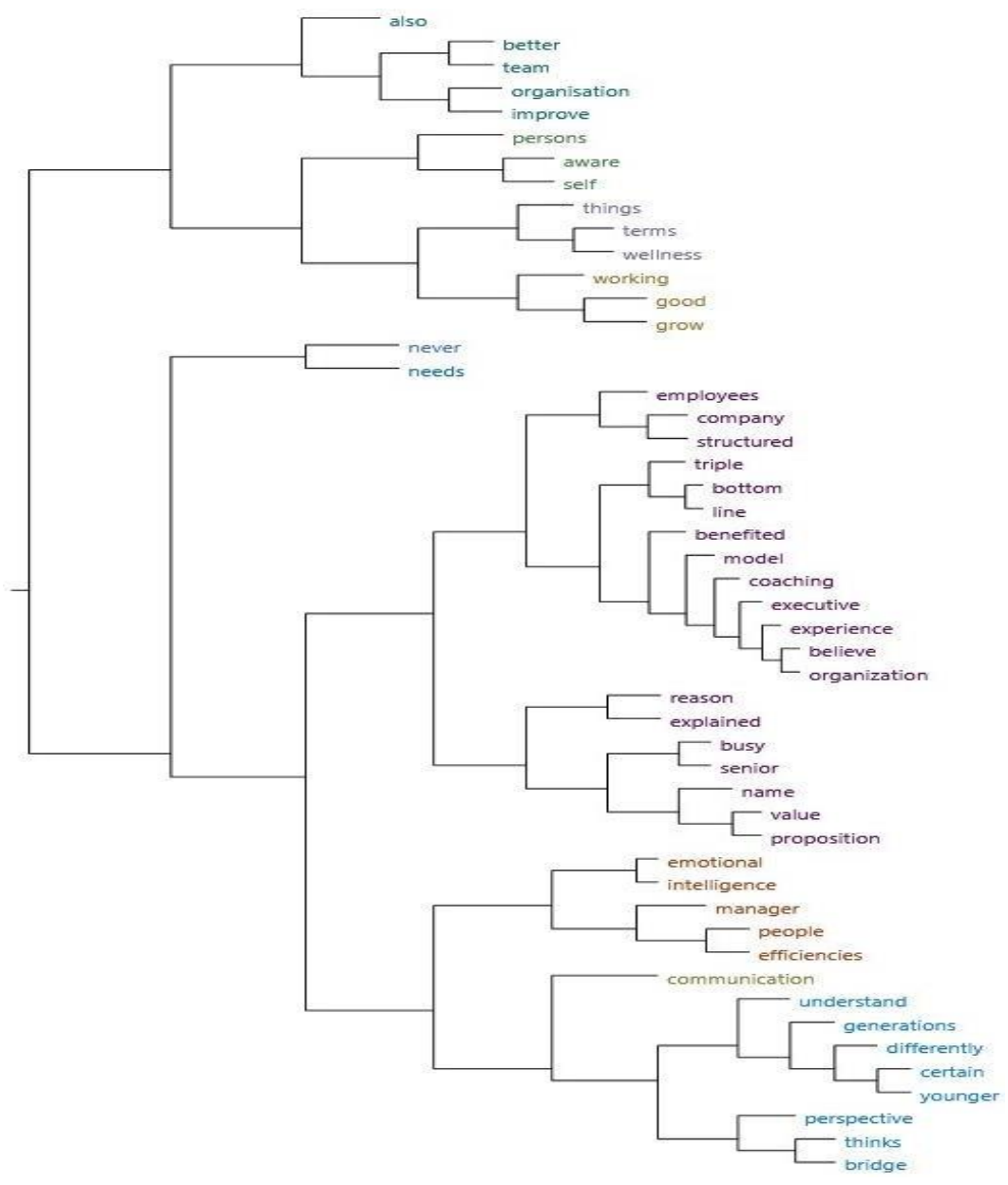


Figure 4.2: Cluster analysis

4.4 Thematic analysis of the qualitative data emanating from the thematic analysis of Interviews

The research analysed the data thematically uncovering four themes through the inductive process. The themes were linked back to the research objectives, which were unpacked through the research questions.

Theme 1: Coaching is beneficial to the organisation

Research Objectives and Research Questions linked to the theme:

Research Objective 1: To determine whether executive leaders at the case study are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.

Research Question 1: To what extent are leadership skills required for leaders in a VUCA World and post Covid 19 World?

Research Objective 4: To explore the influence of a coaching model in terms of building a positive and sustainable organisation.

Research Question 4: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

The researcher sought to ascertain from the participants whether coaching was beneficial to the organisation, and what was being changed. This was in response to the research objective of the coaching model influencing the bottom line (sustainability) of the business, and linked to Objective 1 and Objective 4 of the study.

All the participants had positive viewpoints in terms of the two questions, apart from those who had not participated in coaching and who could give neither a

positive nor negative viewpoint. The coding summary tables applicable to theme one is depicted in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Coding summary theme 1

Theme 1: Coaching is beneficial to the organisation.

Themes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Quotes From Interviews
of the coaching experience	Professional development and growth	Identifying gaps and developing ability for improvement	"... and firstly, identifying those areas for improvement or for growth and for development, then secondly in a structured manner, the ability to make improvements and developments in those areas." (P7)
		Tips for growth in career	"... and good tips to grow your career and life-work type balance. Open to your personal growth, which is excellent." (P1)
		Conversion of basic skills into in-depth skills	"By going for the coaching for executive management, it converts your basic skills much more in-depth so you can really take it and apply it in a different way with your staff, as well as with your general work ... how would you manage task in a different way." (P2)
		Assist with time management, communication	"Definitely as it would assist one to reach their goals and communicate with the team, and to manage the team better to be able to explain to be a better leader. Assist with time management, communication." (P12)

Themes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Quotes From Interviews
		Performance coaching	"In order to achieve targets coaching will need to be done to achieve target, but the next months or timeframes to achieve the goal or target that is put in place. Performance coaching." (P8)
	Goal orientation and decision making	Help people focused	"Yes, do develop the leaders in the company and to keep us on the right direction."(P1)
		Provide guidance to make right decisions	"It gives you a different perspective and personal guidance [to] discuss not only issues at work, but only personal life and guidance in how to think to make right decisions, to guide you in the right decision. "(P1)
		Direction of goals	"Once you have things in perspective and objective and you moving towards a goal, you don't get hooked into hustle and bustle of everyday life ... puts it into perspective and then it also motivates. So, I think it does help."(P5)
		Career path	"In writing to remember your end goal and your career pathing." (P3)
	Work life balance and organisational effectiveness	Tips for life work balance	"... and good tips to grow your career and life work type balance. Open to your personal growth which is excellent." (P1)
		Improve organisational awareness and streamline working	"I think from the coaching experience, [it] improve[d] my organisational awareness and working within the organisation, streamlining and working on area[s] that were not strongpoints [or] strengths." (P7)

Themes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Quotes From Interviews
	Team engagement and collaboration	Better engagement with team	"More precise decision maker. Better engagement with my team. Through the coaching it did allow me to better engage with my team." (P10)
		Knowledge of management to work out of the people	"The coaching experience basically takes you, um basically let me put it this way. When you come into a position you have basic knowledge of management, and how to deal with particular aspects, especially when dealing with people and how you manage their work output." (P2)
	Self-Awareness and Personal Growth	Self-awareness	"The coaching experience gave me a different insight into the way I should change my way of thinking in certain aspects. Made me look at things from a different dimension, [through] self-awareness. And it also allowed me to think a bit more of the future and [be a] more strategic thinker." (P13)
		Good for key staff in the organisation	"Yes certainly. Good. Not for each and every individual, But certainly for key staff in the organisation." (P1)

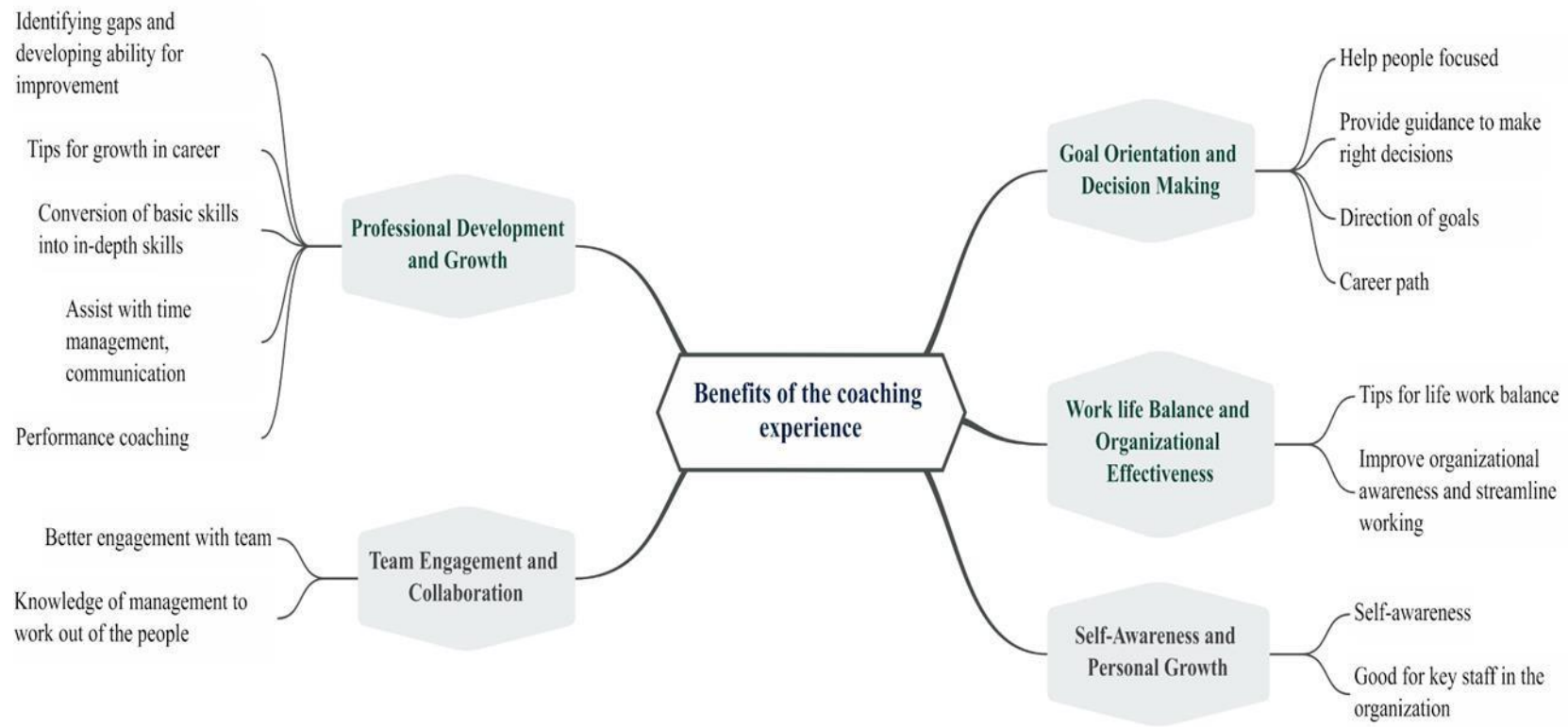


Figure 4.3: Theme 1: Coaching is beneficial to the organisation

Analysis of the interview transcripts about the benefits of the coaching experience reflected five different concepts in the minds of the study's respondents. The first benefit of the coaching experience was the professional development and growth of the participants. For professional development and growth, it is important to identify gaps, develop the ability for improvement, and follow tips for growth of the participants' career, as one of the respondents mentioned in this way: "... and good tips to grow your career and life-work type balance. Open to your personal growth which is excellent (P1)". During professional development and growth, the participants also learned the conversion of basic skills into in-depth ones, assisting them with time management, communication and performance coaching, as expressed by a participant as, "In order to achieve coaching will need to be done to achieve target but the next months or timeframes to achieve the goal or target that is put in place. Performance coaching (P8)".

Benefits of the coaching was the goal orientation and decision making, which can be ensured through helping people focus and providing guidance to make the right decisions. This is because coaching gives a different perspective in personal guidance discussions on issues not only at work but also in personal life, and guidance in how to critically think to make the decisions to guide one in the right decision. Career path and direction of goals are very important benefits of professional development and growth because when someone has things in perspective and an objective of moving towards a goal, they don't get hooked into the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

Work-life balance and organisational effectiveness were based on the coaching tips given for life work balance, and improvement in organisational awareness and streamlined working in areas that were not strong points.

Better engagement with the team and the knowledge of management results in team engagement and collaboration are benefits of the coaching, as expressed in the following way: "The coaching experience basically takes you um basically let

me put it this way. When you come into a position you have basic knowledge of management and how to deal with particular aspects, especially when dealing with people and how you manage their work out put. (P2)".

The coaching experience gives a different insight that may change one's way of thinking about certain aspects of work and life and the making one look at things from a different perspective. It also creates self-awareness and allows one to think a little more about the future, while creating more strategic thinking. In the same way, self-awareness training is good for key staff in the organisation, as mentioned by one of the study respondents: "Yes certainly. Good. Not for each and every individual, But certainly for key staff in the organisation. (P1)".

This theme aligned to Research Objective 4 and the influence of the coaching model. Furthermore, it linked to Objective 1 regarding leadership skills and whether leaders are ready to harness new skills.

Theme 2: Coaching can bridge the gap between generations in the workplace? (NVivo References 21)

Research objectives and questions linked to the theme:

Research Objective 3: To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior leaders and mid-level leaders, and result in a retention strategy.

Research Question 3: How can a coaching model/programme best fit the organisation?

Research Question 4: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

The coding summary table applicable to Theme 2 is depicted in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Coding summary theme 2: coaching can bridge the gap between generations in the workplace

Themes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Quotes From Interviews
Coaching can bridge the gap between generations in the workplace	Knowledge	Coach with	“ Yes, it can especially if the coach has experience with older and younger generation. I suppose it’s all to do with vocation. His or her skills. Understand gaps between the different generations. The coach could explain various perspectives.” (P1)
	Transfer and	experience between	
	Perspective	generations can	
	Understanding	explain various perspectives	
		Emotional awareness and understanding the younger generation need	“Explain why certain people behave a certain way because of current generation. Everyone does not understand that. Emotional intelligence workshops. Emotional awareness of others. Understanding the younger generation needs.” (P1)
		Results in empathy	“Yes, because it teaches us to work with each other, to step in each other’s shoes. Empathy.” (P3)
		Transfer of skills from old to younger generation	“We learn from the expert’s older generation. Younger staff learning is learning from the older generations. Senior guys too busy. Hardly make time to transfer skills so I would not say they are transferring their skills, as they have so much on their plate.” (P4)
	Personal Growth and Development	Addressing challenges	“Through coaching one can proactively address some of those challenges.” (P7)
		Creates Self-reflection and emotional intelligence	“Yes, because it teaches us to work with each other, to step in each other’s shoes. Empathy. A person can take a step back and do self-reflection. Emotional intelligence.” (P3)
		Identification of growth and development areas	“Yes, I think it can especially in identifying growth areas and development areas where some of the gaps can be an issue in an organisation.” (P7)

This theme linked to Objective 3 of ascertaining whether the executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior and mid-level leaders, and result in a retention strategy.

Furthermore, the theme answered Research Question 3 in terms of how the coaching model can best fit the organisation, to enable the coaching to bridge the

gap between senior and mid-level leaders through adding the element of IE, development plans, and leadership development. It also answered Research Question 4 in terms of the skills of emotional intelligence and what can be changed by means of a coaching model.

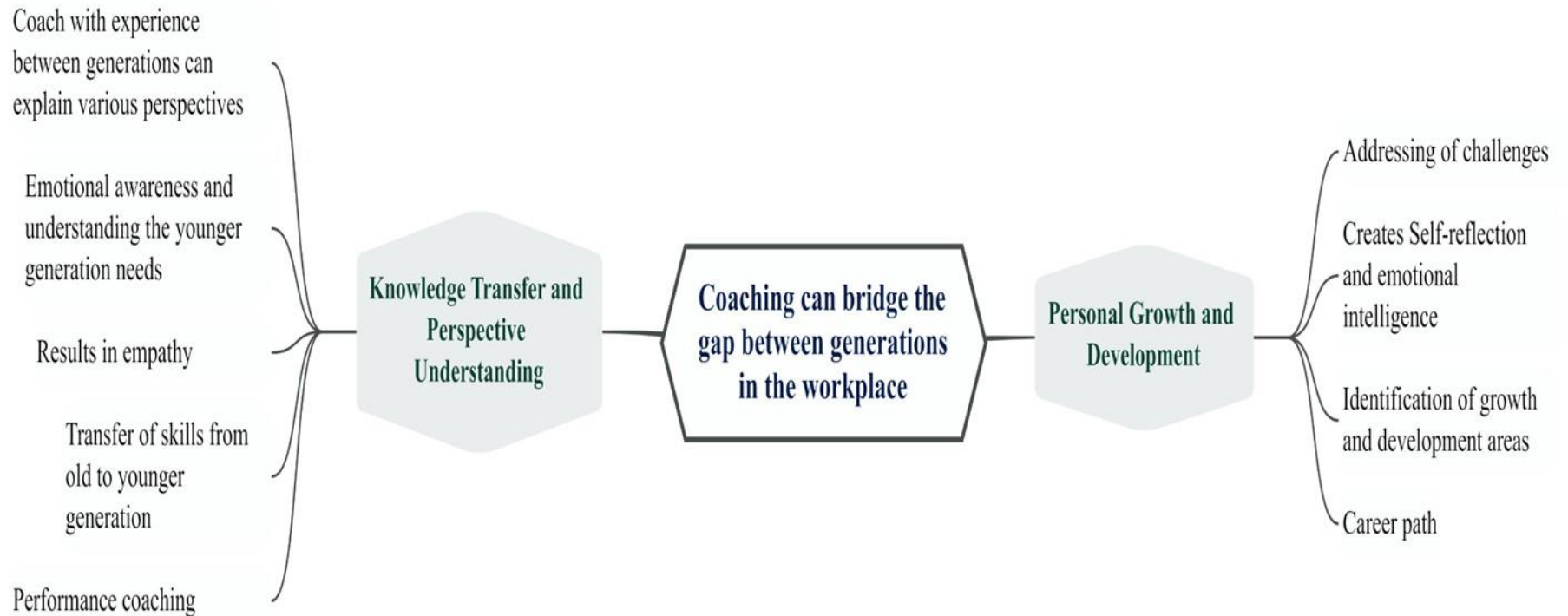


Figure 4.4: Theme 2: Coaching can bridge the gap between generations in the workplace

The gap between generations in the workplace being bridged by coaching is reflected by the axial codes of knowledge transfer and perspective understanding, as well as of personal growth and development.

During knowledge transfer and perspective understanding, the coach with experience of different generations can explain various perspectives, and help in bridging the gap between generations in the workplace. If the coach has experience with older and younger generations, his or her skills in understanding the gaps between the different generations can explain various perspectives.

