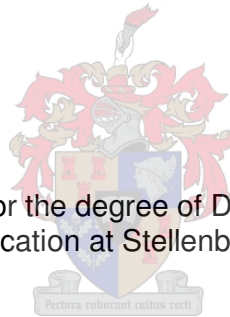# AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECT OF COACHING ON THE EMPOWERMENT OF MIDDLE MANAGERS IN THE RETAIL SECTOR: A LIFELONG LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

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DECLARATION

By submitting this dissertation electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that the reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously inits entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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ABSTRACT

The modern business environment is characterised by uncertainty, rapid change and the continuous pursuit of competitiveness. This has placed a renewed emphasis on the capacitation of managers operating in such environments and may be seen as a critical means of ensuring a sustainable advantage. Within the South African food retail environment, learning and development activities do not seem to be capacitating managers effectively, as well as taking too long to meet the changing demands of the retail sector. Lifelong learning has the potential to accelerate the development of individuals in management positions.

Lifelong learning can be seen as the facilitation of learning, growth and development of individuals, as well as a means for enabling individuals and organisations to meet the challenges of an increasingly competitive world.

Learning has the potential to empower individuals. In facilitating lifelong learning, a coaching methodology was used to facilitate the learning of ten middle managers in a large food retail store (part of one of the biggest retail organisations in South Africa). This research set out to evaluate the effect of coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) to empower middle managers in the food retail sector.

The research was approached from a lifelong learning perspective and the focus of the research was the individual adult learner. Within the context of adult learning, the concepts of andragogy, experiential learning and transformative learning were applied in the facilitation of adult learning.

Coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) allows for a uniquely individual and personal approach to learning. The learning and development intervention (using a coaching methodology) to facilitate learning was implemented over a period of 12 months and the participants were ten middle managers employed by the retail store.

The case study (more specifically a multiple-case) design was used as research design. The findings of the research were discussed to place them within the context of the following research questions:

- What is the effect of coaching as a method of learning and development in the facilitation of lifelong learning to empower middle managers in the food retail environment?

- Is coaching (as only another way of facilitating learning) an effective method for facilitating learning and the development of middle managers in the food retail sector?

- Which dimensions should be taken into consideration when implementing a coaching methodology (as a method of learning) in developing middle managers in the retail sector?

The participants' empowerment status was measured with a standardised questionnaire using a pre-test, post-test and post-post-test design. The research was conducted in three phases. Mixed methods research (using both qualitative and quantitative methods) was used during the research, which included interviews, field notes, questionnaires, observation, tests and official statistics.

The first phase consisted of an evaluation, which included an evaluation of each individual manager. Two learning style questionnaires were applied to each middle manager to gain a better understanding of each middle manager and to assist the learning process on an individual basis. Lastly, a pre-test on empowerment was done by means of a standardised questionnaire. Part of this phase involved a structured interview with each individual manager. The second phase involved exposure to the coaching intervention and the process of coaching, followed by a post-test for measuring changes in the empowerment status. The last phase consisted of a post-post-test to measure changes in empowerment at the end of the coaching intervention.

Five out of the ten middle managers showed sustained empowerment gains at the end of the coaching intervention. An experiential approach (using Kolb's learning model) was used to facilitate the learning, and the middle managers who completed the learning cycle (namely concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experience) showed empowerment gains. The learners who showed empowerment also displayed self-direction in their learning. Coaching (as a method to facilitate lifelong learning) was used as an effective method of learning in a busy retail environment. Statistical analysis showed no statistically significant improvements in empowerment from pre-test to post-post-test of the total group. Based on the findings and conclusions of the research, a new coaching framework (to facilitate lifelong learning), namely the New Coaching Retail Model, is proposed. This model consists of dimensions that facilitate individual lifelong learning, pointing to an empowered lifelong learner.

OPSOMMING

Die hedendaagse sake-omgewing word gekenmerk deur onsekerheid, vinnige verandering en 'n volgehoue ingesteldheid op mededinging. Binne die konteks van menslikehulpbronontwikkeling is daar 'n hernude beklemtoning van die ontwikkeling van bestuurders in omgewings van hierdie aard, wat aan besighede 'n volhoubare voordeel sal gee. In die Suid Afrikaanse kleinhandel-voedselsektor blyk dit dat sekere leer- en ontwikkelingsaktiwiteite nie aan die uniekheid van die sake – en dus aan die konteks – voldoen nie. Lewenslange leer het die potensiaal om individuele ontwikkeling te versnel.

Lewenslange leer kan as die fasilitering van leer, groei en ontwikkeling gesien word, en hou voordele in vir die individu, asook vir die organisasie binne die konteks van 'n veranderende sake-omgewing.

Lewenslange leer het die potensiaal om die individu te bemagtig. Binne die konteks van die navorsing is 'n afrigtingsmetodologie gebruik om die lewenslange leerproses van tien middelbestuurders van 'n kleinhandelsaak (wat deel vorm van een van die grootste kleinhandelgroepe in Suid-Afrika) te fasiliteer. Die doel van die navorsing was om die effek van afrigting op die bemagtiging van middelbestuurders binne die kleinhandel te evalueer.

Die navorsing is vanuit die perspektief van lewenslange leer benader. Die fokus van die navorsing was die individuele volwasse leerder. Binne die konteks van volwasse leer, is andragogie, ondervindingleer en transformasieleer tydens die fasilitering van volwasse leer toegepas.

Afrigting (as 'n metode om lewenslange leer te fasiliteer) maak voorsiening vir 'n unieke individuele en persoonlike aanslag tot lewenslange leer. Die leer- en ontwikkelingsintervensie (deur die gebruik van afrigting) is oor 'n tydperk van 12 maande gevolg en die teikengroep het uit tien middelbestuurders binne een kleinhandelsaak bestaan.

Die navorsingsontwerp het 'n gevalle studie- (meer spesifiek 'n veelvuldige gevalle studie) ontwerp gevolg. Die drie navorsingsvrae verwys na die aard van die afrigtingsintervensie om lewenslange leer te fasiliteer en was daarop gemik om te bepaal of die afrigtingsintervensie 'n effek op die deelnemers se bemagtigingsvlakke gehad het, of afrigting as effektiewe metode vir leer en ontwikkeling vir middelbestuur binne die kleinhandelsektor aangewend kan word, en watter dimensies in ag geneem moet word wanneer 'n afrigtingsmetodologie gebruik word om middelbestuur binne die kleinhandelsektor te ontwikkel.

Die deelnemers se bemagtigingstatus is met 'n gestandaardiseerde vraelys gemeet, terwyl 'n voor-en-ná-toets en 'n verdere (post-post-) toetsontwerp gevolg is. Die navorsing is in drie fases geïmplementeer. Beide kwalitatiewe en kwantitatiewe metodes bestaande uit onderhoude, notas tydens veldwerk, onderhoude, vraelyste, waarneming, toetse en statistiese analise is gebruik.

Die eerste fase het uit 'n formele evaluering bestaan, waar elke individuele bestuurder geëvalueer is. Elke bestuurder het twee verskillende vraelyste voltooi wat die individu se leerstyl geïdentifiseer het. Hierdie fase het ook 'n voortoets behels wat die deelnemers se bemagtigingstatus gemeet het, asook uit gestruktureerde onderhoude. Gedurende die tweede fase is deelnemers aan die afrigtingsintervensie blootgestel. Gedurende die intervensie is die deelnemers se bemagtigingstatus weer deur 'n ná-toets gemeet om verandering in bemagtiging vas te stel. Fase drie het uit 'n verdere toets bestaan om die deelnemers se bemagtigingstatus aan die einde van die leer intervensie te meet.