During coaching, it can be explained why certain people behave in a certain way which may be because of their generation, but everyone does not understand that. The emotional intelligence workshops created emotional awareness and understanding of the younger generation's needs.

In order to bridge the gap between generations through coaching, there needs to be knowledge transfer and perspective understanding which result in empathy and the transfer of skills from the older to the younger generation, as one of the study participants expressed in this way: "We can learn from the experts', [the] older generation. Younger staff should be learning from the older generations. Senior guys [are] too busy. [They] hardly make time to transfer skills, so I would not say they are transferring their skills as they have so much on their plate (P4)".

Addressing the challenges, creation of self-reflection and emotional intelligence and the identification of growth and development areas also result in personal growth and the development of the participants, which is an important factor in bridging the gap between the generations in the workplace, as expressed by one participant: "Yes, I think it can [be] especially [important] in identifying growth areas and development areas, where some of the gaps can be an issue in an organisation (P7).

Theme 3: EI, self-awareness, and the awareness of others (NVivo References 26)

Research objectives and questions linked to this theme:

Research Objective 1: To determine whether executive leaders in the case study are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.

Research Question 2: How will the criteria be determined to unpack whether leaders are ready to harness new skills?

Research Objective 2: To identify the type of executive coaching programme required in the current landscape.

Research Question 3: How can a coaching model/programme best fit the organisation?

Research Objective 3: To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior leaders and mid-level leaders, and result in a retention strategy.

Research Question 4: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

The coding summary tables applicable to Theme 3 are depicted in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Theme 3: Emotional intelligence and self-awareness and awareness of others

Themes	Axial Codes	Open Codes	Quotes From Interviews
Emotional intelligence and self-awareness and awareness of others	Emotional intelligence and employee well-being	Awareness of others' emotional intelligence	"Yes, people [it] is a no brainer. It will benefit. Awareness of others Emotional intelligence."(P1)
		Keeping employees' morale up and motivated	I think it will add to triple bottom line. It can. For people to be in a happy job. Keep employee's morale up. Motivated. Important adds to their happiness (P9)
		Self-awareness and reflection	"Self-awareness. Auto correct, self-reflection. Self-regulation. How does it affect that person, awareness of others." (P2)

Themes	Axial Codes	Open Codes	Quotes From Interviews
		Values to come in years in the company	"Eventually yes, it has to be initiated which has now been done and I think the company will see the value in years to come." (P2)
	Empowering guidance	Builds confidence and self-awarded individuals	"I think that is the main reason for coaching, the individual can benefit from coaching, but in the greater scheme you are also benefiting the organisation with a more confident individual who understands themselves better, self-awareness." (P1)
		Clear direction and guidance that helps individuals grow and develop	"Yes, it will give me a clear direction. On our own, you get discouraged along the way. No one is monitoring if you still on track." (P4)
	Self-awareness	Enhances self-awareness and personal growth	"Yes, I think it creates a lot of self-awareness, decisions one takes, your personal performance what that has on the organisation. It also in an objective way tries to get one to align personal objectives with organisation objectives which benefits both parties, self and the organisation." (P7)
		Help to grow	"Yes, I think there would be a personal growth and then amplifying it in the workplace." (P6)
		Helps individuals identify and name their feelings in sessions, fostering awareness	"Yes, coaching is beneficial. For instance, most of the sessions in coaching we name our feelings, not my strong point to name feelings. Most of my life I have suppressed feelings. I think it is good to be aware." (P3)
		Self-growth and development	"I would think so. Growing within self. With growth and development. Coaching session not only about work and company based overall wellness how you deal with things." (P10)
		Self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses and teamwork organisation	"So, whatever the person's strengths and weaknesses are, we are more aware of it as a company as a manager puts everyone less stressed. More aware of it. People more understanding of each other." (P9)

This theme was linked to three objectives, namely, Objective 1, Objective 2, and Objective 3.

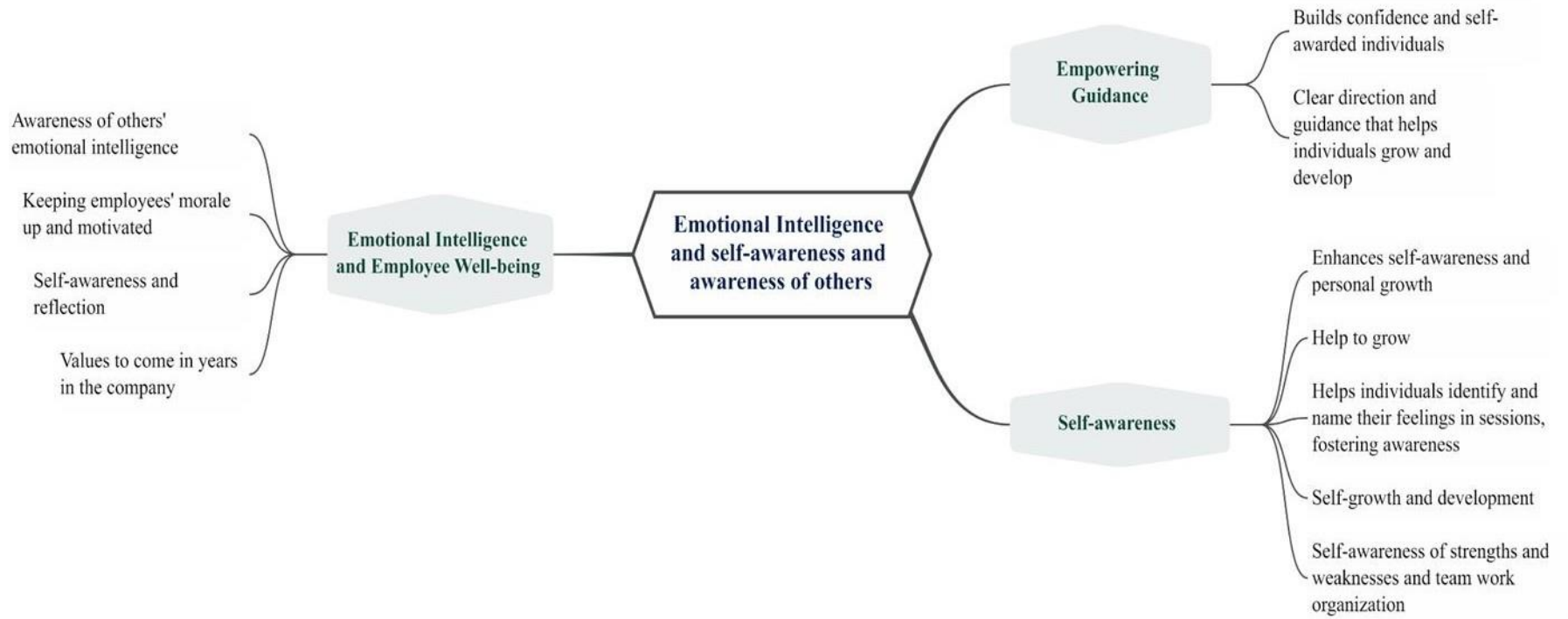


Figure 4.5: Theme 3: Emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and awareness of others

EI, self-awareness, and awareness of others are reflected by the axial codes' of emotional intelligence and employee wellbeing, empowering guidance, and self-awareness.

EI and employee wellbeing during coaching produce awareness of others' emotional intelligence, and keep the employee's morale up and motivated, as expressed by a study participant in this way: "I think it will add to [the] triple bottom line. It can. For people to be in a happy job. Keep employee's morale up. Motivated. Important[ly], [it] adds to their happiness (P9)".

Self-awareness and reflection created during the coaching add value to the company in the future in terms of emotional intelligence and employee wellbeing, as mentioned by one participant: "Eventually yes, it has to be initiated, which has now been done, and I think the company will see the value in years to come (P2)".

Empowering guidance is the main reason for coaching the individual, but which, in the greater scheme of things, can benefit the organisation with more confident individuals who understand themselves better, and have self-awareness. Empowering guidance is achieved through building confident and self-directed individuals through clear direction and guidance, helping individuals grow and develop, as one of the respondents mentioned, "Yes it will give me a clear direction. On our own you get discouraged along the way. No one is monitoring if you [are] still on track (P4)". The coaching experience creates self-awareness, which enhances personal growth in the workplace.

The coaching is beneficial and in most of the sessions, the participants named their feelings, which is not a strong point for coachees as during most of their lives, they have suppressed their feelings; so, coaching is very good in making them aware of it. It helps individuals to identify and name their feelings during sessions, fostering awareness, self-growth, and development, and bring self-awareness of strengths and weaknesses, as one of the study's respondents mentioned: "So whatever the person's strengths and weaknesses are, we are more aware of it as a company, as a manager ensures everyone [is] less stressed. More aware of it. People [are] more understanding of each other (P9)".

Theme 4: Influence of coaching and what is being changed

Research objectives and questions linked to this theme:

Research Objective 1: To determine whether executive leaders in NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.

Research Objective 4: To explore the influence of the coaching model in terms of building a positive and sustainable organisation.

Research Question 4: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

The coding summary tables applicable to Theme 3 is depicted in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Theme 4: Influence of a coaching model and what is being changed

Themes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Quotes From Interviews
Influence of Coaching and What is Being Changed	Team Alignment and Collaboration	Building and aligning a team and focus on end goal	"Additionally, it is undoubtedly advantageous to bring the team together, align the team, and focus on the end goal." (P14)
		Develop emphatic attitude with the employees	"Being a manager, you have to deal with a lot of personal problems with staff and [coaching] has made one more empathetic, change your mindset." (P13)
		Engagement and collaboration with each other	"Engage with one another, collaborate with one another, talk with one another." (P8)
		Focus on team objectives and resource utilization	"...more assertive focused on team objectives focus on resource utilization. All of those at the end of the day would impact on your Triple P." (P7)
	Efficiency and Productivity Improvement	Efficiencies lead to better profits	"It is not an immediate thing because people use that [to] improve on their efficiencies, and efficiencies obviously lead to better profits along winded process." (P2)

Themes	Axial Codes	Initial Codes	Quotes From Interviews
		Improve efficiency communication and teamwork	"Yes, definitely will improve efficiencies, communication, and teamwork." (P12)
		Improve efficiency in delivery of service	"Yes, I think profit, quality of coaching will filter down to the quality of leaders and manager, which will filter further down the quality and efficiencies of the way we deliver the service." (P6)
		Increase productivity	"Sustainability a lot. Increase productivity, we will get things done quickly because now a delay from different things from people." (P4)
	Enhancing Leadership and Team Effectiveness	Become a better leader increase efficiency and teamwork	"The coaching enables you to become a better leader, lead your team better, increases your efficiencies, increases your overall morale and workforce and teamwork within the organisation. All-round benefit for the organisation." (P10)
		Better collaboration	"Generally, when we chat outside with the guys, you say I have this problem, this client and this is what I have done, and they say this is what I have done and so forth. Better collaboration." (P2)
		Improved efficiency and management of risk and growth development	"I think the improved efficiencies improved management of risk, the growth and development of personnel who form part of my team will all be benefits to the organisation." (P7)
		Learned interaction with other sector managers	"As mentioned earlier just by interacting with other sector manager who has also been on the coaching, you can see there is a difference. Generally." (P2)
	Strategic Impact and Triple Bottom Line	Benefit the strategic sessions	"Yes, certainly benefit the strategic sessions. Certainly, profit benefit." (P1)
		More maturity in perspective	"Coaching helps a leader or manager to think outside of the box to do things differently to the climate. Think more maturely in that respect." (P6)
		Opportunity to give direction to triple bottom line	"Yes, it will add to triple bottom line. Yes, as coaching has the opportunity to give direction toward the triple bottom line." (P5)
		Profit benefit	"Yes, certainly benefit the strategic sessions. Certainly, profit benefit." (P1)

This theme aligned to Research Objective 4 of the coaching model. Furthermore, it was linked to Objective 1 regarding whether leaders were ready to harness new leadership skills, while also answering Research Question 4, namely, ‘What can be changed by means of a coaching model”?

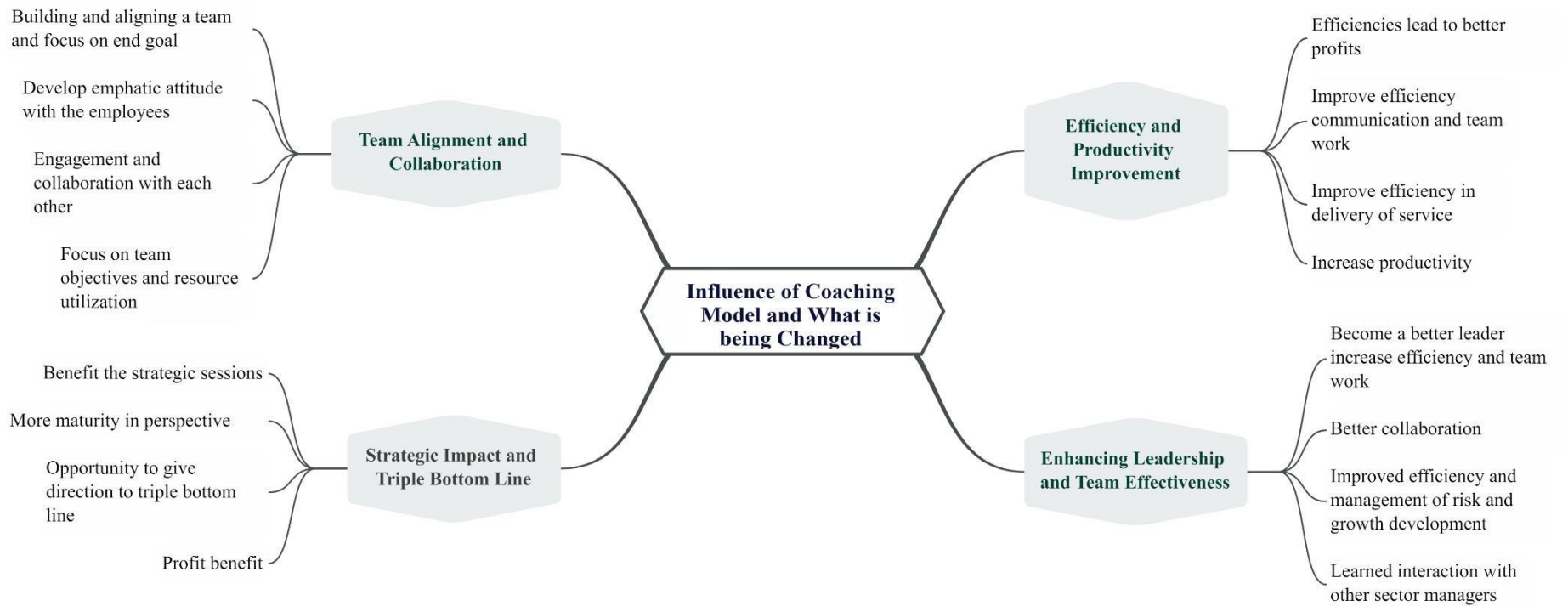


Figure 4.6: Theme 4: Influence of a coaching model and what is being changed

The influence of the coaching is reflected by the axial codes of team alignment and collaboration, efficiency and productivity improvement, enhancing leadership and team effectiveness, and strategic impact and triple bottom line.

The axial code of team alignment and collaboration emerged from the open codes of building and aligning a team and focus on end goal, developing empathetic attitude with the employees, engagement and collaboration with each other, and focusing on team objectives and resource utilisation.

Building and aligning a team and focusing on end goal helps in developing an empathetic attitude with the employees, and creates engagement and collaboration with each other, as stated by a respondent: “Engage with one another, collaborate with one another, talk with one another (P8)”. Another influence of coaching is to focus on team objectives and resource utilisation, which results in team alignment and collaboration, as one of the respondents mentioned: “Makes one more assertive, focused on team objectives focus on resource utilisation. All of those at the end of the day would impact on your triple P (P7)”.

Another influence of coaching is an improvement in efficiency and productivity, which emerged from the open codes of efficiencies leading to better profits, improved efficiency in communication and teamwork, improved efficiency in delivery of service, and increased productivity resulting in sustainability and positivity. Although, it is not an immediate thing, people still mentioned the improvement on their efficiencies which obviously leads to better profits in the organisation, while improved efficiency in communication and team work, as stated by a respondent in this way: “Yes, definitely will improve efficiencies, communication and teamwork (P12)”.

The quality of coaching filters down to the quality of leaders and managers, which in turn will filter further down to the quality and efficiencies in the way that a service is delivered; this will ultimately improve efficiency in the delivery of services and increase productivity, as mentioned by one participant: “Company Sustainability, increase productivity, we will get things done quickly”(P4)”.

The axial code of enhancing leadership and team effectiveness emerged from the open codes of becoming a better leader, increase efficiency, and teamwork, better collaboration, improved efficiency and management of risk, and growth development and learning interaction with other sector managers.

The coaching enabled a participant to become a better leader, and lead the team better, while it increased efficiencies, and the overall morale of the workforce and teamwork within the organisation, which result in all-round benefits for the organisation. Thus, becoming a better leader increased efficiency and teamwork within the organisation.

Better collaboration leads to improved interactions with other sector managers, as well as improved efficiency and management of risk and growth development, as one of the study participants state in this way: "I think the improved efficiencies improved management of risk, [and] the growth and development of personnel who form part of my team will all be benefits to the organisation (P7)".

Strategic impact and triple bottom line of the impact of coaching in terms of the return on investment is derived from the open codes of benefiting the strategic sessions, more maturity in perspective, opportunity to give direction to triple bottom line, and profit benefit.

The coaching sessions certainly benefited the strategic sessions for the participants, added profit benefit and sustainability, and helped a leader or manager to think outside of the box to do things differently resulting in a more positive organisation. They thought more maturely in that respect.

The opportunity to give direction to triple bottom line and profit benefit also reflects the impact of coaching and return on investments as stated by a respondent "It will add to triple bottom line. Yes, as coaching has the opportunity to give direction toward the triple bottom line. (P5)".

4.5 Thematic Analysis of the qualitative data emanating from the thematic analysis of focus group discussion

The researcher analysed the data thematically uncovering two themes through the inductive process. The themes were linked back to the research objectives, which were unpacked through the research questions.

Theme 1: Use of leadership skills at senior/executive level to embrace the demands of a VUCA world (NVivo References 15)

The focus group consisted of managers and senior leaders. The data was examined using theme analysis, which is a standard qualitative research method (Guest et al., 2012). This style of analysis is often adopted in qualitative research because it “minimally organises the data and communicates it in rich detail”. In the description, this method is used for “identifying, evaluating, and relating patterns (themes) inside data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006) because it can provide a perceptive evaluation that solves certain research questions; therefore, it was chosen for the current research.

The qualitative data from the focus group was organised and managed using NVivo software, which is very useful for large data sets. The researcher could work more efficiently with large amounts of text and complex coding schemes due to the NVivo software tool, which helped organise the vast data set while retaining a high degree of analytical sophistication. The second phase began after the researcher had read and become acquainted with the data, and had an idea about what was in it and what was interesting.

Research objectives and questions linked to Theme 1 from the focus groups:

Research Objective 1: To determine whether Executive Leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.

Research Objective 4: To explore the influence of the coaching model in terms of building a positive and sustainable organisation.

Research Question 4: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

4.5.1 Coding explanations of the data analysis of focus group 1

This phase comprised in the first generation of codes from the qualitative data, which is a conceptual activity that must be re-examined regularly. There were 14 codes crafted from the one in the focus group discussion and collected during the beginning of the coding phase of the research. Through the usage of coding, the researcher simplified and concentrated on precise data qualities. By coding, the researcher could transform unstructured data into groups. Specific codes were allocated to quotes from the participants' responses, and the transcripts were coded line by line to arrange the data logically. Coding assisted the researcher in simplifying and focusing on specific data features, which is how data emanated from being unstructured to logical concepts arising. Using an inductive methodology, the themes were linked effectively to the data, and were not manipulated to correspond with any prevailing coding frame or the researcher's ideas.

The coding summary tables applicable to themes are depicted in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Phase one: open coding

Code	Grouping	Example Quotes
1. Aid in perspective building	Emotional intelligence coaching assists in comprehending the differences in perspectives.	"The emotional intelligence will definitely get me to, you know, think differently, understand them better, and understand me better." (P-B)
2. Better teamwork	Emotional Intelligence coaching helps in better teamwork.	"Better teamwork" (P-A)
3. Bridge the generation gap.	EI bridges the expectations between generation.	" I just want to add that everybody has been trained by the baby boomer generation, so we have adjusted ourselves to their expectations, so the gap sits between the top level and the younger generation, so ya, that emotional intelligence needs to be worked on both ways." (P-A)

4. Increase in maturity level	EI coaching assists in the increase of maturity level, whether for senior or younger leadership.	"I also think it will come about in the sense of maturity level, you know a lot of it is, and unfortunately even people that are older people actually need that." (P-B)
5. Organisational synchronisation	Help in creating synchronisation within the organisation.	"You get some sort of flow, you know, amongst the division and the organisation whether you in the organisation sitting at head office or elsewhere." (P-A)
6. Lean management approach	Lean management described as a technique of running an organisation that is founded on the idea of constant improvement, a long-term method to work.	"Okay, because we are quite a lean management team." (P-B)
7. Strong synergy	There is a great and strong synergy between older and young leadership.	"There is a lot of youth. Also, there are not too many people that are very senior in terms of management. Yes, they are a little older. The other thing I think there is good cohesion. " (P-A)
8. Parrot fashion seniors	Seniors tend to follow more the old trends and systems mindlessly.	"I think there is a big generational [gap] because I think the older guys are very parrot fashion." (P-B)
9. Seniors' task-oriented approach	As a leader, millennials are more oriented toward tasks than people oriented.	"So, if [I] can just say basically millennials are, how can I put it, they not really people orientated people. Because the older guys tend to be more aware of people's feelings and emotions before they act, millennials are completely different." (P-A)
10. Youngers' non-striving approach	Youngers show a lack of ambition while striving for the leadership position.	"I would say conversely, the young generation, they do not exhibit leadership qualities the way you would expect them to exhibit them. They are very much not, they do not work on their own to get into leadership." (PA-B)
11. Expert leadership principles	Because of their expertise and other factors, the older generation's principles and basics tend to lead the business on a more strategic path.	"I think in a positive way in different generations and their leadership styles, the younger generations can connect better with their peers and their teams, and therefore they exhibit a bit leadership at that level, but at a higher level [they don't]." (P-B)
12. Same paced leadership	Leadership for every generation has the same pace in terms of traits, expectations, and management.	"Everybody expects the same, have same behaviour traits, fast-paced [work environment] time management, respect." (P-A)
13. Young leaders as exploratory thinkers	When younger leaders take on the job of a leader, they adopt the exploratory approach.	"While the younger people are much more expansive [in their] thinking because it comes from the education system." (P-C)

Axial coded categories were pursued in the following phase, which was a result of the linkages made between the codes during the open coding. The researcher

categorised the open codes into meaningful categories. All of the open codes were linked to create four categories. The axial coding summary tables applicable to themes are depicted in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Phase two: axial coding

Category	Category Representing	Codes Aligned
1. The assistance of emotional intelligence coaching	To identify how emotional intelligence coaching benefits the generational gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aid in perspective building • Better teamwork • Bridge the generation gap • Increase in maturity level • Organisational synchronisation
2. The negative impact of generational differences on leadership traits	To identify the negative impact of generational differences on leadership traits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parrot fashion from seniors • Seniors' task-oriented approach • Youngers non-striving approach
3. The positive impact of generational differences on leadership traits	To identify the positive impact of generational differences on leadership traits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expert leadership principles • Same-paced leadership • Young leaders as exploratory thinkers
4. Leadership skills at the case study	To determine the leadership at the case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lean management approach • Strong synergy

In the third phase, namely thematic coding, the researcher examined the data and produced refined themes that recapped and answered the study's key research questions. The aim was to gain an understanding of the data so that themes might be unpacked and developed throughout the interpretation stage of the research. Two key themes were formed from the collection of related categories. All of the topics appeared to provide an answer to the research questions. Based on comparisons, the categories were organised into themes. Themes should consist of entire phrases that explicitly answer the research questions.

Research objectives and questions linked to Theme 1 from the focus groups:

Research Objective 1: To determine whether executive leaders in NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world;

Research Objective 4: To explore the influence of the coaching model in terms of building a positive and sustainable organisation.

Research Question 4: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

The summary tables applicable to themes emanating from the focus group are presented below in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8: Themes from focus group

Research Objective	Themes	Aligned Categories
RO1: To determine whether executive leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.	Theme 5: The utilisation of leadership skills at the executive level to embrace the VUCA world's demands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The negative impact of generational differences on leadership traits • The positive impact of generational differences on leadership traits • Leadership skills at the case study
RQ4: What is being changed due to the coaching model (e.g., corporate culture, old vs. new paradigm, opinions, postulates, power, and relationship issues)? Will this create a positive and sustainable company by its influence on these aspects?	Theme 6: Executive coaching strategies to bridge the generational leadership gap.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assistance of emotional intelligence from coaching

Research objectives and questions linked to the themes:

Research Objective 1: To determine whether executive leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.

Research Question 1: How will the criteria be determined to unpack whether leaders are ready to harness new skills?

Research Question 4: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

Quotes coded from the focus group discussion extracted from NVivo were as follows:

“The EI will definitely get me to, you know, think differently understand them better and understand me better.” (P-B)

“Better teamwork.” (P-A)

“I just want to add [that] there is everybody has been trained by the baby boomer generation, so we have adjusted ourselves to their expectations, so the gap sits between the top level and the younger generation so, [yes]ya, that EI needs to be worked on both ways.” (P-A)

“I would say conversely [that] the young generation, they don’t exhibit leadership qualities the way you would expect them to exhibit it, they are very much not, they don’t work on their own to get into leadership.” (PA-B)

“I also think it will come about in the sense of maturity level, you know, a lot of it is, and unfortunately even people that are older people actually need that.” (P-B)

“You get some sort of flow, you know, amongst the division and the organisation, whether you [are] in the organisation sitting at head office or elsewhere.” (P-A)

“While the younger people are much more expansive [in their] thinking because it comes from the education system.” (P-C)

“Everybody expects the same, has same behaviour traits, fast-paced time management, respect.” (P-A)

Theme 6: Executive coaching strategies to bridge the leadership generational gap.

Research objectives and questions linked to the theme:

Research Objective 3: To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior leaders and mid-level leaders, and result in a retention strategy.

Research Question 2: How will the criteria be determined to unpack whether leaders are ready to harness new skills?

Research Question 3: How can a coaching model/programme best fit the organisation?

Quotes coded from the focus group discussion extracted from NVivo were as follows:

“I think, in a positive way, in different generations and their leadership styles, the younger generations can connect better with their peers and their teams, and therefore they exhibit it a bit of leadership at that level, but [not] at a higher level.”
(P-B)

“So, if [I] can just say, basically, millennials are, how can I put it, they [are] not really people orientated people (nervous chuckle), because the older guys tend to be more aware of people’s feelings and emotions before they act, millennials are completely different.” (P-A)

The words were generational gap, EI, the older generation, younger generation, and younger people.. EI coaching often appeared in the focus group discussion, as shown in the word cloud below (Figure 4.7).



Figure 4.7: Word cloud focus group 1

Conclusion of the first focus group discussion.

From the first focus group discussion, two main themes emanated, namely:

- The utilisation of leadership skills at the executive level to embrace the VUCA world's demands.
- Executive coaching strategies to bridge the generational leadership gap.

These themes were linked to the objectives of whether executive leaders in the case study are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world. They were also linked with identifying the type of programme required, a model or coaching intervention tailor-made specifically for the organisation being studied. This would result in bridging the gap between millennials, baby boomers, and the silent generation, to ensure the transfer of critical knowledge, and to evaluate whether the model added value.

Thematic analysis of the qualitative data emanating from focus group discussion 2

The researcher analysed the data thematically, uncovering two themes through the inductive process. The themes were linked back to the research objectives, which were unpacked through the research questions.

4.5.2 Coding explanations of the data analysis of focus group 2

This open coding process, as alluded to earlier in the first focus group discussion, included creating the first codes from the data, which is the conceptual task that needs to be reviewed frequently. The focus group data gathered during the initial coding phase of the investigation was converted into 19 codes. The researcher streamlined and focused on particular data features by using coding. The researcher was able to use coding to translate the unstructured data into theories about what was happening in the data. Table 4.9 displays an open coding table with the code, meaning of the code, and a few sample quotes. This table further

portrays how the transcripts were coded line by line, and how the specific codes were given to quotes from the responses.

Table 4.9: Phase 1: Open coding focus group 2

Code	Code Grouping	Example Quotes
1. Benefits everyone	Emotional coaching benefits everyone.	"I think it will benefit everyone." P1
2. Develop empathy	Emotional coaching aid older generation in developing empathy.	"You will see the leaders will see what is important to the younger generations. Understand their feelings. P1"
3. Help in work-life balance	Emotional coaching helps in creating work-life balance.	"Just to add on to that, like for the older generation and work life balance, mostly just the men worked. So now the issue of having to work overtime was never really considered, as there were not any females. But now they [are] trying to adjust as there are females in the workplace and females are mothers, [and] need to cook, so now that is they are trying to introduce work life balance as well." (P7)
4. Need for practicing self-awareness	"Older generation need to be self-aware to get benefit from emotional coaching.	"Older people, if they are going to try and be emotionally aware, they are going to really need to get in touch with themselves. It can [be] something you are just reading and think you going to be able to practice. You must really be aware [of] yourself, your behaviours, and others. You must really want to apply it and change." (P7)
5. Unacceptable to change	Older management has difficulty accepting change	"Older people are set in their ways. It is very difficult for them to change. For them to make a change is difficult, they say 'I have been doing this for 50 years of my life, how can I change'. P3"
6. Unaware of feelings	Older generations were mostly unaware of their feelings.	"I think it can, but they also have to be open to and very aware, and willing to accept emotional intelligence. Because you must know a lot of older people are not in touch with their feelings." (P3)
7. Unaware of mental issues	Older people are unaware of mental issues as compared to younger generation.	"I think it can, but they also have to be open to and very aware and willing to accept emotional intelligence. Because you must know a lot of older people are not in touch with their feelings." (P3)

8.Generation gap in executives	Mostly, the generation gap lies at the executive level.	"But yes, there could be a big generational gap between the executives [and the next tier of management." (P3)
9.No generation gap amongst young management	There in no generation gap in the younger management.	"I think in terms of there is not a huge gap between any of the generations when it comes to the organisation being studied. There is a lot of youth, also there are not many people that are very senior in terms of management. If we look in my division,
10.Authoritative style	Old style leadership is mostly authoritative in style.	there is no gaps between the levels" (P3) "Autocratic style." (P5)
11.Difficult to communicate	Older generation leaders are harder to communicate with.	"Those older leaders are harder to approach in terms of communication." (P1)
12.Lack of psychological skills	Older generations lack basic interpersonal psychological skills as a leadership skill	"Emotional intelligence, being empathetic, being constantly aware of other people, and that was not a topic in their generation. That generation work was work - you [are] not here to be a family, we [are] not here to be friends, we coming to work. As opposed to now a lot of organisations and a lot of people and leaders now are having to realise that
13.Lack of respect amongst older leadership	Older generation leadership lacks element of respect in their leadership style.	that style of leadership no longer works." (P7) "A lot of factors contribute to the generational differences in terms of leadership traits ... lead us to have feelings. Seniors and younger generations also depend on the person's values. They have different values. Respect. To lead, you need respect between the generations. Seniors may not have respect and leadership styles may be
14.Micromanagement from older generation	Older generation leadership tends to more micromanage the work.	influenced." (P8) "Micromanaging from the older generations." (P2) "For example, the younger generations are okay to work remotely, as long as the deadlines are met, but the older generations need to micromanage so
15. Older generations lack of work life balance	There is a lack of work-life balance in the older generation.	you cannot work remotely." (P3) "Adding to that, another case I found [regarding] the older generation versus the newer generation, the older generation did not have much of a work life balance, now that's what has been pushed now." (P7)

8.Stricter approaches	As compared to younger managers, older managers have a stricter leadership approach.	"I think maybe with the generation, they have stricter approaches as a younger manager. Younger manager would have a more-calmer approach, I would not say chilled, but a little more of an easier way to approach than someone coming from an older background who is a little stricter - like this is [sticking] to the book and this is how things must be done. So, you are scared to approach one like that. " (P3)
9.Easier to approach same age leader	Approaching a leader who is the same age is better.	"I think it is also easier to approach someone closer in your age, as you see that person as almost a peer, and especially when we come from traditional households where we had to respect your elders, so that also takes a part in that. Older leadership." (P6)
10.Leniency in managing style	Younger management has a more lenient leadership style as compared to older leaders.	"A younger manager knows that socializing gets the team going, gets that kind of feeling that relationships are important. So, in terms of the fact that there [are] those differences you can pick up." (p5)
11.Structured way of working	Older management has more structured way of working.	"Definitely think in terms of behaviours as older managers have a different way of working. Structured. You work the whole day; you take your break at a certain time of the day. You don't talk during the day." (P4)

The next stage of axial coding, which was developed from the connections between the codes established in open coding, sought to create axial-coded categories. These open codes were categorised by the researcher into useful groups. Five categories were created by connecting all of the open codes.

Table 4.10: Codes linked to newly established categories for NCE

Category	Category Representing	Codes Aligned
1. Benefits of emotional intelligence coaching	To identify benefits of emotional intelligence coaching with the generational gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits everyone • Develop empathy • Help in work-life balance
2. Challenges in way of emotional coaching	To identify the challenges of emotional intelligence coaching with the generational gap	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for practicing self-awareness. • Unacceptable to change • Unaware of feelings • Unaware of mental issues
3. Negative aspect of generational differences on leadership traits	To identify the negative impact of generational difference on leadership traits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authoritarian style • Difficult to communicate • Lack of interpersonal psychological skills • Lack of respect in older leadership • Micromanagement from older generation • Older generation's lack work- life balance. • Stricter approaches • Easier to approach same age leader
4. Positive aspect of generational differences on leadership traits	To identify the positive impact of generational difference on leadership traits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leniency in managing style • Structured way of working
5. Leadership skills at the organisation being studied	To determine the leadership skills at the organisation being studied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generation gap amongst executives • No generation gap amongst young management

In this thematic coding phase, the researcher explored all the information and derived specific themes that were summarised, and addressed the major research questions. The objective was to comprehend the data in order to identify and develop themes throughout the research's interpretation phase. The gathering of related categories during this stage resulted in the formation of two main themes. The research questions appear to be addressed by each of the themes. The

categories were sorted into themes based on their commonalities. Themes directly addressed the research questions (RQs).

Table 4.11: Themes from the second focus group

Research objective	Themes	Aligned categories
RO1: To determine whether executive leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.	Utilisation of leadership skills at executive level to embrace VUCA world's demands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative aspect of generational differences on leadership traits • Positive aspect of generational differences on leadership traits • Leadership skills at the organisation being studied
RO3: To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior leaders and mid-level leaders, and result in a retention strategy	Executive coaching strategies to bridge the leadership generational gap.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Challenges in the way of emotional intelligence coaching • Benefits of emotional intelligence coaching

Research objectives and questions linked to the theme:

Research Objective 1: To determine whether executive leaders at the NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.

Research Objective 3 To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior and mid-level leaders, and result in a retention strategy. To determine whether executive leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills.

Research Question 1: To what extent are leadership skills required for leaders in a VUCA World and post Covid 19 World?

Research Question 2: How will the criteria be determined to unpack whether leaders are ready to harness new skills?

Research Question 4: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

Quotes coded from the focus group discussion with reference to the above were as follows:

“You will see the leaders will see what is important to the younger generations. Understand their feelings.” (P1)

“Older people, if they are going to try and be emotionally aware, they are going to really need to get in touch with themselves. It can [be] something you are just reading and think you [are] going to be able to practice. You must really be aware yourself, your behaviours, and others. You must really want to apply it. And change.” (P7)

“Older people are set in their ways. It is very difficult for them to change. For them to make a change is difficult, they say ‘I have been doing this for 50 years of my life, how can I change’.” (P7)

“I think it can, but they also have to be open to and very aware and willing to accept EI. Because you must know a lot of older people are not in touch with their feelings.” P5)

“Autocratic style.” (P5)

“Those older leaders are harder to approach in terms of communication.” (P1)

“EI, being empathetic, being constantly aware of other people, and that was not a topic in their generation. [For] that generation, work was work ... you [are] not here to be a family, we [are] not here to be friends, we [are] coming to work, as opposed to now, a lot of organisations and a lot of people and leaders now are having to realise that that style of leadership no longer works.” (P7)

“Micromanaging from the older generations.” (P2)

“For example, the younger generations are okay to work remotely as long as the deadlines are met, but the older generations need to micromanage so you cannot work remotely.” (P3)

“Adding to that, another case I found the older generation versus the newer generation, the older generation did not have much of a work-life balance; now that’s what has been pushed now.” (P7)

“I think maybe with the older generation, they have stricter approaches as a younger manager. Younger manager would have a more calmer approach, I would not say chilled, but a little more of an easier way to approach than someone coming from an older background who is a little stricter. Like this is [sticking] to the book and this is how things must be done. So, you are scared to approach one like that.” (P3)

“Definitely think in terms of behaviours as older managers have a different way of working. Structured. You work the whole day; you take your break at a certain time of the day. You don’t talk during the day.” (P4)

Theme 6: Executive coaching strategies to bridge the leadership generational gap.

Research objectives and questions linked to the theme.

Research Objective 3: To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior leaders and mid-level leaders, and result in a retention strategy.

Research Question 1: To what extent are leadership skills required for leaders in a VUCA World and post Covid 19 World?

Research Question 2: How will the criteria be determined to unpack whether leaders are ready to harness new skills?