Die navorsing se bevindinge dui daarop dat vyf van die tien deelnemers aan die einde van die afrigtingsintervensie 'n verbetering in hul bemagtigingstatus getoon het. Deur gebruik te maak van 'n ondervindingsaanslag (soos gebruik in Kolb se leermodel) was dit beduidend dat die middelbestuurders wat die siklus van leer voltooi het, almal ook 'n verbetering in hul bemagtigingstatus getoon het. Hierdie leerders het ook selfrigting in hulle leer getoon.

Afrigting (as 'n metode om lewenslange leer te fasiliteer) kon effektief as 'n metode van leer in 'n besige kleinhandelsektor gebruik word. Statistiese analise het getoon dat daar geen betekenisvolle verbeteringe van die voortoets na die na-na-toets van die groep was nie. Gegrond op die bevindinge en gevolgtrekkings, word 'n nuwe afrigtingsmodel voorgestel om lewenslange leer te fasiliteer, naamlik die "New Coaching Retail Model" (wat vertaal kan word as die "Nuwe Kleinhandelafrigtingsmodel"). Dié model is aamgestel uit dimensies wat individuele lewenslange leer bevorder, en wat dui op 'n bemagtigde lewenslange leerder.

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The retail sector within South Africa today has become more competitive than ever (Wholesale and Retail SETA, 2007; 2009). Profit margins are becoming smaller as large and small retailers compete for customers and business (Ackermann & Prichard, 2004; Caplan, 2003). Local and global competition, advancement of new technology, and the constant change of the business environment are creating new challenges for amongst others employers (organisations), managers and leaders, and employees. The ability of the organisation and individuals within the organisation to respond quickly to these changes requires better educated, more skilled and empowered individuals who are capable of flexibly filling new roles to meet changing knowledge and skill requirements (Burns, 2002; Thomas, 2007). Within a global and South African context, managers and leaders in retail organisations and retail stores have a critical role to play in the sustainability and ultimately the existence of such businesses (Miller, Vandome & McBrewster, 2010; W&RSETA, 2009).

According to Hodgkinson and Sparrow (2002) and Miller, F.P. et al. (2010), retail markets (such as the food retail sector), which have become increasingly turbulent in the last few years, are amongst the largest spenders on management development, yet few are able to quantify the benefits of management development or learning programmes.

Capacitating these managers and leaders to operate within this highly competitive market places a bigger emphasis on effective learning and development for this target group (Meyer & Fourie, 2006). Vinnasse (2002) agrees that the soundest strategy for South African organisations to become a competitive global player is investment in their human capital. According to the Wholesale and Retail Seta (W&RSETA, 2009), traditional paths of learning for middle managers within the big retail organisations in South Africa do not seem to keep up with an ever-changing business environment.

Meyer (2007) affirms that middle managers are a vital component within any organisation, and that they are a key link to productivity and the application of the various business strategies. The food retail business is driven by profit and the business environment demands that middle managers also play a large part in ensuring profit

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(Ackerman & Prichard, 2004). Within the context of the research, one of the largest food retail companies in South Africa wanted to develop their middle managers to become more empowered within themselves, so that they could feel more empowered to operate profit centres. The term profit centre management is a futurist concept and proposes that each manager of a department would not only manage their department, but ultimately make a profit within that department (Miller, F.P. et al., 2010; Smith, 2005a). The researcher was approached by one of the largest stores within the food retail company to facilitate a more innovative way to empower and develop all (ten) their middle managers.

Miller, F.P. et al. (2010) argue that middle managers play a pivotal role in integrating the objectives of their organisations. Sadler-Smith (2006) is of the opinion that managers are crucial stakeholders in modern organisations and that they have a dual role to play, as they are learners themselves. Middle managers within the retail sector have traditionally worked their way through the ranks, as the middle managers in this research have done. However, the harshness of the retail sector with its long hours and challenging working conditions has not always allowed managers to attend and complete learning programmes, and subsequently to capacitate these individuals to reach their full potential (W&RSETA, 2009).

Human Resource practices, such as learning and development activities, could be seen as a response to the challenges of the changing world by maximising employee knowledge and skills (Meyer, 2007; Raelin, 2002). The need to respond to the fast pace of business and limited time has placed a new emphasis on the effective learning and development of individuals within the modern organisation (Sadler-Smith, 2006). The concept of lifelong learning is based on the belief that learning and growth should continue across the lifespan of an adult (Smith & DeFrates-Densch, 2009.).

Lifelong learning is becoming a key organisational concept as it provides a wider range of learning opportunities, whether for work or personal development (Higgs & McCarthy, 2008). The concept of lifelong learning seems to have gained momentum as a means of educating people to meet the continual changes in the workplace and in life itself (Miller, F.P. et al., 2010). According to Adult and Continuing Education (ACE, 2010), lifelong learning can be seen as the facilitation of learning, growth and development.

Learning is taking on a new importance in organisations today, and the primary learning and development intervention is planned individual learning, whether accomplished through on-the-job learning, coaching, or other means of fostering individual learning (ASTD, 2004). Such development interventions should also be delivered in a structured (but highly flexible) manner, and generate measurable learning outcomes (Meyer & Fourie, 2006).

Within the South African context, there is a growing awareness of a more developmental and individually centred approach to capacitating employees (Meyer & Fourie, 2006). This has placed a bigger emphasis on the individual adult learner, individual learning, individual learning styles, as well as the individual learner's uniqueness (Meyer, 2007).

Such a developmental approach needs to be facilitated. Brookfield (1986) and Mohanty (2010) are of the opinion that one of the aims of facilitating adult learning is the nurturing of self-directed, empowered individuals. Sparrow (2005) explains that this type of power stems from new knowledge and skills acquired, critical reflection and taking action, whereby the individual gains inner strength from the learning experience. Brookfield (1986) proposes that adult learning is made up of dimensions (such as creating new perspectives and critical reflection) and that these dimensions should be incorporated in facilitating effective adult learning.

If organisations wish to develop the capacity to use their valuable human resources fully and gain a competitive edge, they will need empowered managers who are committed to lifelong learning (Meyer & Fourie, 2006). According to Lowman (2002) coaching is becoming an increasingly popular method of staff development in South African organisations. Another driver of the popularity of coaching is the need for lifelong learning and development (Jarvis, Lane & Fillery-Travis, 2004).

Drawing on the work of Chapman (2010) who developed the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, which is based on the Experiential Learning theory (meta-theory) of Kolb (1984), this research sets out to facilitate individual learning and to persuade the adult learner (middle manager) to engage in and practise the skills of lifelong learning.

Furthermore, within a South African context, many adults from previously disadvantaged backgrounds approach learning with low self-confidence, feelings of inferiority and a sense of powerlessness (Aitchison, 2004). Not many middle managers within the food

retail sector are formally qualified (W&RSETA, 2009), yet many are functioning in important management positions. Lifelong learning is seen as a process that can be applied for the purpose of promoting equal opportunities and empowerment (Miller, F.P. et al., 2010). Gutierrez (2008) makes the point that the lack of access to learning and development activities is both a cause and effect of powerlessness. Learning has the potential to facilitate empowerment (Inglis, 2007), whereas empowerment can be described as a process of learning to learn.

Empowerment is a multifaceted, conceptually complex idea (Rappaport, 1995), and its essence cannot be captured by a single concept. Although his point is rather dated, Freire (1985) argues that once personal empowerment has taken place, other levels of empowerment will follow. Brookfield (1986) agrees with this statement and is also of the opinion that developing a sense of personal power and self-worth in adults should be seen as one of the fundamental purposes of learning.

Within the context of the research, coaching is used as a method to facilitate learning. Finding an appropriate coaching model to facilitate lifelong learning proved difficult, as no one model encapsulates the uniqueness of the South African retail sector, which is referred to in paragraph 1.7.