Research Question 4: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

Quotes coded from the focus group discussion with reference to the above were as follows:

“There could be a big generational gap between the executives.” (P3)

“I think in terms of, there is not a huge gap between any of the generations when it comes to the company, there is a lot of youth also there are not many people that are very senior in terms of management. If we look in my division, there is no gaps between the levels.” (P3)

“A lot of factors contribute to the generational differences in terms of leadership traits., [which] lead us to have feelings. Seniors and youngers generations also depend on the person’s values. They have different values. Respect. To lead you need respect between the generations. Seniors may not have respect and leadership styles may be influenced.” (P8)

“But yes, there could be a big generational gap between the executives.” (P3)

“Older people, if they are going to try and be emotionally aware, they are going to really need to get in touch with themselves. It can [be] something you are just reading and think you [are] going to be able to practice. You must really be aware yourself, your behaviours, and others. You must really want to apply it and change.” (P7)

“A younger manager knows that socialising gets the team going, gets that kind of feeling that relationships are important. So, in terms of the fact that there are those differences you can pick up.” (P5)

“Definitely think in terms of behaviours as older managers have a different way of working. Structured. You work the whole day; you take your break at a certain time of the day. You don’t talk during the day.” (P4)

roles/styles, as defined in the PDA International Technical Manual 2005-2014, were indicative of the next level leadership role for Technical Executive.

PROACTIVE LEADER: PS: 100 – 80 – 0 – 20 / 50

“Is an inclusive leader with an extroverted interest in people”.

“Accepts risks and challenges”.

“Enjoys responsibility and the authority gained through his persuasion skills”.

“Has the ability to gain the respect and trust of others”.

“Applies pressure in a charismatic way in order to achieve goals”.

“Uses his interpersonal skills and charisma to influence and persuade”.

“Is willing to delegate”.

“Is an excellent motivator of people, knows how to communicate and persuade”.

“Is very independent and prefers freedom to set and achieve goals”.

NEGOTIATING LEADER: PS: 50 – 100 – 50 – 0 / 50

“A kind and sociable leader, who establishes an excellent relationship with his team members”.

“Tries to cause a good impression. Is kind and understanding”.

“Works with and through people to achieve progress in projects”.

“Uses his sociable and extroverted nature to persuade and influence others”.

“Might have difficulty to discipline (others) because he/she is not strict, and their approach is ‘non-aggressive’”.

“Is extroverted, charismatic, relates well to people both in one-on one situations as well as in groups”.

“Will use his/her communication and persuasion skills to mediate between individuals”.

“Is independent and prefers to form his/her own opinions”.

4.6 Researcher observation

Throughout the coaching intervention, the researcher observed the participants in order to ascertain the impact of the coaching intervention, and to identify the type of coaching model that would best be suited to NCE. Through the action research element in the study, the researcher was involved in the participatory action research.

Lewin advocated for action research, which is a cyclical, iterative approach to research involving planning, taking action, fact-finding, and resetting. As mentioned in Chapter 3, action research is “research in action rather than research about action” (Coghlan & Coughlan, 2010, p. 4), and “Action is taken to improve practice, and the research generates new knowledge about how and why the improvements came about”. Furthermore, action research is participatory in nature, and is a partnership between the researcher and participants for improvements on further action.

The researcher took on the role of a management researcher to be able to develop valuable knowledge, in order to support organisational problem solving. Spending time with the research participants and immersing herself in the participant groups over time, through the coaching interventions and workshops, thus enabled the researcher to investigate the process in a natural setting, in order to raise awareness of the need for EI for participants and to determine what change was required in the coaching intervention. The reflective study further allowed the researcher to observe and contribute value to NCE, while devising an appropriate coaching model. Figure 4.9 depicts the intervention being intersected by reflection, due to the researcher observing the coaching interventions. The finding is discussed in Chapter five.



Figure 4.9: Researcher observation and reflection through the coaching intervention

Through the reflection, the researcher completed a template while determining any changes required, in conjunction with the coaching notes. The tables below are an indication of some of the aspects that the researcher explored during the reflection stages and analysis.

Table 12: Observation of coaching intervention

Observation of Coaching Intervention and Model	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	Observation Results
Coach understands the role of the coachee	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Coachee understands the difference between coaching and mentoring	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Rapport	80%	100%	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	95%
Engagement in process	50%	80%	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	90%
Motivation	80%	100%	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	95%
Coachee embraced PDA	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Coachee embraced BBCC methodology	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Coachee embraced EI workshops	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Coachee completed EI assessment	0%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	73%
Coachee developed PDP with set goals, both business and personal	100%	100%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	0%	100%	100%	100%	82%
Coachee embraced 360 feedback from seniors	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Coachee aspired to enhance overall capabilities	50%	80%	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	87%
Coachee embraced AI coaching	50%	80%	100%	100%	0%	80%	0%	0%	80%	80%	0%	52%

Table 4.13: Observation of group coaching

Observation of group coaching model	CG1	CG2	CG3	CG4	CG5	CG6	CG7	CG8	CG9	CG10	CG11	Observation Results
Coachee understands the difference between coaching and mentoring	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Rapport	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Coachee embraced EI workshops	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%	80%	92%
Coachee completed EI assessment	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Coachee embraced Energy Workshops	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	50%	100%	100%	100%	80%	89%
Coachee interacted in the group setting	80%	100%	80%	80%	100%	80%	80%	100%	100%	80%	100%	89%
Coachee was motivated	80%	100%	80%	100%	100%	100%	80%	100%	100%	100%	100%	95%

Key	
1 Always observed	100%
2 Often observed	80%
3 Seldom observed	50%
4 Not observed	0%

The data representation in Table 4.12 and Table 4.13 is an analysis of the findings pertaining to the observation and Research Objective 1, which was to identify the type of coaching programme required and to devise a model or coaching intervention tailor-made for NCE. Analysing the tables partly assisted in determining an appropriate intervention, in terms of the motivation and output of a measurable goal. The findings that emerged from the analysed data, in terms of the observation and reflection, showed that the group was not that ready to take on Artificial Intelligence coaching.

4.7 Conclusion

The findings of the qualitative data analysis were presented in this chapter. The findings illustrated the gender and generation distribution at NCE. All participants in the study had been employed for three years or more, and they all had NQF 7 or NQF 8 qualifications, apart from two respondents who had an NQF 6 qualification. This informed the researcher that the respondents would have adequately understood the interview and focus group questions to provide valuable feedback.

The action research element enabled the researcher to clearly define the process and intersection of an ideal coaching model, in terms of bridging the gap between a multigenerational workforce and impacting the bottom line of the business through the use of EI in the coaching intervention. Furthermore, through the action research and coaching intervention, the senior managers crafted development plans and participated in EI coaching workshops. This in itself created the prospect of continuous leadership development as well as of a greater sense of awareness of others and awareness of self. This also enabled the leaders to display emotional reasoning in the current COVID-19 landscape and economic downturn that they had faced and were facing, and to develop their ability to display agility and resiliency in the face of adversity. The findings and explanations supported by the results and literature are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research findings in the qualitative data analysis presented in the preceding chapter. The responses from the participants through qualitative tools employed in the research at NCE were reviewed against the literature, as well as against the objectives and aim of the study. Models were explored through the literature review in Chapter 2, and a combination of models was applied to craft a coaching model named SUMUP for NCE.

This particular study sought to investigate leadership coaching readiness to harness new leadership skills at a senior level in the organisation, through the crafting of a coaching model enabling leaders to improve their emotional intelligence and interpersonal effectiveness, in order to reach business goals and bridge the generational gap.

The objectives of the research study are detailed below:

Research Objective 1: To determine whether executive leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.

Research Objective 2: To identify the type of executive coaching programme required in the current landscape.

Research Objective 3: To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior and mid-level leaders, and result in a retention strategy.

Research Objective 4: To explore the influence of a coaching model in terms of building a positive and sustainable organisation.

The research questions that informed the objectives of the research conducted at NCE are detailed below:

Research Question 1: To what extent are leadership skills required for leaders in a VUCA world and post-COVID 19 World?

Research Question 2: How will the criteria be determined to unpack whether leaders are ready to harness new skills?

Research Question 3: How can a coaching model/programme best fit the organisation?

Research Question 4: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

The researcher gained an understanding of all the participants' roles and responsibilities, as well as of the hierarchy in the organisation, to gain an understanding from a systemic viewpoint of how the organisation operates and how each participant is interconnected in its operation. In terms of the age group of participants, it was observed that most of them fell between the millennials (Gen-Y) and Generation X. Kumar (2014) proposes descriptive research attempts to systematically explain a condition, problem, or occurrence, while describing views toward an issue or problem under study. Through the primary data collection, leadership skills required in a VUCA and post-COVID-19 landscape, and the type of coaching model were explored and aligned with the extant literature, thus, reinforcing the type of coaching intervention that was suggested. This was further explored in the participatory action research.

Within the context of organisational performance, the influence of coaching was also evaluated, which corresponds to Objective 4. The research was made up of a literature review in the first part, in which the concept of a model for coaching in the engineering consulting industry was reviewed. Qualitative data collection and analysis, which included participatory action research in the observation and improvement of a coaching model specific to the NCE, was developed, and an inductive approach was adopted as the model was developed after the data had already been collected and analysed (Saunders

et al., 2012 p.41). In the next section, the researcher links the objectives and themes, as well as the participatory action research, with the coaching model and interventions that emerged from the research. The qualitative approach helped to examine the objectives of the research, linking the themes from the qualitative techniques in order to examine how they related to the objectives. This enabled valuable insight into the findings to be gained in order to address the research aim.

5.2 Findings and interpretations

The findings and interpretations presented below are based on the research questions which were aligned to the research objectives.

5.2.1 Objective 1: To determine whether executive leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.

Theme 1, coaching is beneficial to the organisation, aligned with Objective 1. There was an improvement from an organisational perspective in terms of the performance of those leaders who had had coaching. One participant stated, “The coaching enables you to become a better leader, lead your team better, increases your efficiencies, increases your overall morale and workforce and teamwork within the organisation. All-round benefit for the organisation”. McCarthy and Milner (2020) stated that coaching improves performance leading to improved efficiencies. As discussed in the literature review, Watson (2020) confirmed that coaching improves relationships with employees. Auerbach (2022) also suggested that leadership coaching improved leadership strength and led to higher productivity. Constructs in this theme included the importance of EI in coaching, and were corroborated by the literature which supported the findings.

Theme 3, EI and self-awareness, and awareness of others also aligned with Objective 1 in terms of the leadership skills required, which were the skill of EI and the type of coaching model explored in the participatory action research. Looking at EI in the literature review, Goleman’s (1995) model regarded empathy (understanding others’ feelings, diversity, and awareness) as a crucial component of it.

Sinek (2016) stated that leaders now need to lead with empathy and perspective and concentrate on sustainability and frustrating the competition, instead of on spreadsheets, profits, and projected revenues, saying “We need emotionally intelligent leaders who can model and champion cooperative working. They will coach rather than command; they will be driven by empathy, not ego”.

The digital revolution requires a different, more humane kind of leadership, as discussed in Artley (2018). The GENOS EI model also stated that a core competency of EI was awareness of others, which resulted in empathy. These skills are further acknowledged by the WEF, as required for the future.

Participants reported emotional awareness of others, self-awareness, and the skills of empathy and emotional reasoning about a situation in terms of this theme. Solomon and Collier-Peter (2019) posited that coaching provides one with a greater sense of self-awareness.

Skills that emanated from the study relating to Theme 1 were emotional reasoning, empathy and self-regulation, efficiencies, teamwork, and communication. Participants mentioned: “self-awareness, autocorrect, self-reflection, self-regulation”; “emotional reasoning”; “you are making people more aware of each other, aware of others in order to be able to respond to each other”; “has made one more empathetic change in your mindset”; and “definitely will improve efficiencies, communication and teamwork.”

These skills are identified in the skills required by the WEF (2020). EI was rated in the top 10 skills required in the workplace. Furthermore, in the current pandemic, two of the top 10 skills for 2025, as cited by the WEF, are leadership and social influence. These attributes are also encompassed by EI.

Reasoning, problem-solving, and ideation, which is also encompassed by EI were also mentioned in the top 10 skills required. Other newly emerging skills for 2025 are self-management, for example, active learning, resilience, stress tolerance, and flexibility, which according to the GENOS EI model, fall under the EI competency of self-management. Halliwell et al. (2022) further

suggested organisations wishing to enhance leader performance through the improvement of EI and leadership self-efficacy may discover value in coaching leadership due to the intervention's optimistic effect on these constructs, and the positive association observed between developmental changes in these constructs.

Farr and Brazil (2019) argued that critical thinking is an essential leadership skill. Thus, good people and leadership skills for advancing one's career are important in the engineering industry. Having come through the pandemic and the current landscape, NCE needs to recover and leadership will need to be strong in the face of adversity, while being agile to cope with rapid change. Rimita (2019) suggested that leaders should not be threatened by adversity or ambiguity. Bleich et al. (2021) maintained that leadership skills include self-awareness, relationship capacity, and the ability to manage information through the lens of others.

It was also observed through the research that NCE needs to ensure the sustainability of future projects. Thus, employees at the senior level need to be professionally registered in order for the organisation to retain particular project work. A desirable qualification for the future skill set is being professionally registered. Of the participants interviewed, seven were professionally registered.

Through the findings of the focus groups, Theme 5, the utilisation of leadership skills at the executive level to embrace the VUCA world's demand, also aligned to Objective 1 and answered the research questions.

Through the coaching and EI workshops, various emotional intelligence skills may be unpacked and worked on to build on them and harness them, in order to embrace the skills currently required in the VUCA landscape. The skills discussed in the focus groups were empathy, self-awareness, work-life balance, and communication. For leaders to adapt, change will require more than just readiness. Change readiness suggests that coaches (and in this instance, the leadership at NCE) be ready to contract on the change process, but still need to implement actual change (Theeboom, 2017; Triberti & Riva,

2016). Halliwell et al. (2022) stated that organisations that want to enhance performance in leadership through improvement of EI and self-efficacy, should realise the significance of leadership coaching. Ahn et al. (2014) posited that changes in the engineering context are defined as: change in engineering processes; change in people through understanding and accepting employee changes, and directing and collaborating with others; change in knowledge through the change in engineering disciplines; and the ability to learn more about other fields such as technological and situational skills. Furthermore, there must be an awareness of the need to change, which was corroborated by the participants in the focus groups.

Through the qualitative study, and more specifically from Focus Group 2, two of the participants felt that the senior leaders needed to practise self-awareness and empathy. They also believed that the older generation lacked an element of respect and basic interpersonal psychological skills in their leadership style. In Focus Group 1, the participants felt that the younger generation lacked maturity. A strong viewpoint that came through was that the older generation did not understand work-life-balance, were micromanagers, and did not allow for flexibility. Because of the authoritative style of the older generation, it was harder to communicate and approach them. Empathy was emphasised by both focus groups.

As discussed in Ahn (2014), there must be an awareness of the need to change. The leadership at NCE were aware of the necessity for change, and wanted to do so in order to ensure the transference of critical skills for the retention of talent at the organisation.

5.2.2 Summary overview of objective 1

There was a significant indication in the literature review that EI is a skill required in the current landscape. EI was further broken down into the competencies of self-awareness, awareness of others, self-management, emotional reasoning, and self-regulation, which were evident in the analysis of the data. Participants also mentioned that through EI skills, communication skills, collaboration skills, and resiliency would improve. Skills are seen as the

merging of expertise and capability within one's area or context, as stated in Brinkley and Le Roux (2018). As such, through experience, a leader will acquire different skills through learning.

As set out by Bleich et al. (2021), leadership skills require self-awareness, relationship capacity, and the ability to manage information through the lens of others. Brinkley and Le Roux (2018) further suggested that coaching is integral to this learning in order to develop an understanding of individuals, thus assisting the coachee in discovering and growing through harnessing existing skills and acquiring new ones. Stewart and Harrison (2016) concurred that coaching is an effective tool for upskilling employees. As such, through the coaching intervention and EI workshops, leaders could have insight into skills required in the VUCA landscape, while being able to develop and improve upon these skills.

Some of the statements from the participants in terms of Theme 1 are expressed below:

"The coaching enables you to become a better leader, lead your team better, increases your efficiencies, increases your overall morale and workforce and teamwork within the organisation. All-round benefit for the organisation"; "but in the greater scheme, you are also benefiting the organisation with a more confident individual who understands themselves better, self-awareness"; "Yes, so obviously, we are all individuals but moving towards a common objective or goal. If I am improving my performance, my team performance will improve, and therefore the organisation's performance must improve or contributes towards it."

Brinkley and Le Roux (2018) further proposed that when the coachees succeed in their personal life, this brings greater focus to the organisation. One participant commented in the interviews, *"From an organisational perspective, it gets people focused"*. These findings align with what these authors above have deliberated upon.

It is informative to mention that two participants felt that the leadership needed to want to change, while the leadership team said that they wanted to change.

As corroborated in the definition of leadership, Rost (1993) proposed that one of the four critical components of leadership, is that leaders and followers must commit to true change. This should be explored further in a possible team intervention.

5.2.3 Objective 2: To identify the type of executive coaching programme required in the current landscape.

Identifying a model or coaching intervention tailor-made specifically for NCE, could bridge the gap between millennials, baby boomers, and the silent generation, in order to ensure the transfer of critical knowledge.

All participants, besides those who had not received coaching, provided positive responses. Participants mentioned that there would be better collaboration and better communication between generations. One such participant stated, “... *will definitely improve efficiencies, communication and teamwork*”. As discussed in the literature review, millennials require communication. Poor intergenerational communication often sees this requirement go unheard. Executive leaders need coaching around this, as discussed in Rose and Gordon (2015).

Furthermore, Paulo-Pons (2022) posited that coaching improved performance through supporting facets of interaction with others as well as communication. Paulo-Pons (2022) also explored the definition of coaching from the IAC, which states that coaching is an advanced method of communication that tries to assist a person, group, or team in achieving their goals, by jointly creating awareness and solutions to issues.

Theme 2, namely that coaching can bridge the gap between generations in the workplace and Theme 6, executive coaching strategies to bridge the generational leadership gap, aligned with Objective 2. Through the review of the extant literature, it was evident that EI forms part of an essential strategy in bridging the multigeneration gap. The participant analysis through the primary study reinforced that an integral part of the coaching intervention included in the model is EI. Ballesteros-Sanchez et al. (2019) pointed out that executive coaching has been found to have the highest impact on behaviours linked to

managing, leading, and finding solutions within a challenging area. Participants in the coaching intervention mentioned that *“coaching has bridged the gap”* and *“it has bridged the maturity gap”*. Through coaching and understanding the generational differences in the workforce, soft skills, EI, and psychological factors may be improved, resulting in talent retention. Ihamäki and Heljakka (2021) posited that EI is critical in creating close relationships and improving organisational growth, through understanding emotions to change the behaviour of multigenerational teams.

Regarding the influence of coaching, which saw Theme 4 aligned to Objective 2, based on the participants' responses, there was an overwhelmingly favourable agreement that it positively impacted the business and persons there, specifically in terms of self-awareness, awareness of others, and the ability to self-regulate one's emotions, which are all competencies of EI. As cited by Hendon et al. (2017), there is a clear relationship between EI and communication skills, which has positive outcomes for teamwork and relationship-building between generations.

Participants mentioned the following regarding this:

- *“You think about things quickly. Self-awareness. Autocorrect, self-reflection. Self-regulation. How does it affect that person's awareness of others.”*
- *“In the coaching, you make people more aware of each other, aware of others to be able to communicate to each other. When we are aware of each other, we can treat each other better, and when we treat each other better, we can work more efficiently, and if we are working more efficiently as well, we are adding to the profit.”*
- *“Teaching the older generation to impart on the younger generation, creating the younger ones to work eventually without the guidance of the older ones.”*
- *“The core of coaching is how to manage people, and the big factor is the emotional gap. How to emotionally manage people.”*

Coaching was viewed as beneficial to the organisation and participants. Notably, Mayer et al. (2000) posited that leaders who display high EI can self-

regulate and manage emotions, as well as recognise and empathise with what is displayed by their multigenerational team; as such, they can use this ability to comprehend and close the generational gap. The findings suggested that self-regulation and the ability to manage emotions, as well as display awareness of others through the use of emotional intelligence, would benefit the organisation and participants. Pinos (2013, p 76) described emotional intelligence as “one’s ability to manage and monitor one’s own emotions; recognise different types of emotions in others; distinguish the difference between one’s emotions and those of others; and possess the ability to direct information towards one’s decision-making actions”.

NCE needed to navigate the pandemic. The leadership had to think more quickly, be adaptable, and transparent, yet be strong in the face of adversity. In this context, leadership needed to consciously transfer these skills to the next level of leadership, by being more emotionally aware of the business and others, to ensure a pipeline of leaders who can navigate future VUCA landscape, and ensure the business would be sustainable. Zelinski (2019) reported that through the use of emotional intelligence, a business increased employee productivity, which resulted in a profit increase of 60%. Palmer and Cignac (2012) noted a positive correlation between employee and manager engagement through the effective use of emotional intelligence. Thus, this further supports the findings regarding the influence of coaching, with an emotional intelligence element, in enabling leaders to bridge the gap between a multigenerational workforce, through better engagement, communication, and empathy.

As determined in the literature review, leaders are faced with an increasing change in requirements due to changing organisational landscapes and role expectations (Holmberg et al., 2016). Competent, influential leaders are often lacking in organisations (Rothwell, 2010), resulting in unsustainability and people leaving these organisations, thus affecting retention. Notably, these definitions come from a pre-COVID-19 and pre-VUCA context and are part of an old paradigm, which is something for the organisation being studied to explore further.

Theme 5 from the focus groups was also linked to Objective 2. As stated by Ringberg and Reihlen (2008), knowledge transfer brings with it much complexity between receiver and transferer. Lappalainen (2015) further stated that skills required by leaders included being a generalist, having transferable skills in leadership, knowing how to interact and network, knowing languages, and having cultural and emotional skills, all of which are critical in the engineering sector. Good communication skills are imperative amongst the leadership generation in terms of knowledge transfer. Paulo-Pons (2022) suggested that executive coaching improves performance by supporting “time management, goal setting, motivation, interaction with others, communication and management [of the] work environment”. Thus, through the coaching and improvement of communication, knowledge sharing can take place.

5.2.4 Summary overview of objective 2

This objective was linked to identifying a type of programme required, a model, or coaching intervention tailor-made specifically for the organisation being studied, to bridging the gap between millennials, baby boomers, and the silent generation, to ensuring that the transfer of critical knowledge can be crafted, and to evaluating the value of the model.

Through the literature review and participatory action research, various coaching interventions and programmes were delivered, and either changed or improved upon. There were no statements of disagreement that a coaching intervention would not bridge the gap between the generations. More so, there was a very positive response noting that coaching would bridge the gap, explicitly noting that an EI element linked to the intervention would add value to it. The coaching intervention was positively received, and senior management cited growth and maturity in those that had participated in it. Furthermore, through observation and the qualitative study, the researcher observed a positive impact on the awareness of others which resulted in better communication between different generations. Participants who took part in the coaching intervention believed that coaching was a crucial support to the leaders, and should be an intervention that continues, specifically at

management level. Senior leadership was fully committed to this intervention at NCE.

Across all the objectives and themes, it is evident that EI was required to form part of the coaching intervention, as this would be the direct link to bridge the gap between the generations through awareness of others, empathy, emotional reasoning, awareness of self, and management of self and self-regulation. At NCE, top management was committed to implementing these interventions for all layers of staff. Top management attended the EI workshops and assessments, demonstrating their support of the importance of coaching in the workplace. The emerging themes from the analysis corroborated the importance of EI as part of the coaching intervention. From the qualitative study, however, it was additionally observed that the coaching intervention needed to be more structured in terms of timing.

5.2.5 Objective 3: To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior and mid-level leaders, and result in retention.

Theme 2, coaching can bridge the gap between generations in the workplace, aligned with Objective 3. The context described by the participant feedback below resonated with the literature review, wherein Johansen (2012) emphasised the importance of viewing overall leadership skills differently. A profoundly new set of leadership skills will be necessary to cultivate millennial leadership while being mindful of leaders from all the generations.

Participants in the interviews mentioned the following in that regard:

- *“They will unpack gaps between the different generations.”*
- *“From a communication perspective.”*
- *“Because it teaches us to work with each other, to step in each other’s shoes. Empathy.”*
- *“Engaging with different generations, seeing how they see things. Workshops and strategies to engage with them. Engage with younger guys and different generations. Can bridge the gap there.”*

- *“Looking at everything and understanding how that millennial thinks, and why they react or manage the way they do. So can help us manage up and sideways with our colleagues and bosses.”*
- *“It will bring about a deeper understanding between age groups.”*
- *“Youngsters can learn from the older ones.”*
- *“Gap identification, generational gap, the way people think: millennials versus GenX.”*

Burton et al. (2019, p. 385) stated: “Leadership traits, comprising of integrity, credibility, useful listening, visionary, fairness, humility and caring, will echo with and entice staff that are innovative and productive. Complexity will arise from the diversity of a multigenerational workforce and leaders will be required to understand behaviours, values, and beliefs through the lens of others”. It has been noted that the findings suggest that one of the new skills or leadership traits that is emerging to enable bridging the gap in a multigenerational workforce is emotional intelligence, which is all encompassing of self-awareness, awareness of others, communication, and empathy. The complex and dynamic problems of the modern world are best navigated by leaders who acquire and demonstrate these qualities. Through the literature review, supported by the WEF, EI was rated amongst the top 10 skills required in the workplace. In the current pandemic, two of the top 10 skills for 2025, as cited by the WEF, are leadership and social influence. These are attributes encompassed by EI.

Schroth (2019) suggested that today’s workforce is becoming more diverse in terms of generations, requiring leaders to follow an effective leadership style and acquire skills to lead their teams successfully. Ihamäki and Heljakka (2021) stated that emotions play a fundamental role in changing the behaviour of multigenerational teams. Having a multigenerational team means that the individuals have different levels of enthusiasm, excitement, and confidence.

Through coaching and EI workshops, leaders can acquire the skills to manage a diverse workforce in terms of a multigenerational one. One participant mentioned, *“Coaching helps a leader or manager to think outside of the box to do things differently. Think more maturely in that respect. People is the big one.*

The core of coaching is how to manage people, and the big factor is the emotional gap. How to emotionally manage people”.

Theme 2 of the focus group themes is linked to Objective 3 as well.

This theme revealed the benefits of EI coaching, by exposing the negative aspects of generational differences on leadership traits while exploring the positive impacts of these as well. The participants commented that EI coaching assisted in comprehending the differences in perspectives between generations, while bridging the expectations between them.

The literature review further explored how generational differences in organisations, can impede the handover of critical information from managers in leadership positions to entry-level employees (Al-Asfour, 2015). As stated in Harrison (2016), the new decade starting in 2020 is the first ever decade where four generations are seen working together in the workplace. Each generation has different values, viewpoints, and expectations. In the organisation being studied, it is imperative to bridge the gap between leaders and millennials, and attempt to have information exchange. NCE currently has five generations working together. As the participants were also part of the interviews, it allowed them to reflect on their viewpoints. During the focus groups, the participants discussed and expanded on their responses to the questions. They mentioned that improved communication and collaboration between the generations was the cornerstone to bridging the gap between the generations.

5.2.6 Summary overview of objective 3

Emerging themes from the qualitative analysis supported the idea that coaching would bridge the gap between the generations. Furthermore, the participants also mentioned that they felt there was a significant generation gap between top and middle management, that possibly the baby boomers needed to be more adaptable to change, and that the top management leaders had to want to embrace EI. Ihamäki and Heljakka (2021) postulated that emotions play a fundamental role in changing the behaviour of multigenerational teams. Furthermore, Usmani et al. (2019) emphasised the importance of organisations understanding generational diversity, and since each generation places

importance on different values, attitudes, skills, and performance, how leaders can craft suitable tasks and reward strategies for these different generations. Through coaching, leaders can expand their EI regarding these broad concepts. Mayer et al. (2000) posited that it is clear that leaders with high EI are able to self-regulate and manage their emotions, identify and understand one generational team's behaviour, and use this skill to understand and bridge the generational divide.

In terms of retention strategies, as explored in the literature, Naim and Lenka (2017) discussed a reduction in withdrawal behaviours and improved work performance through coaching. This could result in improved professional outcomes and the professional registration of employees, leading to retention, due to NCE being able to work on projects that require staff to be professionally registered.

In today's landscape, it is argued that the success of an organisation is influenced by its leadership and specifically their emotional intelligence. Palmer et al (2012) posited that emotions influence decisions, which in turn influence behaviour and, ultimately, performance. Through coaching and bringing in the element of EI, leadership can make better decisions to help manage emotions, behaviour, and attitudes, thus resulting in a return on investment and an engaged workforce. Baran (2018) mentioned that it is evident that coaching is a valuable tool for supporting employees. Furthermore, as examined in the study by Okechukwu and Raymond (2015), coaching improved employee performance by a 74.32% and reduced employee turnover. Furthermore, Stefaniak (2017) stated that through coaching, a career path is set which can also result in a retention strategy.

5.2.7 Objective 4: To explore the influence of a coaching model in terms of building a positive and sustainable organisation.

To attain this objective, participatory action research was undertaken to explore the influence of the said coaching model crafted specifically for the organisation. The researcher implemented the PDA assessment in the first phase of the participatory action research through the coaching intervention,

and then implemented EI workshops and the GENOS EI assessment. Furthermore, AI coaching was introduced after the face-to-face coaching sessions had been completed to complement the coaching intervention.

Themes of decision-making, communication, learning, EI, behaviour, generational differences, and biases emanated from the data, from which personal development plans were drawn up using Excel (Annexure E provides an example). The plan examined the competencies and PDA profiles required at the next level of leadership, as well as the broad range of results of leaders, as outlined by Charan et al. (2011) who developed a leadership model of six leadership pathways, which further explored a central architecture that could be adapted to an organisation. Thus, this was introduced into the coaching intervention by means of a review from the senior leaders to the coachees, and was then unpacked with the latter in terms of the next level roles and competencies to work toward through using the coaching intervention. These personal development plans were introduced to create self-awareness and reflection.

5.2.8 Summary overview of the participatory action research

The objective of the participatory action research was to ascertain whether the coaching intervention could be implemented at NCE. The researcher was involved in the coaching process, and was able to adapt the intervention and add tools at different stages of it, as well as present EI workshops. Saunders et al. (2012) presented the action research spiral of context and purpose, diagnosing, planning to take action, and evaluating. The action research of the case study followed the spiral throughout the process using Kolb's reflective model, as posited by Petkus (2000), in terms of the concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation, and then repeated the reflective model for planning and evaluation of the coaching intervention. The phases are presented in Table 3.3 (p114) of this research study.

The researcher explored various coaching models through the secondary research, which included the GROW coaching model, OSKAR coaching model, CLEAR coaching model, STEPPA coaching model, brain-based coaching

model, SYSTEMIC coaching model, Strengths coaching model, Multipliers coaching model, and Integrity coaching model. In addition, various EI models were explored. As there had been no coaching programme implemented at NCE before, this was first implemented at a senior level, and then adapted through reflection and the milestones that the participants had achieved, to determine what would best suit the organisation and participants. The participants in the coaching intervention expressed many positive feelings around the experience, and believed that the intervention would support them further in their roles. As the study and intervention were being undertaken at NCE, the GENOS EI assessment and workshops were used in the implementation of the coaching intervention because this assessment is particularly suited to the workplace. Through the literature review, it was shown that there is a direct link between the way people feel and the way they perform at work. GENOS EI is an assessment that is particularly well suited to the workplace and leaders. Leaders who demonstrate high EI in the workplace can manage their emotions. Goleman's mixed model of EI further supported the GENOS EI assessment. Furthermore, the leaders believed that the EI workshops would add value if rolled out to other tiers of staff. According to Auerbach (2022), in a study of 2 165 coaching clients worldwide polled by ICF, 96% stated that they would repeat coaching as they believed that this would improve their proficiency. Of the companies that calculated a return on investment (ROI) from coaching, 86% mentioned that they saw a return on investment on engagement and 30% mentioned they had a ROI of 10-49 times on their investment.

Through the semi-structured interviews in the participatory action research, the coachees discussed that the coaching intervention provided EI competencies of self-awareness, awareness of others, emotional reasoning, empathy, and empowering others. Through the evidence from the participatory action research, it is suggested that an EI component must accompany the coaching intervention. Through the participatory action research, in terms of the coaching, emotional intelligence workshops, AI coaching, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups, the SUMUP model was crafted.

The coaching was systemic in that the coaching model looked at the participants within the system, attempting to bring a more comprehensive perspective, thereby aligning the individual and organisational goals.

Whittington (2014) defined systemic coaching as a method of coaching that coaches with the system in mind, delving into the parts of the sum and the sum of the parts, and tapping into the potential and performance of the coachees and organisation. Furthermore, Boyatzis et al. (2006) discussed the influence that leaders have on the behaviours and decisions of employees and the team, through Kolb's reflective model of. The researcher was actively involved in the participatory action research, by introducing the EI workshops as well as the assessments that were brought into the coaching intervention.

There were five phases to the coaching intervention, and was not only limited to one-to-one coaching. Terblanche (2020) stated that a five-stage approach was required in determining a model. In terms of the coaching model/intervention required for NCE, the researcher had to be cognisant of the aim of the research study and Objective 2, namely, *'to identify the type of executive coaching programme required in the current landscape'*. This would then follow Phase 1 of Terblanche's (2020) approach, in terms of defining the purpose and desired outcome of the model. Stage 2 of the study explored many models which all had a common thread, extensions of the GROW model, and also explored leadership interventions; many theoretical and conceptual frameworks, and coaching and mentoring frameworks were also explored at this stage of the literature review, and are summarised in figures 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 2.6 (p.97-p.100). During the participatory action research, the researcher added tools to the coaching intervention, and combined this with observing what could be required in terms of the aim of the study, and what was being observed in the coaching sessions. The interventions added during the reflective participatory action research and coaching conversations, due to the need to add an emotional intelligence assessment as well as actual workshops on emotional intelligence and 360 reviews, with regards to the leadership pipeline. AI coaching was also explored to determine if this intervention would add a richer experience and meet the aim of the study. The coaching model

crafted for NCE was termed SUMUP (acronym created by the researcher), which figuratively depicts the coachees' experiences of summing up where they are, where they want to be, and how they will get there, while also taking into consideration the objectives of the organisation. Coachees were invited to participate in the coaching intervention. On acceptance, they were informed of the setting, the company's expectations, and the duration; they were also consulted about their expectations, and then, once the confidentiality agreements had been signed, the phases began.

The five phases were as follows:

S – Self-awareness

U – Understand current reality linked to self and job role

M – Meaning of new reality

U – Understanding others through this process

P – Proactively reroute

The first phase, designated as 'self-awareness', utilised the PDA and SCARF assessments to gain a deeper understanding of self (assessments researched and unpacked in Chapter 2). These assessments gave the coachees (participants) insights into their behavioural styles and triggers. Three one-to-one coaching sessions followed using the brain-based coaching conversation methodology, which was described earlier in the literature review. All the participants who completed the PDA assessment were surprised as to how accurate this assessment was. Further tools were added into the coaching sessions from the coaching toolkit, including the DISC profile assessment. All were found to be valuable, however, from observation, the PDA was found to be a valuable tool for the setting up of this intervention, as it was able to glean a lot of information from the participants.

In the next phase, designated as 'understand the current reality linked to self and job role', the leader would gain an understanding of what their current reality was in terms of their job role, where they were, and where they wanted

to be, linking their aspirations with those of the company. This phase linked the profile of the participants to the competencies and job roles, as determined by the technical executives, as well as to a review of the broad range of results of leaders described in Charan et al. (2011). In the first instance, the participants were surprised at the accuracy of the PDA assessment; then, it was even more informative for the participants to understand and unpack their competencies in their natural role state and that of their current role state in the workplace. The relevancy of leadership competencies explored in this model and their usefulness in terms of their applicability were discussed in Chapter 2. The purpose of this was for the leaders to have insight into what was required of them from a behavioural and competency perspective related to their role; it was also for them to better understand how to move toward the next level of leadership competencies at NCE, and if this was indeed the path they wanted to follow. Various tools were used at this juncture, such as the conflict resolution tool, values tool, and time management tool. All these tools are part of the brain-based coaching toolkit.

The third phase, designated as 'meaning of new reality', enabled the coachee to map a new reality of insights that they had uncovered in the previous sessions, and design a personal development plan customised to the SUMUP model, which was crafted specifically for NCE (Appendix A). The PDA coach (AI coach) was introduced to the participants at this stage. This took the coachees further on a journey of daily tasks, which reinforced new habits that they chose toward their new reality. Through understanding where they wanted to go, they could then, through their development plan, discuss how their leadership could provide them with additional responsibilities (stretch tasks). This would then provide intrinsic motivation in terms of responsibility, personal achievement, growth, and development, as well as recognition and advancement. The AI coaching seemed onerous throughout the intervention, due to the level of participation and time management issues at NCE. From the observation, the participants engaged and completed tasks more readily with the one-to-one coach experience. This may be due to coach-coachee accountability, whereas with AI Coaching, it is not personable. This could be explored in future studies.

The fourth phase was designated as 'understanding others through this process'. This phase consisted of EI assessments as well as EI workshops. This included understanding and empathising with others through emotional reasoning, self-regulation techniques, resiliency techniques, and empowering performance, as unpacked in chapter 2 in terms of Goleman's (1995) Emotional Intelligence model and the GENOS EI model in the workplace (Palmer, & Gignac, 2012). Moreover, this assisted with the objective of the coaching model, which was to help bridge the gap between the generations in terms of communication, understanding, and collaboration, and not only concentrating on cognitive and task-driven goals. The GENOS model was chosen as this model specifically aligns to EI in the workplace and retention. The model is also an expansion of Goleman's EI model, as discussed in the literature review, and was the most closely linked model with the aim of the study at NCE. The EI workshops were very engaging and were well received by all participants, allowing them to see links between emotional intelligence, communication, teamwork, different generations' contexts, and retention. These workshops were also a further expansion of the GENOS toolkit. It is notable to see the link to the literature here, in that Hendon et al. (2017) suggested that emotional intelligence and good communication skills have positive outcomes for teamwork and relationship-building between generations; also, according to Lappalainen (2015), leaders need to be technically, relationally, socially, emotionally, intelligently, and conceptually adept. Through the coaching intervention, participants experienced these from the qualitative techniques applied in the study.