The researcher made use of a combination of the Co-Active Coaching Model (Whitworth, Kimsey-House & Sandahl, 2001), as well as the Behavioural Coaching Model (Skiffington & Zeus, 2002), because neither of the two models was seen to be effective in facilitating learning on its own, as described in paragraph 1.7. These two coaching models are integrated to facilitate learning (within the context of lifelong learning) in the retail sector. Brookfield (1986), Evans (2009) and Cunningham (2007) assert that adult learning (lifelong learning) must be experience-centred and that the experience must be meaningful to the learner. Lifelong learning further requires the ability to learn from life experiences (Passarelli & Kolb, 2009).

This type of learning could occur within an organisation, requiring organisations to develop into learning organisations and thereby creating a culture of lifelong learning (RSA, DoL, 2008). According to Burns (2002), a learning organisation is not solely concerned about offering more training. A learning organisation involves the development of higher levels of knowledge and skills. Learning organisations also

embark on meta-learning or reflecting on how learning takes place. Jarvis et al. (2004) point out that organisations need to develop the learning skills of their employees, while taking that unique learner's perspective into consideration.

This approach to lifelong learning (using coaching as a method to facilitate learning to empower middle managers) within the retail sector in South Africa could have been implemented earlier; however, no such research (as referred to in paragraph 1.7) has been documented. Within a global and South African context, research into the practice and impact of coaching in business settings seems to be limited (Cilliers, 2005; Meyer, 2007). For this reason it is important to evaluate the effect of using a coaching methodology to facilitate lifelong learning for empowering middle managers in the retail sector, as proposed in the research. Dunlap and Lowenthal (2011) conclude that dialogue and collaboration have the potential to elevate learning for the individual to become a self-directed, lifelong learner.

1.2   RESEARCH GOAL

The goal of the research was to evaluate the effect of using a coaching methodology to facilitate lifelong learning to empower middle managers in the food retail sector.

1.2.1 Research objectives

To realise the above-mentioned goal, the following objectives were formulated:

- The first objective included a thorough literature study of the concepts that related to the research, namely:

    - Lifelong learning

    - Coaching

    - Empowerment

    - Learning organisations

- The second objective was the experimentation and implementation of the conceptual approach pertaining to the four major concepts.

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- The third objective was to empower the individual middle managers using a coaching methodology to facilitate lifelong learning.

- The fourth objective was to do the research analysis and write up the research.

- The fifth objective was to do a further literature review to refine the results based on the findings of the research.

Learning could be seen as beneficial to both the organisation from a short-term as well as a long-term perspective. In the short term, the organisation gains an empowered individual whose work performance and attitude have been enhanced. In the long term, the organisation gains an individual who is more capable of adapting to changing business conditions and, as a result, better equipped to take on new roles and deal with changing business conditions effectively.

According to Jarvis et al. (2004:17), employee and organisational learning have become more prominent in that organisations have realised that "to respond quickly and flexibly to change is largely dependent on the capability of its employees to learn, adapt and evolve." Within this context, individuals and organisations can take steps towards empowerment (through learning) as experimentation, whereby trust of the empowerment process may yield significant payoffs. This may lead to organisations attracting and holding the best people and achieving success in competitive markets (through responsiveness and flexibility) by taking full advantage of their valuable human resources (Aitchison, 2004).

1.3   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In addressing the stated problem, this research seeks to answer the following research questions:

Research Question 1

What is the effect of coaching as a method of learning and development in the facilitation of lifelong learning to empower middle managers in the food retail environment?

Data will be gathered for this question by the analysis of answers to a standardised empowerment questionnaire (see appendix A).

Research Question 2

Is coaching (as only another way of facilitating learning) an effective method for facilitating the learning and development of middle managers in the food retail environment?

The researcher will attempt to answer the question by monitoring the progress of the participants over a period of twelve months.

Research Question 3

Which dimensions should be taken into consideration when implementing a coaching methodology (as a method of learning) for the development of middle managers in the retail sector?

The researcher aims to identify key dimensions for implementing a coaching methodology to facilitate learning in order to empower middle managers more effectively.

The researcher is open to the reality that a new framework for facilitating learning (using a coaching methodology) could evolve, based on the findings and conclusions of the research, which could be used or tested within the food retail sector. It is important to note that such a framework would be specific to the food retail sector. This is not the purpose of the research, as the application of the two models used (the Co-Active and Behavioural Coaching Models) first need to be critiqued; however, it could form the basis for generating a hypothesis.

Cox, Bachkirova and Clutterbuck (2009) advocate the creation of a personal model of coaching. The value of such a personal theory or model is that it allows the researcher to be aware of what is important, to know what one wants to achieve and to have access to the means used in the process (Cox et al., 2009).

Lane and Corrie (2006:48–49) suggest that three essential domains should be included in such a personal model of coaching, namely purpose, perspective and process.

1. Purpose. The main purpose or output of the research was to empower the individual middle managers who experienced the coaching process as a method to facilitate learning.

2. Perspective. The philosophy that was adhered to was an adult learning or lifelong learning philosophy. The researcher made use of a combination of the Co-Active and Behavioural Coaching Models by using Kolb's experiential learning theory to facilitate learning with regard to the adult, being the middle manager in this case. Kolb's meta-theory underpins the methodology used in this research.

3. Process. This refers to the process (the methods and tools) used to facilitate lifelong learning.

The research aims to show congruence between the three essential domains. The main focus of the research is on individual adult learning, and not on coaching. Coaching in the context of the research only refers to the method used to facilitate lifelong learning.

1.4   NEED FOR THE RESEARCH

Formal learning and development interventions within the South African retail sector do not seem to be meeting the developmental needs of human capital in this demanding sector of industry (W&RSETA, 2009). Learning and development interventions are deemed to be taking too long to complete (up to three years), negating the current skills and knowledge needed to function, because these very skills and knowledge soon become outdated. This implies the need for a philosophy of constant, lifelong leaning. Learning to learn is an important skill required by every individual in the fast changing world (Miller, Kovacs, Wright, Corcoran & Rosenblum, 2010).

The ability to "learn how to learn" will equip the individual to learn throughout his or her lifetime (Passarelli & Kolb, 2009). In essence this could have an empowering effect on the individual. Change will not be too threatening, as the individual will be empowered by having mastered the ability to learn throughout life. Constant change will allow the individual to apply the same or other methods to learn new concepts and skills once the understanding of learning how to learn has been established.

The intended learning and development intervention, using coaching as a method to facilitate learning, is aimed at providing accelerated learning whereby middle managers can function more effectively in the retail environment. There has also been a paradigm shift from traditional instruction to organisational and lifelong learning (Meyer, 2007; Wick & Leon, 2003).

Within the South African context, individual development and lifelong learning are seen as key ingredients to accelerate the development of knowledge and skills to actualise people's full potential (RSA, DoL, 2009). Employers increasingly demand flexible, multi-skilled workers with a high standard of personal competencies. Employees therefore need to possess the skills and feel empowered within themselves to function at these levels (W&RSETA, 2009). The problems with traditional training and the shortcomings of a low performance organisational culture have led to the realisation that a new approach to learning is needed (W&RSETA, 2008).

In order to adapt to the constant challenges of the retail environment, businesses must evolve into learning organisations where employers and employees become lifelong learners who are committed to lifelong learning (Smith, 2005b). Coaches are in an excellent position to educate clients about the current research relating to learning acquisition, coaching and change, as well as about the relationship between managing human capital and profitability (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003).

As there are no learning models using coaching as a method to facilitate learning that are specifically used in the food retail sector (especially within the South African context), this research could lead to similar learning opportunities for using coaching as a method to facilitate learning that could be implemented throughout the food retail sector. This research endeavours to make an original contribution to human knowledge, the results of which could be published.