The final phase was designated as 'proactively reroute'. This phase was where the coachees reflected on their journey thus far, where they had journeyed from, and where they found themselves at the current time. This came with the commitment to continue their new journey by being more intentional, self-directed, resilient, solution oriented, agile, and adaptable to the new context within which they found themselves, while being empowering leaders. At the end of each session, the coachees would reflect on what stood out for them during the session, and would identify one immediate action that they would take at the end of it.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings of the semi-structured interviews, focus groups, and participatory action research. From the literature review and the participants' experiences, there appeared to be considerable similarities around the coaching experience and its benefits. Through observation, the researcher explored the different tools, while remapping the coaching experience as the coaching went along. The next chapter draws the study to a conclusion and presents the recommendations.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The findings of the organisation being studied, an engineering consulting firm based in KwaZulu-Natal, were discussed in the preceding chapter.

This chapter focuses on the conclusions and recommendations for this organisation. Furthermore, this chapter gauges whether the research objectives were achieved, and also presents the recommendations for the organisation, as well as for research in this area in general.

This research study used a qualitative approach combined with participatory action research. Sixteen participants were interviewed through semi-structured interviews, and two focus groups were held. A participatory action research approach using a coaching intervention was adopted.

The study's main aim was to investigate leadership coaching readiness to harness new leadership skills at a senior level in the organisation, through the crafting of a coaching model enabling leaders to improve on their emotional intelligence and interpersonal effectiveness, to reach business goals and bridge the generational gap.

The research objectives and research questions that informed the aim of the study are presented below:

Research Objective 1: *To determine whether executive leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.*

Research Objective 2: *To identify the type of executive coaching programme required in the current landscape.*

Research Objective 3: *To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior and mid-level leaders, and result in a retention strategy.*

Research Objective 4: *To explore the influence of a coaching model in terms of building a positive and sustainable organisation.*

Research Question 1: *To what extent are leadership skills required for leaders in a VUCA world and post-COVID 19 World?*

Research Question 2: *How will the criteria be determined to unpack whether leaders are ready to harness new skills?*

Research Question 3: *How can a coaching model/programme best fit the organisation?*

Research Question 4: *What can be changed by means of a coaching model?*

The conclusions presented below are based on the research objectives and research questions detailed above. The findings supported the value of leadership coaching in encouraging the development of leaders' skills in emotional intelligence to bridge the gap in a multigenerational workforce. At the organisation being studied, there had been no previous intervention to address the gap of no of a coaching model which could assist leaders to harness new skills of emotional intelligence, resulting in a connection between the multigenerational workforce.

6.2 Conclusion

Research Objective 1: *To determine whether executive leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.*

From the research study, it was concluded that the leaders at the organisation being studied were ready to harness new skills in the form of emotional intelligence. EI is a skill that is required in the current landscape within which the NCE finds itself navigating. The competencies of emotional intelligence that were presented in the literature review were awareness of self, awareness of others, self-regulation, empathy, empowering others, and emotional reasoning. These competencies also encompassed elements of communication. By means of the technical executives at the organisation being studied selecting the job role requirements for the next leadership level from a preselected tool

(PDA Job Profiling), job roles styles (refer p.183) were suggested which also had elements of emotional intelligence competencies. These elements were empathy, social influence and the ability to build and maintain relationships. Through the research study and participatory action research, it was evident that the leadership at NCE were ready to harness these new skills, as they were regarded as relevant and needed in a VUCA world. In addition, through the study, the skills of agility in terms of faster decision-making, and adaptability in terms of change emanated, as well as critical thinking and finding solutions.

The research questions from the qualitative tool (interviews) that informed Research Objective 1 and led to its findings being achieved, were the following:

Research Question 1: To what extent are leadership skills required for leaders in a VUCA World and post Covid 19 World?

Research Question 2: How will the criteria be determined to unpack whether leaders are ready to harness new skills?

Research Question 4: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

The themes explored in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5 were positive in affirming that leaders were ready to harness these new skills. These themes were:

Theme 1: Coaching is beneficial to the organisation.

Theme 3: Coaching can bridge the gap between generations in the workplace.

Theme 4: The influence of the coaching model and what can be changed.

Theme 5: The utilisation of leadership skills at the executive level to embrace the VUCA world's demands.

Theme 6: Executive coaching strategies to bridge the generational leadership gap.

The participants and their seniors believed that embracing new skills linked to emotional intelligence would set the organisation up for success in terms of sustainability and profitability. Furthermore, through the theme 'coaching can bridge the gap between generations', the skills of self-reflection and emotional intelligence emerged. This finding supported the one regarding the new skills required for leadership to embrace in a VUCA context, as well as the one regarding whether the leaders at NCE were ready to utilise these skills. Through continued coaching and workshops, these skills can be further enhanced.

Theoretical frameworks, which further supported the research questions that was aligned to Objective 1 being answered, were leadership theories and styles, participatory action research, and leadership development, and were explored in the extant literature in Chapter 2.

Research Objective 2: To identify the type of executive coaching programme required in the current landscape.

This objective was achieved through the participatory action research and Research Question 3, which enabled a model specific to the organisation being studied to be crafted. The research question that was answered through the study and that aligned with Objective 1, was Research Question 3, namely, *'How can a coaching model/programme best fit the organisation?'*

The theme that aligned with Objective 2 was Theme 3, namely, *'Emotional intelligence and self-awareness, and awareness of others.'* The theme supported that the coaching model required an element of emotional intelligence intertwined into the model.

The recommendation regarding the coaching model and the intervention are presented below, and emanate from the qualitative data presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5. The coaching intervention, which allowed a model to be crafted, was undertaken whilst the organisation being studied was navigating a turbulent time in history, namely, the COVID-19 pandemic and an which included an economic crisis. Leadership needed to display resiliency, adaptability, agility, and EI. The organisation being studied was working in an

uncertain landscape with a multigenerational workforce who all required a different approach in terms of their values and belief systems; this was further explored and unpacked through the literature review and primary study. Through these two parts of the study, it was found that leadership skills require self-awareness, relationship capacity, and the ability to manage information through the lens of others, which were supported by the findings of the qualitative study. Furthermore, as corroborated by secondary data, age-associated changes and distributed leadership are essential for the management of a multigenerational workforce; this is the motivation why top management need to bridge the gap between millennials and senior management to ensure crystallised (experience) intelligence is passed from one generation to the next. Coaching is a short-term intervention to improve leadership effectiveness through implementing new behaviours and demonstrating self-awareness, which was a finding from the primary study and was reviewed against the secondary study (Bleich et al, 2021; Kombarakaran et al., 2008; Lowe & Barry, 2020; Pillay, 2015; Rose et al., 2015).

Coaching was defined as an advanced form of communication, which supported the finding of adding an element of emotional intelligence to the coaching model, in that EI would improve communication in terms of awareness of self and others, as well as solution finding. Coaching could result in increased performance and retention of skills, improved communication between a multigenerational workforce, and improved resilience, agility, and interpersonal skills at the organisation being studied. Through the COVID-19 pandemic, the government reprioritised spending away from infrastructure and toward managing the pandemic, which resulted in NCE navigating an uncertain future and the need for leaders to be resilient in the face of adversity. New requirements of agility (quickness to change) and a transparent leadership style were explored and suggested in the study. Furthermore, the leaders at NCE were also required to develop a pipeline of future leaders and bridge the generational gap. These leaders were pressured to perform at levels outside of their comfort zones, while the employees and managers needed to learn faster and under more challenging conditions. The development of a coaching model would significantly contribute to new knowledge for NCE, as no coaching model or intervention existed within the organisation; as such, the SUMUP (acronym

created by the researcher) model was specifically crafted for the organisation being studied, through a combination of models from the participatory action research.

It was believed that coaching at the leadership level would make a significant contribution to supporting the leaders in managing change and a multigenerational workforce, while navigating the pandemic, thus resulting in a retention strategy. The literature review revealed that one of the most critical activities for leaders was to improve upon self-awareness, individual reflection, executive coaching, and personal development plans. The leaders in the organisation being studied, who participated in the coaching intervention (participatory action research), all pointed out having a positive experience from the coaching model and intervention.

The coaching model emanated from the literature review and the researcher's involvement as a credentialed coach, during the participatory action research stage. The research used reflection during the participatory action research (the cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, and active experimentation), as discussed in Chapter 3. Through reflective observations and evaluating the coaching experience through participant feedback, the researcher was able to introduce new facets into the experience to determine the efficacy of the proposed model.

Effective goal pursuit is essential to organisational success. Therefore, the researcher needed to identify a new coaching model, or improve an existing one, which would incorporate the SMART model (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound) and a goals-based model (GROW and Brain-based Coaching Intervention), without neglecting the element of emotional intelligence; thus, EI was brought in through self-awareness in the assessments and the EI workshop intervention. This coaching would help the leaders become their best, deliver business results, and understand the different generations working in the organisation.

Through the study, five phases to the coaching intervention were posited. The intervention which emanated from the model being formulated was systemic in nature, in that it considered the participants working within a system. It thus attempted to bring a more comprehensive perspective by aligning individual and organisational goals, and enabling leaders to be influential in terms of the behaviours and decisions of a multigenerational workforce.

The coaching model crafted for NCE was termed SUMUP, which figuratively depicts the coachees' experience of summing up where they were, where they wanted to be, and how they would get there, while also taking into consideration the objectives of the organisation.

The five phases were as follows:

S – Self-awareness

U – Understand current reality linked to self and job role

M – Meaning of new reality

U – Understanding others through this process

P – Proactively reroute

All participants in the coaching intervention described it as having a positive influence on their roles in the workplace, on their individual selves, as well as having a positive influence in terms of understanding the different generations, through having gained some insights into EI and generational differences. The broad range of results of leadership, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Charan et al., 2011), underpinned the progression of the leader, and was insightful for the leaders participating in the coaching intervention; this was because they were heavily involved in all of these aspects in their roles, could see how all these aspects tied in together, and were able to appreciate the importance of each element. Through their seniors' review and the job role requirements that were presented to them from the preselected tool (PDA Job Profiling) for the next leadership level, they could identify an area that they would focus on, which was further added to their development plan. A copy of the personal development plan is attached as Appendix C.

The literature review explored the process through the various models and intervention. Even though these tools are universally appropriate in any organisation, they were modified and adapted to suit the organisation being studied. Furthermore, as there is “no one-size-fits-all” for an individual in a coaching intervention, the process of SUMUP remains the same; however, it may take longer to navigate the phases from one coachee to another, and different coaching tools may be required at each intervention depending on the level of the coachee, in terms of maturity in their role. The EI workshops and interventions did not require any change as they blended well together.

The viewpoints of the managers corroborated the literature review in terms of increased performance, growth, and understanding of generational differences. Linkages between the value systems of the organisation, the leaders, and the employees were unpacked, explored, and strengthened during the intervention, and then further corroborated through the research, as discussed in Chapter 2 (Lowe & Barry, 2020; HST, 2007; Usmani et al., 2019). The literature review study supported the importance of the coaching intervention.

The missing element in the model could be an element of a team coaching intervention. Team coaching was discussed in depth in Chapter 2 and was shown to have significant advantages, specifically in terms of the potential for the collective to work together toward change and the performance of the group (Science, 2010). From the observation, it was determined the particular AI Coaching implemented was onerous for the leaders.

Theoretical frameworks which further supported the research questions that were aligned to answering Objective 2, were the coaching models and coaching and mentoring theory frameworks. The conceptual frameworks were the VUCA landscape, emotional intelligence, multigenerational workforce, and coaching through the participatory action research.

Research Objective 3: To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior and mid-level leaders, and result in a retention strategy.

The research question from the qualitative tool (interviews), which informed Research Objective 3 and led to achieving its findings, was:

Research Question 4: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

The themes explored in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5 relating to this objective, were positive in affirming that leaders were ready to harness these new skills. These themes were: Theme 2 from the interview tool, 'Coaching can bridge the gap between generations in the workplace'; Theme 3, 'Emotional intelligence, self-awareness, and awareness of others'; and Theme 6, 'Executive coaching strategies to bridge the generational leadership gap'.

Through the coaching intervention, it was suggested that emotional intelligence, self-awareness and awareness of others could be improved upon, which would in turn bridge the multigenerational gap and create a retention strategy.

The analysis of the qualitative data suggested that the coaching would bridge the gap in terms of the skills of communication, empathy, and understanding the multigenerational workforce. One participant stated that "youngsters can learn from older ones". Through the study, it was evident that when employees learn and do what they enjoy, they tend to stay at their jobs, resulting in retention. Retention happens when employees have challenging, meaningful work with learning opportunities. Work experience and tenure add to retention positively.

The findings in the interviews and focus groups corroborated with the extant literature on the topic, thereby further providing rich meaning to the retention aspect of Research Question 4, in terms of what could be changed through the coaching model, which aligned to Objective 3.

In the Focus Group 2 discussion, there appeared to be synergy between older and young leadership. A participant mentioned, "I think there is good cohesion".

The qualitative study also revealed that a participant possibly felt that the older generation was not in touch with their feelings, and that for them to become

more emotionally intelligent, they would need to be willing to accept the idea of EI linked to feelings. Pinos (2013) stated that EI is the ability to manage and monitor one's emotions and those of others. Goleman's (1995) mixed model of emotional intelligence and the GENOS EI model, as explored in Chapter 2, both agree that the recognition of one's feelings and of those of others are components of emotional intelligence. The importance, therefore, is the value that was derived from the emotional intelligence intervention, through weaving this into the coaching and adding further workshops to support the development of EI. This enabled leaders to understand and accept the linkage between EI and feelings, as determined from the findings in Chapter 4.

The qualitative study further revealed that the participants found the coaching to be supportive and it helped them deal with stress, thus enabling them to navigate the current VUCA landscape of uncertainty and ambiguity, through having acquired a new set of skills in agility, adaptability, and EI. The participants commented that it set them toward their goal, and improved efficiency, communication, and teamwork.

The participant feedback was highlighted to help in creating synchronisation within the organisation and assist in increasing maturity level, whether with senior or younger leadership; this was supported by the literature review on p.75, (Gyllensten and Palmer, 2014). Coaching and developing oneself, as well as the opportunity for the younger generation to learn from the older one, can result in retention. This intervention could be part of the organisation's strategy to retain employees and develop them further professionally. This would then increase the opportunities for future work through current pipelines and new project opportunities, thus creating a sustainable organisation. From the findings, it is also supported that coaching can bridge the generational gap.

The conceptual frameworks that supported the research question were multigeneration, leadership styles, emotional intelligence, and coaching. These were the overarching concepts that provided a foundation for the research. Meanwhile, the theoretical frameworks were participatory action research and leadership theories. These were the established theories and models that guided the design and analysis. The research was informed by multiple

conceptual frameworks, and the research process and analysis were guided by known leadership theories and participatory action research as the underlying theoretical frameworks. These frameworks provided for a well-organised basis and aid in determining the approach and interpretations.

Research Objective 4: To explore the influence of the coaching model in terms of building a positive and sustainable organisation.

The research question from the qualitative tool (interviews) that informed Research Objective 4 and led to achieving its findings, was Research Question 4: What can be changed by means of a coaching model?

The themes explored in Chapter 4 and discussed in Chapter 5 related to this objective were:

Theme 1, 'Coaching is beneficial to the organisation'; Theme 4, 'Influence of a coaching model and what is being changed'; and Theme 6, 'Executive coaching strategies to bridge the generational leadership gap'.

From the study at NCE, it was observed that through the promotion of a culture of learning, development, and empowerment, the coaching model can have a significant influence on creating a successful, sustainable organisation, in terms of retention of skill and knowledge transfer. Through a coaching intervention, management were supported, which influenced crucial factors that had a favourable effect on the organisation that was being studied, in terms of overall wellbeing and long-term performance. Notably, through the study, it was observed that coaching had multiple benefits for the individual and organisation, ranging from confidence boosting, staff engagement and learning, improvement in communication, and collaboration; these resulted in the transference of knowledge and development of leadership and interpersonal skills linked to emotional intelligence. This would further result in the retention of talent and a positive workforce culture.

Additionally, inferences from the literature review particularly, Gyllensten and Palmer (2014), who discussed the value of coaching and bringing confidence to the coachee, and Wiginton and Cartwright (2020, p.166) who reported that

there is a growing base of empirical research that supports the efficacy of managerial coaching. This empirical research is beginning to address the pleas from scholars advocating for more comprehensive research, which examines the antecedents or factors that influence managerial coaching.

Furthermore, the examination of its process, the skills and behaviours that managers possess and enact, factors that might influence the managerial coaching process, are the outcomes that emanate from such coaching. The above authors' findings were supported with that of past research undertaken by the Institute of Coaching (2018), which implored leaders not to underestimate the contribution of coaching to the coachee and organisation. Coaching has been found to correlate directly with employees' motivation, engagement and satisfaction (Baran, 2018). Furthermore, it was explored through the literature review that employee retention increased in organisations that provided coaching and mentoring programmes. This study also supported the claim that coaching could indeed influence retention.

The problem that NCE faced was an uncertain landscape because of the current pandemic, requiring executive leaders to be resilient, agile, and adaptable. There have been considerable shifts in society, its institutions, and its individuals because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which introduced significant uncertainties into familiar structures, as stated by Renjin (2020, p.23): "This has caused macro-level changes and uncertainty in the direction of business and society that leadership will need to navigate by being resilient".

Together with this uncertainty created during the pandemic and post pandemic is a fast-changing economic environment, which was forcing the professional registration of employees, specifically at the millennial leadership level. To become registered, they had to work under the supervision of a professionally registered engineer, which is applicable to all professional categories (Pr Eng, Pr Tech Eng, Pr Techni Eng, Pr Cert Eng). This is a requirement mandated by the ECSA (2021). There is a business imperative to fast-track, coach, and mentor millennial leadership in order to attain these registrations.

In the organisation being studied, leadership is required to understand behaviours, values, and beliefs of a multigenerational workforce, which can be enabled through the coaching intervention, empowering leaders to manage such a workforce. This was also supported by the literature review. Burton et al. (2019, p. 385) posited that “leadership traits, comprising of integrity, credibility, useful listening, visionary, fairness, humility and caring, will echo with and entice staff that are innovative and productive. Complexity will arise from the diversity of a multigenerational workforce, and leaders will be required to understand behaviours, values, and beliefs through the lens of others.”

The research study suggested that coaching offers several advantages for both coachees and companies. It is an effective instrument for fostering growth, skill improvement, and awareness of self and others, by developing emotional intelligence, thereby enhancing leaders’ capabilities to understand others. This then enables the transfer of knowledge and enhances retention through employee engagement, due to learning and development, and employees attaining their goals of working toward professional registrations.