1.5   DELIMITATION OF THE RESEARCH

The research was conducted within a Pick n Pay retail store, one of the largest retail organisations in South Africa, but could also be applied in other sectors of the retail industry. The researcher was a training manager within the retail group between 2000 and 2001, and was actively involved with supervisory and management development during that time. From this relationship with one of the stores, the basis for the research was established. The research was aimed at 10 middle managers in the retail store; however, the method of learning and development could be applied to higher levels of management as well as to lower level managers. Although the empowerment questionnaire was applied within the retail sector, it could also be used in other sectors and in a community setting (as used by Bester, 2002). The empowerment of each

individual is handled as a specific case and within this context, empowerment is an individualistic concept and each individual's empowerment status was measured longitudinally over time. Lastly, the research was conducted within a specific time frame (12 months).

1.6   CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

The following concepts are explained briefly in order to ensure clarity and provide a better understanding of their contextual use. These concepts are discussed in more detail in Chapter Two (Lifelong learning), as well as in Chapter Three (Coaching, Empowerment and Learning organisations):

1.6.1 Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is the continuous building of skills and knowledge throughout the life of an individual (Field, Gallacher & Ingram, 2009; Williams & Remenyi, 2008). This occurs through experiences encountered in the course of a lifetime (Mohanty, 2010). From an organisational perspective, lifelong learning with its wide range of contexts, conditions, purposes and diversity, could be an appropriate concept in changing environments where continuous individual learning is required (Evans, 2009).

Lifelong learning cannot be separated in time or place from work (Miller, F.P et al.,2010); it is a process that draws everyone involved into learning what changes are needed, learning to apply new skills, learning how to continue learning, and learning how to develop as a person (Burns, 2002:227).

According to the Scottish Executive (2004), lifelong learning covers the whole range of learning. That includes formal and informal learning and workplace learning. It also includes the skills, knowledge, attitudes and behaviours that people acquire in their day-to-day experiences.

Europa (2003) proposes that within the context of lifelong learning, learning individuals should have individual learning pathways, suited to their needs and interests at all stages of their lives. Chapman (2010) refers to this type of learning as customised one-on-one learning. Lifelong learning is also about providing second chances to update basic skills and offering learning opportunities at more advanced levels (Abdullahi,

2009). This means that systems of provision need to become more open and flexible, so that opportunities can be tailored to the needs of the learner or the potential learner.

As the major part of lifelong learning, the process of learning should acknowledge that the adult should be encouraged to become engaged as an active learning agent in their own development (Burns, 2002; Evans, 2009). In adapting to the needs of adult learning and lifelong learning, facilitators need to be open to new techniques to facilitate this type of learning (Burns, 2002; Parsons, 2001; Skiffington & Zeus, 2003).

Cox et al. (2009) are of the opinion that adult learning theory underpins this type of learning within a coaching context. Three basic principles of three theories of adult learning (as proposed by Cox et al., 2009) were used in this research to reinforce the learning process. These theories are:

1. Andragogy (as proposed by Knowles, 1980)

2. Experiential Learning (as proposed by Kolb, 1984)

3. Transformative learning (as proposed by Mezirow, 1990).

Knowles (1980) introduces the concept of andragogy and describes how adults are more self-directed, less dependent, more experienced and more orientated (amongst others) toward their developmental needs. The concept of andragogy further provides a useful framework for participants engaging in coaching as a learning and development activity.

Kolb (1984:38) proposes that "learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience", and that experiential learning is concerned with technique and process, rather than content. Osland, Turner and Kolb (2010) expand upon this concept whereby knowledge is generated from experience through a cycle of learning driven by the resolution of dual dialectics of action/reflection and experience/abstraction. Movement through these modes of learning link one experience to the next, creating a learning spiral that guides growth and development through a lifetime (Passarelli & Kolb, 2009).

Transformative learning (Mezirow, 1990) is a theory of adult learning which attempts to describe how adults make meaning of their experience, which involves a transformation of perspectives.

The three theories mentioned are at the heart of all adult learning and development activities (Cox et al., 2009), and can be used as basis for coaching practices. Burns (2002) and Parsons (2001) are of the opinion that educators involved in adult learning must transform themselves into facilitators whereby they enable, inspire and coach aspiring adults.

Smith and Spurling (1999) argue that lifelong learning calls for personal commitment, and once engaged, the individual taps into resources (both tangible and intangible) which would not otherwise be found. This viewpoint reflects a humanist/phenomenological approach to learning, as it is concerned with the growth and full development of the whole person.

Brookfield (1986) and Evans (2009) conclude that facilitators of adult learning should strive to improvise creatively (in responsible manner) with regard to learning methods and learning activities in response to contextual constraints. They should also be able to elaborate on the broader implications and replicable aspects of such particular practices.

The researcher is of the opinion that lifelong learning should involve a unique, individualised learning focus for each individual adult learner, creating an internal desire to continue learning throughout life.

1.6.2 Coaching

According to Jarvis et al. (2004), coaching is positioned within the wider field of learning and development, and can be defined as the science and art of facilitating the learning and development, and the performance of an individual or teams, which in turn assists the growth of the individual and the organisation alike (Stout Rostron, Janse van Rensburg & Sampaio, 2009).

Goleman (2002:9) gives an overall descriptive definition of coaching and true change occurring: "through a multifaceted process that penetrates the three pivotal levels of an organisation: the individuals in the organisation, the teams in which they work, and the organisation's culture. Based on the principles of adult learning, such processes create a safe space for learning, making it challenging and not too risky".

Coaching is used in various contexts, and there are multiple approaches to coaching (Cox et al., 2009). Within the context of the research, the theoretical traditions as well as the genres and contexts of coaching will be discussed in Chapter Three.

This research focuses on developmental coaching. Cox et al. (2009) describe developmental coaching as the recognition of an employee's skills or potential. The coach then works on enhancing these skills and performance, and as the employees' functioning improves, so their confidence and self-efficacy improve as they learn more (Cox et al., 2009). In developmental coaching, there seems to be "movement from what might be seen as external, behavioural coaching offered by the skills and performance coach to a more constructivist, developmental approach, which takes a longer term, more evolutionary perspective" (Cox et al., 2009:218). According to Jackson (2002), developmental coaching is humanist and person-centred in outlook.

Skiffington and Zeus (2003) describe coaching as a developmental process that encapsulates learning and growth. Thorne (2004) agrees that coaching is about change and creating a process of learning that supports each individual's capacity to grow.

Developmental coaching goes beyond instruction in tasks and can help learners define their needs and values within a process based upon trust, mutual respect, honesty and openness. Developmental coaching further encompasses content, learning processes and underlying beliefs and assumptions (Berg & Szabó, 2005). Developmental coaching is usually long-term (six to 12 months) and uses multiple methods of data collection (Sadler-Smith, 2006:303).

According to Starr (2003), Thorne (2004) and Sieler (2005), the coach plays an integral part in the coaching process. The role of the coach is to provide the coachee with questions, processes and strategies to continue along their developmental path. Hargrove (2003:15) also emphasises that coaching is based on being completely committed to the person(s) you are coaching and engaging with, leaving them inspired, empowered, and enabled with regard to their concerns.

Coaching has become more scientific, with an emphasis on targeting measurable behaviours. Such areas include goal setting, motivation, accelerated learning techniques, focus and planning and assessing a coachee's preferred style of learning (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:1).

Coaching within a business context should not only lead to creating business enterprises that are outstandingly productive, but also nurture the human spirit and allow people to learn and grow (Whitworth et al., 2001). Coaching is a unique way of developing people. The solution-focused approach to coaching emphasises that each individual person is competent to solve his or her own problems. Within the context of the research, it is important to note that coaching is only one mechanism for learning, and not a solution for all learning needs. It must be carefully positioned as one element in an organisation's total learning and development strategy (Jarvis et al., 2004).

The researcher is of the opinion that the unique nature of coaching has the ability to facilitate unique individual learning, thereby empowering the individual to continue learning throughout life.

1.6.3 Empowerment

Although dated, Kanter (1987), views empowerment on a continuum from powerless to empowered, and encourages organisations to help people move to the empowered end. This perspective remains relevant today, whereby changes in empowerment are possible through learning and development processes (Bridges, 2004). These processes include individual development and management development, and are closely related to personal and organisational learning (Hunt & Weintraub, 2007).

Rappaport (1995) notes that it is easy to define empowerment by its absence, but difficult to define it in action, as it takes on different forms in people and contexts. Tamasane (1998:82) and Albertyn (2001) argue that empowerment can be viewed as a process and an outcome. This process enables people to have more control of their lives as well as in their working environment. This process takes place on three different levels, namely the personal level (micro-level), the interpersonal level (interface) and the political (macro-) level (Albertyn, 2001). Empowerment is a concept that is defined by individuals in a specific context (Tamasane, 1998) and this is typically reflected in the research on individual middle managers in a retail setting. Thorne (2004) points out that only when individuals and organisations commit to the process of learning, can empowerment take place.

Empowerment through education (also referred to as transformative education) can involve lifelong learning. "Through learning programmes people develop critical thinking,

knowledge and skills to enhance the empowerment process" (Tamasane, 1998:77). This dimension recognises the mature individual's ability to be an active agent in the learning process. Within the context of the research, empowerment could involve new learning and development opportunities for the individual.

The researcher is of the opinion that empowerment is a multifaceted term involving a transformation of the individual through the process of learning.

1.6.4 Learning organisations

A learning organisation is the term given to a company that facilitates the learning of its members and continuously transforms itself (Mukherjee, 2009). Learning organisations develop as a result of the pressures facing modern organisations and enable them to remain competitive in the business environment. Although dated, Senge (2006:6) proposes five "component technologies" that lead to a learning organisation. These dimensions develop separately, although each dimension is critical of the others' success. These dimensions are: systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, shared vision and team learning.

Within the context of the research (individual lifelong learning within a learning and development activity), there is a stronger focus on the individual (personal mastery); however, together these dimensions provide a vital dimension in building organisations that have the capacity to learn.

Individual learning is acquired through development opportunities, and the individual's commitment to the process of learning is known as personal mastery (Senge, 2006). A learning organisation can be described as the sum of individual learning; therefore it is important to develop a culture where individual learning (personal mastery) is practised in daily life. If one is learning every day, the sum of this type of learning equates to lifelong learning.

Although dated, Senge (2006:3) describes such learning organisations as "organisations where people continually expand their capacity to create results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspirations are set free, and where people are continually learning to learn together".

The assumptions held by the individual and organisations are called mental models. To become a learning organisation, these models must be challenged (Senge, 2006). Burns (2002), Seel (2008) and De Wit and Meyer (2010) assert that there should be a focus on creating such conditions for learning, while Skiffington and Zeus (2003) acknowledge that learning organisations do not occur spontaneously, but have to be developed through conscious interventions (such as coaching), which help individuals to learn. Jarvis et al. (2004:19) are of the opinion that when individuals within organisations proactively seek to learn and develop their skills and abilities, a competitive advantage is gained through its people, and this is something that all organisations should be aiming to achieve.

The researcher is of the opinion is that a learning organisation is an environment where a culture of learning is honored and individuals are seen as unique individual learners.

1.7   RELATED LITERATURE

Coaching seems to be of lesser importance in education in the South African context if judged by the minimal and even lack of recent research material (Meyer, 2007). As coaching, as a method of learning and development, is relatively new, the current body of research is limited.

A NEXUS search was conducted (see appendix B) which indicated that no similar research has been or is being conducted on this specific topic (coaching) within the specific environment (the retail sector) within a South African context. Groenewald (2003) explored counseling, coaching and mentoring as missing tools in people development and concluded that coaching is a missing tool in holistic integrative human resource development programmes. Robertson (2000), in his research, views coaching as an important skill for managers. Hermanson (2004) evaluated the outcomes of a thinking skills programme for middle managers in a services industry organisation and found that the application of such a programme was successful. Two studies, those of Albertyn (2001) and Bester (2002), focused on educational programmes and empowerment. Albertyn (2001) examined the educational perspectives on empowerment by quantatively testing the participants' empowerment before, immediately after and three months after participating in a life skills programme. Bester's (2002) research

findings indicated that the longer the participants participate in an entrepreneurial programme, the bigger the improvement in their empowerment status will be.

Cilliers (2005) confirms that although many constructs such as counseling and individual and organisational development have been applied in South African organisations, not much has been reported in terms of coaching.

More recently, Botha (2010), compared three coaching approaches (personal and professional leadership, neuro-linguistic programming and experiential learning) to ascertain whether a specific coaching approach yielded better results based on the experiences of the coachees, as well as exploring whether a specific element of the coaching process contributed more significantly to the success of the experience than another. Botha (2010) concluded that the experiential learning approach distinguished itself to be more focused on business-related objectives and outcomes than the other two approaches.

The most significant work done (within a South African coaching context) is that of Chapman (2010), who developed the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. In integrating his model, Chapman (2010) draws from the work of Wilber (2000), Almaas (1998) and Kolb (1984), and proposes that coaching is about facilitating integrated experiential learning in individuals in order to enhance personal growth and development. Chapman (2010) concludes with recommendations for developing one's unique model of practice. Based on this enlightened perspective (as a conceptual model to inform the research), this research sets out in exploring the use of coaching as a method to facilitate learning (lifelong learning) to empower individual middle managers in the food retail sector.

Hargrove (2003) argues that coaching has the ability to empower people and within this context, this research sets out to make a valuable and original contribution.

1.8   CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AND COACHING

As with any discipline, lifelong learning and coaching demand a conceptual framework that will provide a common language and a basis for the research, thereby creating a blueprint for lifelong learning practice. In the following section, a brief overview is given

of the conceptual frameworks used in this research. Each of these conceptual frameworks are explained in more detail in Chapter Two (lifelong learning) and Chapter Three (coaching) respectively.

1.8.1 Conceptual framework for lifelong learning

The research is based on two prominent theories of adult learning, namely andragogy and experiential learning.

1.8.1.1 Andragogy

The term *andragogy* is derived from the term Greek *aner*, meaning "of the man (adult)" and "*agogus*" meaning to "lead or accompany" is synonomous with adult learning (Sadler-Smith, 2006). Andragogy recognises the inherent characteristics of adults as learners and uses these characteristics to guide and support adults in their learning (Stober & Grant, 2010). Andragogy therefore refers to learning strategies focused on adults.

Adult learning is seen as a process that is central to adult education (Sadler-Smith, 2006). Knowles (1990) draws from the work of Lindeman (1926) and devised a set of assumptions about adult learning (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 2005). In the following section these assumptions are noted, and will be expanded upon in Chapter Two:

1. Adults need to know the reason for learning something.

2. Adults are self-directed.

3. Experience provides the basis for learning activities.

4. Adults are most interested in learning something that has relevance to their work/personal lives.

5. Adult learning is problem-centred; seeking a solution, rather than being content-oriented.

6. Adults are internally oriented.

1.8.1.2 Experiential Learning

The notion of learning through experience is often associated with the work of Kolb (1984), whose experiential learning model continues to be one of the most influential

frameworks. Central to the model is the view that learning is a process whereby "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984:41).