The study also aimed to investigate leadership coaching readiness at an executive level at NCE. This was sought by determining whether business leaders could improve their EI and interpersonal effectiveness, in order to reach business goals while bridging the generational gap between millennials and executives and senior management. Throughout the study, it was evident that leadership could harness new skills through coaching and improving their EI. All participants wanted to improve upon their EI. It was also clear that the coaching model benefitted the firm by fostering its most precious resource, namely people. Coaching helps to create a sustainable organisation that can adapt, flourish, and succeed in a constantly changing business environment, such as in the current landscape NCE finds itself in, by putting an emphasis on employee development, communication, collaboration, and establishing a healthy organisational culture. Through the thematic analysis of the data from the interviews and focus groups it was noted that through coaching and linking emotional intelligence to the coaching, leaders gained a better sense of awareness of self and others which enabled them to understand a

multigenerational workforce and supported them in bridging the gap between generations thereby improving organisational outcomes through better leadership skills. Theoretical frameworks which were used to support the research questions that were aligned with answering Objective 4, were the coaching models and coaching and mentoring theory frameworks. The conceptual frameworks were made up of emotional intelligence, multigenerational workforce, leadership styles and attributes, and coaching through the participatory action research.

6.3 Summary of the contribution of this research to the body of knowledge

This study was implemented at NCE, an engineering consulting organisation based in KwaZulu-Natal. Five questions were posed to answer the objectives and aim of the study. Having explored the coaching models and interventions, being involved in the participatory action research, and reinforcing this by means of the literature review, the researcher found the coaching model to be a powerful tool to enhance leadership skills at NCE in its current context and in a VUCA environment. At the time of the study, NCE had entered the COVID-19 pandemic, and the economic decline occasioned by the resulting diversion of infrastructure funds to healthcare, further impacted the organisation in terms of operating in a VUCA context.

The leaders had to navigate challenges presented to them that they had never experienced before. They had to adapt to change, be agile, transparent with their teams, resilient in the face of adversity, and display EI to support their teams and themselves. This VUCA environment is still prevalent and are part of the landscape that the leaders at NCE are navigating. The coaching provided a foundation in terms of knowledge of EI, and a way forward for the organisation in terms of a coaching model that can be enhanced even further. As such, the contribution of this coaching intervention cannot be underestimated, as it has brought the element of EI within a coaching intervention specifically crafted for NCE. It provided further insight into how coaching and EI together can shape a leader to harness skills to bridge the generational gap through awareness of

self and others. This therefore provided knowledge into the practice of a coaching model as an approach at NCE.

The research process enabled the researcher, using the aim, research questions, and objectives to explore topics through qualitative and participatory action research, and the literature review. There were no disparate findings between the participatory action research, qualitative study, and literature review, thus positively supporting the research objective, namely, to discover whether leaders were ready to harness new skills by improving their EI and bridging the gap in a multigenerational workforce.

This research study suggests that coaching can help leaders to navigate a complex, ambiguous, and uncertain landscape in which NCE still sees itself. All participants who participated in the coaching intervention suggested that coaching was a positive experience, which supported them in the current landscape. As such, the company should continue with coaching, specifically at the middle and senior management levels. As alluded to by Jyoti and Sharma (2015), coaching has a valuable input in dealing with complex situations and significant organisational changes. Furthermore, this study has validated an important claim about EI regarding its establishment of positive associations within relationships and its contribution to the workplace, which has contributed to the body of knowledge.

6.4 Recommendations

In this section, the recommendations, which are based upon the research findings, will be unpacked, and the findings translated into possible actionable strategies. Through the recommendations, insights can inform the organisation being studied based on the findings. These recommendations are also corroborated by the literature review.

6.4.1 Recommendation for leaders to be exposed to reverse mentoring

In the context of NCE, the current VUCA landscape requires a different type of leadership, management, and support approach. Leaders need to manage themselves and their expectations of employees, while still steering the business in the correct direction. The leaders at NCE find themselves in

unfamiliar, challenging times and must be adaptable, agile, and resilient. Executive leaders need to be exposed to reverse mentoring to prepare them further for harnessing new leadership skills. “Reverse mentoring pairs younger employees with executive team members to mentor them on various topics of strategic and cultural relevance” (Jordan & Sorrel, 2019 p2).

6.4.2 Recommendation for two coaching methods

It is recommended that two possible coaching methods may need to be considered: online for maximum access, and face-to-face, depending on the needs of the generation (baby boomers or younger generation).

6.4.3 Recommendation to continue the coaching intervention

This recommendation is for the NCE to use the coaching intervention and to continue to improve upon it, with a strong focus on EI workshops, to deliver on the pipeline of future leaders.

6.4.4 Recommendation to introduce team coaching

Another recommendation is that NCE should introduce team coaching interventions to bring together the multigenerational workforce into one sitting. This would help them to build relationships, as well as understand and learn aspects from the older generation, to ensure the transfer of skills to the younger generation, enabling the latter to work toward being professionally registered. This would also enhance employee engagement resulting in retention.

6.4.5 Recommendation to introduce mentoring

The younger generation at NCE will have to fill a greater role at the organisation, and at a faster pace; therefore, integrating mentoring initiatives into the coaching model could add further improvement to the programme.

6.4.5 Recommendation to introduce a leadership development policy

A leadership development policy should also be crafted, which links the areas of coaching, mentoring, and succession planning at a middle- to top-management level, to ensure a focused and formal approach is taken at NCE.

6.4.6 Recommendation for future research study

The aim and objectives of this study could be applied to the engineering consulting industry as a whole. This could be an area for further research, thereby finding solutions for the retention of professionally registered engineers in South Africa. Future studies could use participatory action research within a team coaching intervention. This could explore the bridging of the multigenerational gap and gender disparity, as the industry is currently male-dominated. Also, the researcher believes that much more can be done regarding EI in the workplace, in terms of awareness, assessments, and leadership development. This area has not been explored extensively in recent years, specifically through qualitative and action research studies. The tendency towards quantitative and positivistic perspectives on this topic is evident in the literature review, possibly due to the research being time constrained. However, the researcher believes that more qualitative studies with a social constructivist perspective could add value to the research on coaching.

Further research could be carried out for the industry at large, to further explore the transferability of the knowledge gained in this action research and coaching model.

6.5 Conclusion

The findings of this study have positively confirmed that coaching builds leadership skills, confidence, and the ability to navigate complex situations. A more deliberate use of the intervention will empower the next generation of leaders, as well as existing leaders, to ensure that the organisation is sustainable. Developing these leaders will see a definite ROI and a positive influence on the PPP bottom line (People, Planet, and Profit), now referred to as ESG (Environment, Social, and Governance). Using the coaching model and the recommendations of a team coaching intervention, will be a viable solution to further harness new leadership skills, in order to embrace the demands of a VUCA world and bridge the gap between a multigenerational workforce at NCE. The participants in this study all found the coaching intervention to have a positive influence.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Gatekeeper Permission Letter

HR/Letter/MichelleStrickland/015/1021



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25 October 2021

University of Kwazulu Natal
Graduate School of Business and Leadership
Private Bag X54001
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4000
South Africa

To Whom It May Concern,

Permission to Conduct Research

Please note that Ms. Michelle Strickland (Cronje) ID 7011280056086 (hereinafter called the student), has the permission of Naidu Consulting (PTY) Ltd to conduct research at our organisation for her Doctoral Studies.

Naidu Consulting (PTY) Ltd agrees to furnish the student with certain confidential information relating to the research. The student agrees to collect, analyse and present such information only for the purposes described in the research proposal, and to otherwise hold such information confidential pursuant to the terms outlined in this letter.

The student will pilot her study as well as run her full study within our organization in terms of her title "Leadership Coaching in a multigenerational workforce – a case in the engineering sector". The research will be done for the fulfilment of the studies as intended.

The following conditions will apply;

1. The student agrees to hold all confidential and proprietary information or trade secrets in trust and confidence and agrees that it shall be used only for the contemplated purpose and shall not be used for any other purpose or disclosed to any third party.
2. No copies will be made or retained of any written information supplied, and data will be stored securely.
3. At the request of the organization, all information, including written notes, photographs, memoranda and recordings taken by the student shall be destroyed.
4. The organization and any participant will have the right to withdraw participation in the study at any point in time.
5. The student will adhere to the requirements of the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013.
6. All ethical considerations will be taken into account in terms of research participants, the organization and the study.

If there are any questions, please contact my office.

Your sincerely,



M. Manicum
Managing Director

Directors
S. Naidu (Chairman) | M. Manicum (Managing)
J. Naidu | J. Podiyachee
Reg No 2004/024907/07



DEBSA CERTIFICATION
ISO 9001 | Quality Management
ISO 14001 | Environmental Management
BS OHSAS 18001 | Occupational Health & Safety



Appendix 2: Informed consent document

Dear Participant,

My name is Michelle Strickland (Cronje) (Student Number 219091600). I am a PhD / DBA candidate studying at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Graduate School of Business and Leadership (College of Law and Management Studies).

The title of my research is: Leadership Coaching in a multigenerational workforce – a case in the engineering sector.

The aim of the study is to investigate Leadership Coaching readiness at an executive level by determining whether business leaders can improve on their emotional intelligence and interpersonal effectiveness to reach business goals whilst bridging the generational gap between millennials and executives and senior management. Executive Leaders need a safe space to have growing and learning conversations. Leaders need a sounding board where they will not look incompetent but can explore new uncharted waters without the fear of being embarrassed. A company's leadership pipeline is expected to deliver its "next generation" of leaders. The payoff is a supply of leadership talent that simultaneously achieves targets, strengthens and protects ethical reputation, and navigates transformational change in pursuit of a bright, competitive future. Leaders bring potential energy into the workplace and, through this, support employees' kinetic energy.

I am interested in interviewing you so as to share your experiences and observations on the subject matter.

Please note that:

- The information that you provide will be used for scholarly research only.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary. You have a choice to participate, not to participate or stop participating in the research. You will not be penalized for taking such an action.
- Your views in this interview will be presented anonymously. Neither your name nor

identity will be disclosed in any form in the study.

- The interview will take about an hour. The record as well as other items associated with the interview will be held in a password-protected file accessible only to myself and my supervisors. After a period of 5 years, in line with the rules of the university, it will be disposed by shredding and burning.
- If you agree to participate, please sign the declaration attached to this statement (a separate sheet will be provided for signatures)

I can be contacted at: Graduate School of Business and Leadership, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. Email: 219091600@stu.ukzn.ac.za; Cell:0823775520.

My supervisor is Prof. Ana Maria De Azevedo Martins who is located at the College of Law and Management Studies, Graduate School of Business and Leadership, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban. Contact details: email MartinsA@ukzn.ac.za. Phone number: 0312601615

The Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee contact details are as follows: Ms Phumelele Ximba, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Research Office, Email: ximbap@ukzn.ac.za, Phone number +27312603587.

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

DECLARATION

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. I understand the intention of the research. I hereby agree to participate.

I consent / do not consent to have this interview recorded (if applicable)

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

DATE

.....

Appendix 3: Interview protocol – semi structured interviews

1. Length of Interview - 30-60 Minutes
 2. Venue – Office due to COVID-19 restrictions falling away.
 3. An informed consent form as part of the ethical clearance application form will be completed which will be duly signed by each participant and respondent.
 4. Interviewees will be reminded that confidentiality and anonymity will be upheld, and nothing will be attributed to them
 5. The interviewee will be told they may withdraw at any stage and /or do not have to answer any question they do not wish to.
 6. Permission will be sought to record the meeting to be prescribed to analyse the data
- A. The researcher will first gather information around the participant's role.
 - B. The researcher will then set up interviews with each participant and informally discuss with the participant the participants' interpretation of their role in the systemic organisation as well as their interpretation into growth and development in the organisation and the industry as a whole and any bottlenecks they foresee or are experiencing.

C. INTERVIEW

Respondent Number:

Closed Questions

- 1 Please provide your demographics:
Male Female Black Coloured Indian White
- 2 Have you experienced Executive Coaching?
Yes No

Should the answer be no the student will go to question 5 of the open questions.

Proceed to questions below should the answer have been yes.

3 Did you pay for your coaching experience?

Yes No

4 Did your organisation pay for your coaching experience?

Yes No

5 Did your Executive Coach use an existing coaching model?

Yes No

6 Was the model explained to you?

Yes No Not applicable

7 Do you believe you benefited from the coaching?

Yes No

8 Do you think the coaching benefited your organization?

Yes No

Open Questions which will be expanded on during the interview through active listening, observing and following up with clarifying questions and probing further.

1 May you summarise the benefit you attained from the coaching experience?

2 Should there have been no benefit what would you like to have experience from the coaching experience or how could it be improved upon?

3 Do you believe an organisation benefits from coaching interventions with leadership and employees and in what way?

4 If you believe your organization did not benefit from the coaching experience how do you believe they could have benefited?

5. If you have not received coaching what was the reason?

6. Do you believe coaching is an intrinsic value proposition, please expand on this answer?
7. Do you believe coaching can bridge the gap between generations and if so how? If not why?
8. From an Executive/Senior Manager perspective do you believe coaching will add to the triple bottom line to the business and if so, how? If not why?

Appendix 4: Focus group protocol

Similar to that of Team Coaching the Researcher will take the role as facilitator so as to keep the group in the boundaries of the themes to be explored/unpacked further. As a facilitator the researcher will not lead the discussion, merely generate interest and encourage discussion.

Focus group 1 will consist of the Senior Managers from the Study to determine benefits of coaching to coachees and whether they believe this can bridge the gap between millenials and management and if so, what are their expectations of what will change or improve and what outcome do they expect to see.

Focus group 2 will consist of the millenials from the study to determine their interpretation and perception around their growth in the business and industry and the communication between all generations in the workplace and the coaching model. What type of coaching and mentoring do they want and what do they foresee as leadership skills for the future?

Focus Group Detail:

Explained the rationale behind the research study.

Also explained the notes will be kept for a period of time and it will be confidential, the transcription will not have their names on nor show any indication of department so the results will be anonymous.

They were informed they may withdraw from the participation at any stage and it was not mandatory to be part of the research.

All participants signed an informed consent form before commencing the focus group discussion.

The participants were informed what the objectives were as cited below.

Research Objectives:

The overarching objectives of the study were;

- To determine whether Executive Leaders at NCE are ready to harness new leadership skills to embrace the demands of a VUCA world.
 - To identify the type of Executive Coaching program required in the current landscape.
 - To ascertain whether executive coaching will bridge the gap between senior leaders and mid-level leaders and result in a retention strategy
1. To explore the influence of a coaching model in terms of building a positive and sustainable organisation.

The focus group had 4 broad discussion points which were expanded upon during the discussion as detailed below.

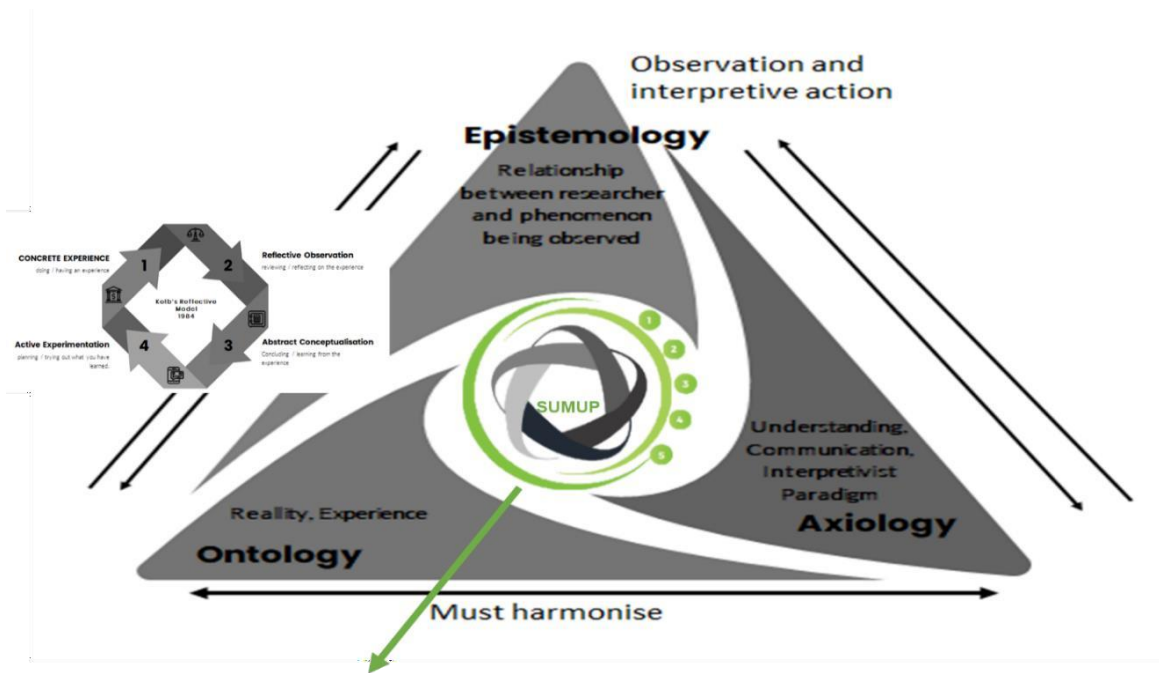
Point 1. Do you believe generational differences influence leadership traits?

Point 2. Is there a generational gap between leaders and or peers and or also subordinates at the case study according to their opinion.

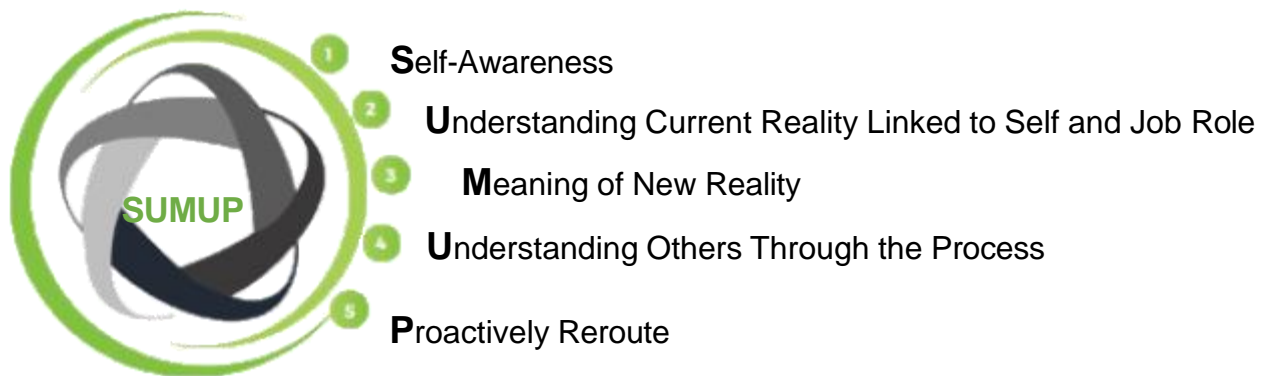
Point 3. Do you think emotional intelligence coaching can assist with the generational gap so that people understand each other

Point 4. What would be the benefit of coaching to the leader, to the business and to the individual.