Kolb's (1984) meta-theory underpins the methodology used in the research to facilitate lifelong learning. This model could be used as a meta-theory for learning, human growth and development (Chapman, 2010). It involves four adaptive learning modes namely concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation.

Facilitating effective lifelong learning (using a coaching methodology) will move the individual through all four stages, and develop all four learning capabilities that are prerequisite for personal growth and development, which will ultimately empower the individual (Chapman, 2010).

1.8.2 Conceptual framework for coaching

Due to the dynamic nature of the retail environment, the researcher sought a coaching framework to facilitate lifelong learning within a large food retail organisation in South Africa. Having been a training manager within the organisation, the researcher realised that a unique approach was needed to facilitate learning within this challenging environment. Among the biggest challenges to implementing effective learning and development interventions (especially within the specific retail sector), are time constraints (due to the very busyness of the food retail environment) and operating in a very results-oriented (bottom-line) culture.

No such a specific coaching model could be found, as mentioned in 1.7, that was flexible enough to allow effective implementation. However, a combination of two specific coaching models (namely the Co-Active Coaching Model and the Behavioural Coaching Model) were identified and used in the research. The combination of these two coaching models seemed most fitting to facilitate learning, growth, development and empowerment in a retail environment. In the following section each coaching model is explained briefly:

1.8.2.1 The Co-Active Coaching Model

The term *Co-Active* refers to the fundamental nature of the coaching relationship in which the coach and coachee are active collaborators. This model was developed by Whitworth et al. (2001), and sets out a coaching model to help managers become more

self-aware, lead a more balanced life, and become better at goal setting. The model can also be broadly applied to different occupations and coaching needs.

In Co-Active Coaching, this relationship is an alliance between two equals for the purpose of meeting the coachee's needs. In the process the coaching relationship grows and develops and becomes more effective. The impact of coaching increases as the coach and coachee get to know each other better.

1.8.2.2 *The Behavioural Coaching Model*

Behavioural Coaching research integrates research from many disciplines, and although behavioural coaching is grounded in scientific method, it also adopts a phenomenological approach to the study of the individual (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:11).

The common purpose of using the Behavioural Coaching Model is to achieve genuine, lasting change, while acknowledging that it is difficult to break habits. The individual's experiences and perceptions of events are considered as important as the events themselves.

The Behavioural Coaching Model makes an explicit interaction between the stages of change, as well as the forms of coaching relevant to each stage and to the seven process steps of the Behavioural Coaching Model.

Both the Co-Active and the Behavioural Coaching Models are discussed individually in more detail in Chapter Three.

1.8.3 Integrating coaching models to facilitate learning

Within the context of Kolb's Experiential learning theory, each of the two conceptual models used (namely the Co-Active Coaching Model and the Behavioural Coaching Model) covered some of the stages (namely concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation) of the learning process.

The Co-Active Coaching Model's strength lies in reflective observation and abstract conceptualisation, whereas the Behavioural Coaching Model's strength lies in concrete experience and active experimentation.

The Co-Active Coaching Model is a very dynamic/intuitive approach to coaching, whereas the Behavioural Coaching Model promotes a more scientific/structured

approach to coaching. Both these models had also been used to develop managers (Skiffington & Zeus, 2001; Whitworth et al., 2001), making it particularly relevant to the research. From a lifelong learning perspective, Knowles (1990:28–29) argues that adult learning should be characterised by systematic (scientific) investigation (i.e. the Behavioural Coaching Model) as well as an artistic/intuitive stream (i.e. The Co-Active Coaching Model),concerned with the discovery of new knowledge.

Each of these coaching models have strengths and weaknesses. The Co-Active Coaching Model emphasises a learning conversation, but that does not lead to action and learning (Chapman, 2010). For the retail sector it is critical to have empowered individuals who are open to learning, and who take action.

In contrast, the Behavioural Coaching Model promotes action as well as being structured, but could be seen as mechanical and rigid (Smith, 2006), which could be interpreted as neglecting the artistic/intuitive element (Evans, 2009). The retail environment is very dynamic and changes constantly, which calls for a uniquely open learning process. The Behavioural Coaching Model claims to follow a scientific approach, with measured results; however, the learning environment (within the food retail context) does not always allow for the implementation of such a structured process.

As the researcher had experience and training in both the Co-Active and the Behavioural Coaching Models, elements of the two different models were used individually as well as combined or integrated during the research. The work of Chapman (2010) is further used as conceptual framework to inform the research.

The integration of these two models allowed for flexibility, yet following a scientific structured process to generate tangible results, which could be equated to return on investment. From a learning perspective, all of the four modes of experiential learning (as proposed by Kolb, 1984), namely, concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation are covered by the two coaching models.

The individual coaching models (Co-Active and the Behavioural Coaching Models) are expanded upon in detail in Chapter Three, and the strengths and weaknesses of each of these models are further critiqued in this chapter.

A coaching framework allows the coach to create a structure within which to operate. Following this, the coach can then pursue best practices, using the most effective tools and techniques, exploring the most effective forms of delivery, and displaying the competencies and training necessary for successful coaching outcomes.

1.9 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

1.9.1 Research design

In the following section, the research design and methodology is discussed briefly. This section serves as an overview, as both the research design and methodology are discussed in more detail in Chapter Four. A research design declares and explains one's approach, whereas the research methodology focuses on the steps or methods used for data generation, data presentation, data analysis, and data interpretation (Mouton, 2001). The design and methodology of the study is described in Chapter Four and not reported on in detail here.

The research design for this research follows the case study research design. A case study is a research methodology common in social sciences. Yin (2009) describes case study research as a linear but iterative process. A case study is based on an in-depth investigation of a single individual, group or event to explore causation in order to find underlying principles (Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Thomas, 2011). Case studies are usually descriptive in nature and provide rich longitudinal information about individuals or particular situations (Mouton, 2008; Yin, 2009).

Bryman (2004) notes that areas in which case study methods have remained popular is the area of organisational research. While much case study focuses on a single case, this research focuses on the multiple-case study design. Within the context of the research, each middle manager is handled as a case, however Yin (2009) proposes that should a study contain more than a single case, the research should use a multiple-case design. According to Patton (2006:44) "Information about the relevant individual is collected, and several such individuals or 'cases' can be included in a multiple-case study." Yin (2009) considers single and multiple-case study designs to be variants within the same methodological framework.

Multiple-case study designs have distinct advantages in comparison to single-case designs. The evidence from multiple cases is often considered more compelling, and the

overall study is therefore regarded as being more robust. Multiple case studies have the advantage of allowing new ideas and hypotheses to emerge from careful detailed observation (Thomas, 2011).

As a research method, the case study is used in many situations to contribute to the knowledge of individual, group and organisational phenomena (Yin, 2009). The case study method further allows researchers to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, further allowing a better understanding of real-life phenomena in depth (Yin & Davis, 2007).

Case studies have a distinctive place in evaluation research (Patton, 2002), and can be based on a mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence, making it part of a larger mixed methods study (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) is of the opinion that any use of multiple-case designs should follow a replication, not a sampling logic.

The researcher acted as key data collection instrument. Babbie and Mouton (2006) point to the centrality of the researcher in that the researcher does not distance him or herself from the researched. The first hand knowledge the researcher obtains in the process is therefore valid within the specific context. This is referred to as credible *inter-subjectivity* (Babbie & Mouton, 2006).

In the following section, the research methodology is discussed briefly. A methodology is the study of procedures (methods) used in the research to create new knowledge (Babbie & Mouton, 2006).

1.9.2 Research methodology

Both qualitative and quantitative data was used during the research. Data conveyed through words has been labeled qualitative, whereas data conveyed in number is labeled quantitative. The research was divided into three distinct phases.

The phases of the research comprised a pre-test, post-test and a post-post-test. Data was gathered using interviews, diaries and fieldwork, questionnaires (three different kinds), observation, tests, and official statistics.

In ensuring quality, triangulation was used. Thomas (2011) is of the opinion that triangulation is an essential prerequisite when using a case study approach. This critical awareness is brought about through the collation of different methods of data collection.

In the following table, the research methodology is presented in matrix form in Table 1.1

Table 1.1: Methodology followed during the research

Phase	Purpose	Data generation	Data collection	Data analysis
Phase 1	- Determine areas of development	- - Evaluation - Pre-test (Empowerment) - Learning style inventories:Kolb, Honey and Mumford	- - DVD/Role plays - Audio tape - Questionnaire - Interviews - Test - Observation - Field notes	- Assessed against outcomes - Analysis of standardissed empowerment questionnaire - Content analysis
Phase 2	- Monitor development of individuals.	- Generic programme (Content) - Individual Coaching - Post-test (Empowerment)	- - - - Questionnaires - Interviews - Observation - Field notes	- Assessed against outcomes - Analysis of standardissed empowerment questionnaire - Content analysis
Phase 3	- Determine effect of intervention	- Post-post-test (Empowerment)	- - - - Questionnaire - Interviews - Observation - Field notes - Official statistics	- Assessed against outcomes - Analysis of standardissed empowerment questionnaire - Content analysis

1.10   ETHICAL STATEMENT

Participants were ensured of confidentiality throughout the research process and reporting of results. This is in line with guidelines for assessing employees (Jacobson, 1996:30). They were protected from being identified, since names were omitted in the research instruments.

Permission (see Appendix K) was also obtained from Pick n Pay to conduct this research within their store.

1.11   SEQUENCE OF CHAPTERS

The introduction and problem statement have been included in **Chapter One** to provide the context of the research. The chapter further poses three research questions, the need for the research, and the delimitation of the research. The four main concepts, namely lifelong learning, coaching, empowerment and learning organisations are briefly clarified in the chapter. The chapter also provides a conceptual framework for lifelong learning and coaching. Within a lifelong learning framework, andragogy and experiential learning are explored. Within a coaching context, the Co-Active Coaching Model and the Behavioural Coaching Models are used. Lastly, the plan and the organisation of the research are discussed briefly.

Chapter Two consists of a literature overview as well as conceptual framework for lifelong learning. Three different approaches to learning are discussed to provide an overview for further discussion on adult learning theories. Andragogy, experiential learning and transformative learning are reviewed and discussed, to couch it within the context of the three adult learning theories used during the research. A detailed overview of the facilitation of adult learning is given, with a short explanation of individual learning and development, as well as experiential learning and development.

Chapter Three consists of a detailed review of the literature regarding the concepts of coaching, empowerment and learning organisations. Within the coaching context an overview of coaching and the theoretical traditions of coaching (with an emphasis of the solution-focused approach) are provided, as well as the genre and context of the research, which was developmental in approach. Developmental coaching is further described in the chapter, as well as the two coaching models used within the research. Both models are explained and critiqued, drawing from their strengths for proposing an integrated model, and incorporating the strengths of each model. This integration is done within the context of using the experiential learning model as proposed by Kolb, 1984. Lastly, the role of the relationship as well as the role of the coach is further expanded upon within a coaching context. Empowerment and related concepts of empowerment, such as levels of empowerment, are further discussed. The measuring of empowerment,

as well as empowerment models are explained. Lastly the concept of learning organisations is expanded upon to place the research within the context of organisational learning.

Chapter Four provides details of the research design and methodology of the research. A multiple-case study is discussed, as well as the procedure for data collection and the different data collection methods. Lastly, the chapter explores the concepts of triangulation and content analysis and the application thereof to this research.

Chapter Five describes the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the results. This is done in terms of the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the variations in their state of empowerment over time. This is triangulated with other findings to provide a meaningful synthesis of the individual respondents.

In the final chapter, **Chapter Six**, a synthesis, conclusions and recommendations based on the literature review and the results are given.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW AND A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a literature review covering the key lifelong learning concepts. The literature review aims to defend the value of pursuing the line of enquiry followed in this research, as well as providing a framework to compare the findings and ideas with those of the researcher.

A literature review surveys scholarly articles, books and other sources such as dissertations and conference proceedings relevant to a particular issue, area of research, or theory, providing a description, summary and critical evaluation of each work (Mouton, 2008; Terre Blanche & Durheim, 1999).

A literature review also involves the synthesis of the work of others in a form, which demonstrates the accomplishment of the exploratory process and offers an overview of significant literature published on a topic (Babbie & Mouton, 2006; Cooper, 1998). Literature reviews may also vary considerably in emphasis, ranging from contemporary situations to historical perspectives (Maree, 2007; Mouton, 2008). This research, however, examines present issues in the current context of business and related learning situations.

The main focus of the research is lifelong learning, and this chapter explores learning related to lifelong learning, especially within the context of this research.

2.2 LIFELONG LEARNING

Lifelong learning is an all-embracing concept that incorporates the various stages of an individual's education (Foley, 2004). Lifelong learning, also known as LLL, is said to encompass all learning activity undertaken throughout life (Miller F.P. et al., 2010).

Within the context of the research, lifelong learning refers to intentional learning that people engage in throughout their lives for personal and professional fulfillment and to

improve the quality of their lives (Dunlap & Lowenthal, 2011). In today's climate of continual change and innovation, lifelong learning has become a critical aspect in enhancing competitiveness and employability (Elia, 2010).

From a global perspective, the European Commission (2003:4) has defined lifelong learning as: "All purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence". Europa (2003:2) phrases it in a slightly different way: "all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, social and/or employment-related perspective".

Within a South African context, there has been a shift in focus to prioritise the concept of lifelong learning since a new democracy came into being in 1994 (RSA, 2004). Two reasons for making the change to lifelong learning have emerged, namely:

- the notion that economic prosperity depends on competitiveness, and that a key way to achieve this is by building the nation's knowledge and skills; and

- the idea that social exclusion of disadvantaged groups can be alleviated by raising their participation in learning (RSA, 2004).

Further, within a South African context, the raising of participation and engagement of individuals in learning is in line with Black Economic Empowerment strategies (RSA, DoL, 2010). The focus of learning is not limited to individuals, but also includes organisations in the process of developing previously disadvantaged individuals for management positions within the context of Employment Equity (RSA, DoL, 2009).

According to Sieler (2005) lifelong learning is now recognised as an essential component of the successful functioning of organisations. There is an increased awareness that the organisation's intellectual resources leads to a sustained competitive advantage (Edvinsson & Malone, 1997; Sadler-Smith, 2006). This has a direct implication for learning, which, if applied sucessfully, makes it a powerful strategy for improvement.

It has been suggested that the term learning defies precise definition, because it is put to multiple uses. Although dated, Boyd and Apps (1980) view learning as the act or process by which behavioural change, knowledge, skills and attitudes are acquired.

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Learning that occurs during the process of change can be described as the learning process. This learning process can unfold within individuals and groups.

The following section provides a summary of the major approaches and their relevance to learning. Some of the central themes that learning theorists have explored are described, and more particularly the various philosophical, theoretical and practical themes, and how these impact on the conceptualisation of what constitutes appropriate teaching of mature persons for lifelong learning.

In grouping the theories of learning into five categories, the researcher might resort to oversimplification, but this structure provides a means of imposing order on a diverse array of theories.

2.3   LEARNING

The concept of learning involves both the planned learning intended to occur through structured and more informal education, and unplanned learning as part of the daily experience of living (Sadler-Smith, 2006).