Appendix 5: A cohesive model for coaching for the organisation



The process leading up to the crafting of the model



The SUMUP coaching model crafted

Appendix 6: Establishing the leadership pipeline (Charan et al.,2011)

Leadership potential is recognised in employees in the organisation being studied that demonstrate:

Capability; dedicated to delivering results, takes responsibility

Commitment; emotional, rational, do what it takes and wants to stay

Passion; exceeds expectations, desires for recognition and progression, high-quality output

It is important to note that criteria are built on the future potential of the employee rather than the current capacity. Identified employees become “ready now” within 1 – 5 years. (Charan et al., 2011).

Personal Development Analysis (PDA) and Required Job Competencies and Leadership Roles

PDA Assessments: Employee’s strengths and development areas are identified and matched to required job competencies and leadership profiles.

A discussion is held with the employee regarding the leadership pipeline and a broad range of results of leaders, as cited in Charan et al. (2011).

Turn potential: able to do the work at the next level in 1 to 2 years.

Growth Potential: able to do the work at larger projects at the same level in the near future

Mastery Potential: able to do the same kind of work currently being done, only even better

A personal development plan is then put in place for the employee who is tracked and coached in the implementation of their development areas.

Participation in championing projects, mentoring/coaching and possible job rotation is required. The employee will be required to maintain high performance and quality in their current roles, in addition to being a role model through demonstration of these

skills at the organisation being studied, an engineering consulting organisation based in KwaZulu-Natal.

The opportunity is to align the participant with the expectation of the role and deliverables and to improve the participant's performance, output and deliverables.

The leadership pipeline Protocol is not static; career pathing is an ongoing process.

Below is a sample of competencies presented to the leadership at the organisation being studied to determine the best fit for the role and industry drawn from the PDA International Set of Competencies.

Appendix 7: Competencies as prescribed by PDA International (PDA International, 2014)

Competency	Include
<p>Big Picture View of the Business The ability to identify business opportunities and the processes that add value to the business, with a genuine orientation to financial results. It implies having the skill to assess the impact that different options, policies and procedures can have on the business, and being able to identify key issues in complex situations.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Market-Oriented The ability to understand the dynamics of the market in which business is being conducted. It implies understanding competitive strengths in the market, including the strategies used by the competition to achieve competitive business positioning and offering added value to the customer.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Customer-Oriented The ability to understand and manage relationships with internal customers, promoting and maintaining a solid network of customers and/or associations. It implies the assurance that the organisation/department will honour its business commitments, by providing high quality products and services.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Strategic Thinking The ability to identify relationships between situations that are not clearly connected to each other and to build strategies or models; to maintain a big picture view and identify key issues in complex situations. It includes the use of creative or conceptual reasoning.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Results-Oriented The concern to establish, accept and achieve challenging goals. It implies striving to improve/exceed one's own past performance standards as well as those of others; or else to achieve what nobody else has, and not giving up when faced with difficulties.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Operating Skills Implies the skill to turn strategy into specific objectives and plans of action, while ensuring the organisation/department adheres to procedures and minimising risk effectively. Clearly assigns responsibility and authority.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Innovation Implies creating something different or ground-breaking. Doing something new that improves one's own performance and/or that of others.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Initiative This is the inclination to act in a proactive manner; it implies pursuing new opportunities, and better ways to do things or solve problems.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Inclination for Quality of Products and Projects It is acting to ensure the highest quality standards around. It is reflected in the constant assessment of information reflecting how the work is being done. It implies insistence that roles and functions be impeccably coordinated.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Political Sensitivity The skill to understand, interpret and participate in the power relationships of the company or other organisations. Understands and manages relationships with internal customers to identify key people who might solve problems during a certain time or situation. Has the ability to communicate and to ensure that actions and procedures are understood internally.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Competency	Include
<p>Big Picture View of the Business The ability to identify business opportunities and the processes that add value to the business, with a genuine orientation to financial results. It implies having the skill to assess the impact that different options, policies and procedures can have on the business, and being able to identify key issues in complex situations.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Market-Oriented The ability to understand the dynamics of the market in which business is being conducted. It implies understanding competitive strengths in the market, including the strategies used by the competition to achieve competitive business positioning and offering added value to the customer.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Customer-Oriented The ability to understand and manage relationships with internal customers, promoting and maintaining a solid network of customers and/or associations. It implies the assurance that the organisation/department will honour its business commitments, by providing high quality products and services.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Strategic Thinking The ability to identify relationships between situations that are not clearly connected to each other and to build strategies or models; to maintain a big picture view and identify key issues in complex situations. It includes the use of creative or conceptual reasoning.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Results-Oriented The concern to establish, accept and achieve challenging goals. It implies striving to improve/exceed one's own past performance standards as well as those of others; or else to achieve what nobody else has, and not giving up when faced with difficulties.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Operating Skills Implies the skill to turn strategy into specific objectives and plans of action, while ensuring the organisation/department adheres to procedures and minimising risk effectively. Clearly assigns responsibility and authority.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Innovation Implies creating something different or ground-breaking. Doing something new that improves one's own performance and/or that of others.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Initiative This is the inclination to act in a proactive manner; it implies pursuing new opportunities, and better ways to do things or solve problems.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Inclination for Quality of Products and Projects It is acting to ensure the highest quality standards around. It is reflected in the constant assessment of information reflecting how the work is being done. It implies insistence that roles and functions be impeccably coordinated.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Political Sensitivity The skill to understand, interpret and participate in the power relationships of the company or other organisations. Understands and manages relationships with internal customers to identify key people who might solve problems during a certain time or situation. Has the ability to communicate and to ensure that actions and procedures are understood internally.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Political Sensitivity The skill to understand, interpret and participate in the power relationships of the company or other organisations. Understands and manages relationships with internal customers to identify key people who might solve problems during a certain time or situation. Has the ability to communicate and to ensure that actions and procedures are understood internally.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> b77d34
<p>Impact and Influence Implies the intent to persuade, convince or influence others in support of one's own plans. It implies the desire to produce a certain impact on people who might affect plans, to create a certain impression on them or ensure they do things as desired.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> 59fd85
<p>Developing Others Implies the genuine effort to support the development, <u>involvement</u> and training of others, backed by an appropriate analysis of their needs and with the organisational context in mind. It is not about routinely having people attend training classes or programs; rather a systematic effort to develop others according to those needs.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> 986688
<p>Leadership The capacity to lead work groups or teams toward the attainment of common objectives. Implies the ability to lead others.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> bd66a9
<p>People Management This implies the appropriate and effective use of authority conferred through a position to gain the commitment of others, <u>in order to</u> make them do what is needed to benefit the organisation. It implies providing adequate direction in some cases and making people accountable for their performance within the organisation, as well as confronting if necessary.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> c5fca8
<p>Interpersonal Sensitivity The capacity to interpret and understand the thoughts, behaviours, <u>feelings</u> and concerns of people (peers, direct reports or supervisors) expressed verbally and non-verbally. It implies having empathy and observation skills.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> f30c89
<p><u>Team Work</u> and Cooperation Implies working in cooperation with others, being part of a team, working together and having a genuine interest in others, as opposed to working individually or competitively. It is the desire to participate and make others participate in the shared vision. Someone with this competency will be able to assemble high-performance work teams and help others through trust, delegation, <u>participation</u> and coaching.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> 949982
<p>Flexibility The capacity to adapt and work effectively in different situations, with diverse groups and situations. The person who has this competency will be able to understand and value different positions or opposing points of view, will adapt their own focus as demanded by changing situations and will promote changes imposed by the organisation or the responsibilities of the position.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> a84e7c

<p>Political Sensitivity The skill to understand, interpret and participate in the power relationships of the company or other organisations. Understands and manages relationships with</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> b77d34
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internal customers to identify key people who might solve problems during a certain time or situation. Has the ability to communicate and to ensure that actions and procedures are understood internally.	
Impact and Influence Implies the intent to persuade, convince or influence others in support of one's own plans. It implies the desire to produce a certain impact on people who might affect plans, to create a certain impression on them or ensure they do things as desired.	59fdd8 <input type="checkbox"/>
Developing Others Implies the genuine effort to support the development, <u>involvement</u> and training of others, backed by an appropriate analysis of their needs and with the organisational context in mind. It is not about routinely having people attend training classes or programs; rather a systematic effort to develop others according to those needs.	98868 <input type="checkbox"/>
Leadership The capacity to lead work groups or teams toward the attainment of common objectives. Implies the ability to lead others.	bd86a3 <input type="checkbox"/>
People Management This implies the appropriate and effective use of authority conferred through a position to gain the commitment of others, <u>in order to</u> make them do what is needed to benefit the organisation. It implies providing adequate direction in some cases and making people accountable for their performance within the organisation, as well as confronting if necessary.	c5fca8 <input type="checkbox"/>
Interpersonal Sensitivity The capacity to interpret and understand the thoughts, behaviours, <u>feelings</u> and concerns of people (peers, direct reports or supervisors) expressed verbally and non-verbally. It implies having empathy and observation skills.	f30c89 <input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Team Work</u> and Cooperation Implies working in cooperation with others, being part of a team, working together and having a genuine interest in others, as opposed to working individually or competitively. It is the desire to participate and make others participate in the shared vision. Someone with this competency will be able to assemble high-performance work teams and help others through trust, delegation, <u>participation</u> and coaching.	94998 <input type="checkbox"/>
Flexibility The capacity to adapt and work effectively in different situations, with diverse groups and situations. The person who has this competency will be able to understand and value different positions or opposing points of view, will adapt their own focus as demanded by changing situations and will promote changes imposed by the organisation or the responsibilities of the position.	a84e7 <input type="checkbox"/>
Business Skills The capacity to close difficult deals, establish long-term and mutually beneficial alliances and business partnerships. It implies identifying with the other side's interests, knowing how to communicate in a timely manner and identifying common areas to produce win-win agreements. It requires the capacity to control emotions in favour of negotiations.	70813 <input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Pursuit of Information The desire and curiosity to know more about issues, matters or people related with the function, recognising and respecting confidentiality of some data which might be of interest. It implies going beyond making purely routine or normal <u>work day</u> questions. It equally implies searching in depth or pressing to obtain more precise information, <u>in order to</u> resolve variances by questioning and looking around for opportunities or information that may be useful in the future.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> a56f56
<p>Self-Control The capacity to stay calm and in control when facing difficult situations, <u>in order to</u> achieve personal or organisational objectives. It implies the ability to handle constant stress with energy and motivation.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> 31a784
<p>Self-Confidence The assurance/knowledge that one <u>is capable of doing</u> a good job, completing the assigned mission with the appropriate focus—for the role and the organisation—in order to overcome problems. This includes tackling new and growing challenges with an attitude of confidence in one's own skills, <u>decisions</u> and points of view.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1844da
<p>Communication The capacity to generate and share assertive, timely and two-way communications, adapting verbal and non-verbal language for different audiences, <u>in order to</u> attain established objectives.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> 032163
<p>Problem-Solving The ability to identify and analyse relevant information, reach conclusions, assess the <u>impact</u> and make subsequent decisions based on the established alternatives.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> 937afb
<p>Planning The ability to define objectives, establish the most appropriate actions and resources to assist in achieving them, with follow up and control of results, as well as the enforcement of appropriate corrective measures when needed. // The capacity to determine business goals and priorities, dictating action, deadlines and required resources.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> a50e9f

Appendix 8: The review feedback on future potential

Review: Future Potential Feedback

Judging Potential

Manager: _____

Technical Executive providing feedback:

Date: _____

Only one block in the grey area may be ticked.

Exhibits operating, technical, and professional skills that are extremely broad and deep	
Exhibits operating, technical, and professional skills that are high for current firm level	
On balance, exhibits operating, technical, and professional, that are acceptable for current firm level	
Exhibits Managerial skills that are expected at the next highest firm level	
On balance, exhibits managerial skills that are acceptable for current firm level	
Exhibits Managerial skills that are high for current firm level	
Demonstrates leadership skills that are expected at the next highest firm level	
On balance, exhibits leadership skills that are acceptable for current firm level	
Frequently demonstrates leadership skills that are high for current position	
Demonstrates little effort to build new skills but keeps current skills sharp	
Regularly works at building new skills and abilities	
Adds new skills when the job calls for it	
Aspires to higher level challenges and opportunities	
Aspires to greater challenges but primarily at the same firm level	
Aspires to stay at the firm, as opposed to assuming bigger challenges or higher personal contributions	
Demonstrates "fire in the belly"	
Is motivated to do more than is expected	
Is motivated to do what is needed in the current job	
Understands the job	
Has a business perspective beyond current position	
Has a business perspective beyond current firm level	
Is orientated toward total business results, not just focused on the success of own area	
Is focused on the success of own area and the team	
Is focused primarily on technical success	

BEHAVIORAL TRAIT	WHERE AM I NOW	WHAT DO I BELIEVE THE ROLE REQUIRES	HOW WILL I GET THERE			Role Traits : 57 : 76: 95		
Role Profile	Natural State		Required by Role	Required by Future Role	What Assistance, Method, Who can assist		Six Month Tracker	
Risk	55	55	100	100/50				Notes: What have I achieved - Small Milestones
Extroversion	57	51	0	80/100				
Patience	41	44	0	0/50				
Norms	47	51	100	20/0				Month 1
Competence PDA	Compatibility					Descriptions taken directly from PDA International (PDA, 2015)		
Big-Picture View of the Business	69%	≥50%				“The capability to recognise business opportunities and the processes that provide value to the business, with a true orientation toward financial results. It suggests having the skill to evaluate the influence that different options, policies and procedures can have on the business and having the ability to recognise key issues in complex circumstances”. (PDA, 2015)		
Communication	89%	≥50%				“The ability to produce and contribute to assertive, well-timed and two-way communication, adjusting the verbal and non-verbal language to varying audiences, enabling attainment of established objectives.		
Customer-Oriented	96%	≥50%				The capacity to know and handle relationships with internal customers, promoting and sustaining a strong network of customers and associations. It suggests the confidence that the organisation/department will honour its business commitments by delivering on high-quality products and services”.(PDA, 2015)		
Initiative	76%	≥50%				“This is the tendency to behave in a proactive manner, it suggests chasing new opportunities and better ways to solution finding and problem solving”. (PDA, 2015).		
Operating Skills	39%	≥50%				“It suggests the ability to change strategy into specific objectives and action plans, whilst making sure the organisation/department listens to		

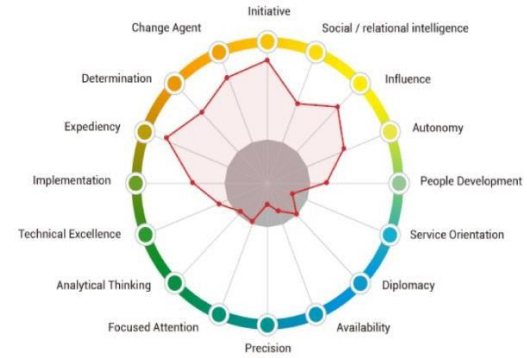
						procedures and successfully minimises risk. Clearly allocates authority and responsibility." (PDA, 2015)	
People Management	77%	≥50%				"This suggests the applicable and efficient use of authority granted through a position to gain the commitment of staff to ensure they do what is required to benefit the company. It suggests offering adequate guidance in some cases and holding staff accountable for their performance in the company in addition to have the ability to be assertive as required". (PDA, 2015)	
Planning	29%	≥50%				"The capability to define objectives, determine the most suitable actions and resources to assist in achieving them, with follow-up and control of results, as well as the ensuring relevant corrective measures are enforced when required. The ability to establish business goals and priorities, imposing action, deadlines and necessary resources". (PDA, 2015)	
Results-Oriented	85%	≥50%				"Establishing, accepting and achieving ambitious goals. It suggests endeavouring to exceed or improve upon your prior performance as well as your teams, or to attain what no-one else has, without quitting in the face of adversity". (PDA, 2015)	
Strategic Thinking	63%					"The capacity to recognise relationships between circumstances that are not plainly connected to each other and to develop strategies or models; to sustain a big-picture view and detect key issues in complex circumstances. It involves the use of creative or conceptual reasoning". (PDA, 2015)	
Broad Range of Results of Leaders Tech Exec Review							
Performance Pillars (you will choose 2 or 3 from here for development)	Operating Results (Revenue, costs, profit)	Above Expectation				Here put where you think you are at. What development do you think you would like in terms of this?	
	Customer Results (acquisition, retention, penetration, satisfaction)	Example: i.e. I already look for new clients, I already ensure customers are satisfied via follow ups, personalised dropping of billing, Possibly I can be developed in terms of identifying cross-selling thereby penetrating existing clients					

	Leadership Results (Setting direction, communication, developing people, setting standards)	Meets Expectation				
	Management Results (control, quality, timeliness)					
	Relationships (Working Relationships, team player, internal and external business and government)					
	Business Perspective	Improve here to beyond current position				Here put where you think you are at. What development do you think you would like in terms of this?
	Technical Expertise (those parts of the work that only you should do)					
	Self-Development	Above Expectation				
Values	Below	Meet	Exceed	By When	What Assistance, Method, Who can assist	Notes
Commitment						
Communication						
Collaboration						
Caring						

Ideas; Stretch Assignments - things you don't already do what the next level Manager does?

Expert Visibility - owning systems, client groups and results? '

- Job Rotation
- Cross-Functional Relationships
- Shadowing
- Leadership Readings
- Bite Size Training
- Webinars / e-learning
- Classroom Learning
- Actions should be SMART: Specific, Measurable, Actionable, Realistic, Time Bound



Appendix 10: EC Protocol for the Amendment of Title : HSSREC/00003704/2021
Approval Notification Letter.



03 November 2023

Michelle Eunice Strickland (219091600)
Grad School Of Bus & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear ME Strickland,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00003704/2021
Project title: Leadership coaching in a multigenerational workforce a case in the engineering sector
Amended title: Leadership coaching in a multigenerational workforce - a case study in the engineering sector
Degree: PhD

Approval Notification – Amendment Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application and request for an amendment received on 25 October 2023 has now been approved as follows:

- Change in title

Any alterations to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form; Title of the Project, Location of the Study must be reviewed and approved through an 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 discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Best wishes for the successful completion of your research protocol.

Yours faithfully



.....
Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)

/dd

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS

Appendix 11: Ethical Clearance protocol reference: HSSREC/00003704/2021



19 January 2022

Michelle Eunice Cronje (219091600)
Graduate School of Business & Leadership
Westville Campus

Dear ME Cronje,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00003704/2021

Project title: Leadership Coaching in a multigenerational workforce – a case in the engineering sector

Degree: PhD

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 19 November 2021 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**

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 discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

This approval is valid until 19 January 2023.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

All research conducted during the COVID-19 period must adhere to the national and UKZN guidelines.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hialele (Chair)

/ms

Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee
UKZN Research Ethics Office Westville Campus, Govan Mbeki Building
Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban 4000
Tel: +27 31 260 8350 / 4557 / 3587
Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics/>

Founding Campuses: Edgewood Howard College Medical School Pietermaritzburg Westville

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