According to Burns (2002:114), the best definition of learning is "a relatively permanent change in behaviour, with behaviour including both observable activity and internal processes such as thinking, attitudes and emotions". There are, however, many situations in which what has been learnt may not manifest in observable behaviour until a later stage (Smith, 2006).

Most people think of learning in a very narrow sense, limiting the concept to the process of acquiring a correct set of facts (Davies, 2008), but learning concerns more than mere knowledge. Burns (2002:116) concludes that "While there is intentional learning in the formal educational setting there is also a plethora of chance learning of a personal nature which strongly influences self-esteem and personal views of self".

While psychologists have produced many theories to explain how learning takes place, the following five theories could be used to explain how people learn, and they are summarised as follows:

1. The Behaviourist (stimulus response) approach, with varieties developed by Pavlov and Skinner.

2. The cognitive-Gestalt approach, based on the work by, among others, Kohler, Piaget, Bruner and Hebb.

3. The social learning theory as proposed by Bandura.

4. Constructivism (learning theory) as proposed by Piaget.

5. The humanist or phenomenological approach, exemplified by Rogers.

What primarily distinguishes the five groups, is their shared philosophical view of man in his environment. The behaviourist approach attempts to study learning and behaviour within a scientific tradition (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). Concepts and methods closely associated with this philosophy in adult education include reinforcement, shaping, programmed instruction and behavioural objectives. Criticism against these approaches to learning is that they can be seen as mechanical and rigid (Thomas, 2011).

The cognitive-Gestalt approaches to learning emphasise the significance of the role of experience, the development of meaning and the use of problem solving and insight as the sources of learning (Thomas, 2010). According to this approach, the individual perceives organised wholes and not disconnected parts, and the context is evaluated as a whole.

The social learning theory is concerned with understanding how social influences can alter the individual's thoughts, feelings and actions through cognitive and other vicarious processes (Sadler-Smith, 2006).

According to Gravett (2006:19), constructivism is not a single, homogeneous theory of learning. The term is used to denote a "cluster of related views (radical constructivism, social constructivism, social constructivism, sociocultural approaches, emancipatory constructivism and social constructionism)". All of these are based on the assumption that learning is a process of "constructing meaning derived from the learner's action in the world", or simply a process of knowledge construction.

The Humanist/Phenomenological approach to learning refers to the concern for growth and development of the whole person (Mouton, 2008). Concepts of adult education that reflect this philosophy include self-directed learning, student-centred learning, development of human potential and lifelong learning.

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The research aligned itself to a constructivist as well a more dominant humanist/phenomenological approach, and from these approaches, as seen in the work of Glasersfeld (1989), Prawat and Folden (1994), Rhodes and Bellamy (1999), Burns (2002), Håland and Tjora (2006) and Dall'Alba (2009), an overall holistic approach becomes apparent. Their views can be summarised as follows:

- Learning is a natural process, as people are curious by nature.

- Persons learn by relating to the world and to their previous experience (experiential learning).

- Each individual learner is a unique learner with unique needs.

- People learn in a free environment that encourages development of potential and self-actualisation.

- Learning is not an isolated event.

- Learning that people find the most meaningful is that which is constructed by the individual from personal experience.

- The learner is seen as complex and multidimensional.

- Monitoring one's own learning is important.

- Learning is not only a cognitive process.

- The responsibility of learning should increasingly reside with the learner.

- The educator has to adapt to the role of facilitator.

- The facilitator should be in continuous dialogue with the learner.

- The facilitator should be able to adapt to the learning experience.

- The learning environment should support and challenge the learner's thinking.

- By experiencing the successful completion of challenging tasks, learners gain confidence to embark upon more complex challenges.

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In order to prepare people for lifelong learning, educational opportunities must develop the individual's capacity for self-direction, meta-cognitive awareness and a disposition towards lifelong learning (Dunlap, 2005; Sadler-Smith, 2006). Adult learning is seen as a process which is central to the field of adult education (Sadler-Smith, 2006) and within this context, the following section endeavours to give an overview of the three main adult learning theories pertaining to the research.

2.4   ADULT LEARNING THEORIES

Since the learning and development population within organisations consists of adults, it would be appropriate to focus on the learning processes of these individuals. It is important that facilitators of adult learning should be familiar with the guiding principles of adult education, and more specifically with adult learning theories (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003).

The three theories of adult learning that formed the basis of the research, and which are said to underpin the very nature of coaching, are: andragogy, experiential learning and the transformative learning theory.

2.4.1 Andragogy

Andragogy can be best defined as the science of teaching adults. The term was originally formulated by Kapp in 1833 to describe Plato's educational method. Knowles (1975) devised a set of assumptions about adult learning that stands in contrast to to teaching children directly. These assumptions underpin learning and development in adulthood (Bachkirova & Cox, 2007). Each of these assumptions is the subject of considerable debate; however, this is not the purpose of the following section, as it rather aims to look more critically at the assumptions of Knowles (1975) about adult learners, as well as its application in the context of the research.

1. Self-concept

As a person matures, his or her self-concept moves from being a dependent personality to being a self-directed human being. According to Knowles and Associates (1984:56) the point at which a person becomes an adult in terms of a psychological approach "is that point at which he perceives himself to be wholly self-directing". Self-direction becomes the dominant paradigm of what it means to be an adult, and is therefore

integral to the type of learning in which adults engage. The concept arises from humanist discourse, implying a focus on the individual (Burns, 2002).

A further implication is that adult learning should be facilitated rather than directed, as adults wish to be treated as equals and expect to be respected for what they know and how they prefer to learn (Cox, 2006).

2. Experience

As a person matures, they accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an ever-increasing resource for learning. This could imply that adults learn more effectively through experiential techniques. It is also important to take into consideration that adults have different experiences (Bachkirova & Cox, 2007).

3. Readiness to learn

As a person matures, the readiness to learn is increasingly orientated to the developmental tasks of their social roles. This implies a focus on competence, and therefore adults become ready to learn when their life situation creates a need to know or understand (Cox, 2006).

4. Orientation to learning

As a person matures, his or her perspective changes from postponed application of knowledge to an immediacy of application, and accordingly, the orientation towards learning shifts from subject-centredness to problem-centredness (Knowles & Associates, 1984; Sadler-Smith, 2006).

5. Motivation to learn.

As a person matures, the motivation to learn becomes internal (Knowles & Associates, 1984:12). Adults are generally more motivated to adopt learning styles that help them solve problems (Knowles et al., 2005). Within the context of the research, andragogy underpins this approach to the research.

2.4.2 Experiential learning

The experiential paradigm or the theory of experiential learning was first articulated by Dewey (1920/2004), in that he propounded the view that there is a intimate and necessary relationship between the process of actual experience and education (Sadler-Smith, 2006).

The notion of learning through experience (and especially in the workplace) is often associated with the work of Kolb (1984), whose experiential learning model continues to be one of the most influential frameworks within a learning and development context (Kime, 2008; Illeris, 2009). Central to the model is the view that learning is a process whereby "knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984:41).

The experiential learning theory has its theoretical origins in the work of Dewey, as well as in Lewin and Piaget's cognitive development tradition. The model recognises the central role of experience in the learning process and distinguishes the experiential learning theory from cognitive learning theories, which emphasise cognition over effect, and behavioural learning theories, denying the role of subjective experience in the learning process (Mainemelis, Boyatzis & Kolb, 2002). Kayes (2002) states that action, cognition, reflection and experience represent four interdependent facets of the learning process, each of which is required for a learning experience to be whole. These four facets are embodied in the experiential learning theory.

Kolb's (1984) learning model (see Figure 2.1) remains one of the most influential and widely used descriptions of the adult learning process (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003). The model was developed from Kurt Lewin's cycle of adult learning and involves four learning modes:
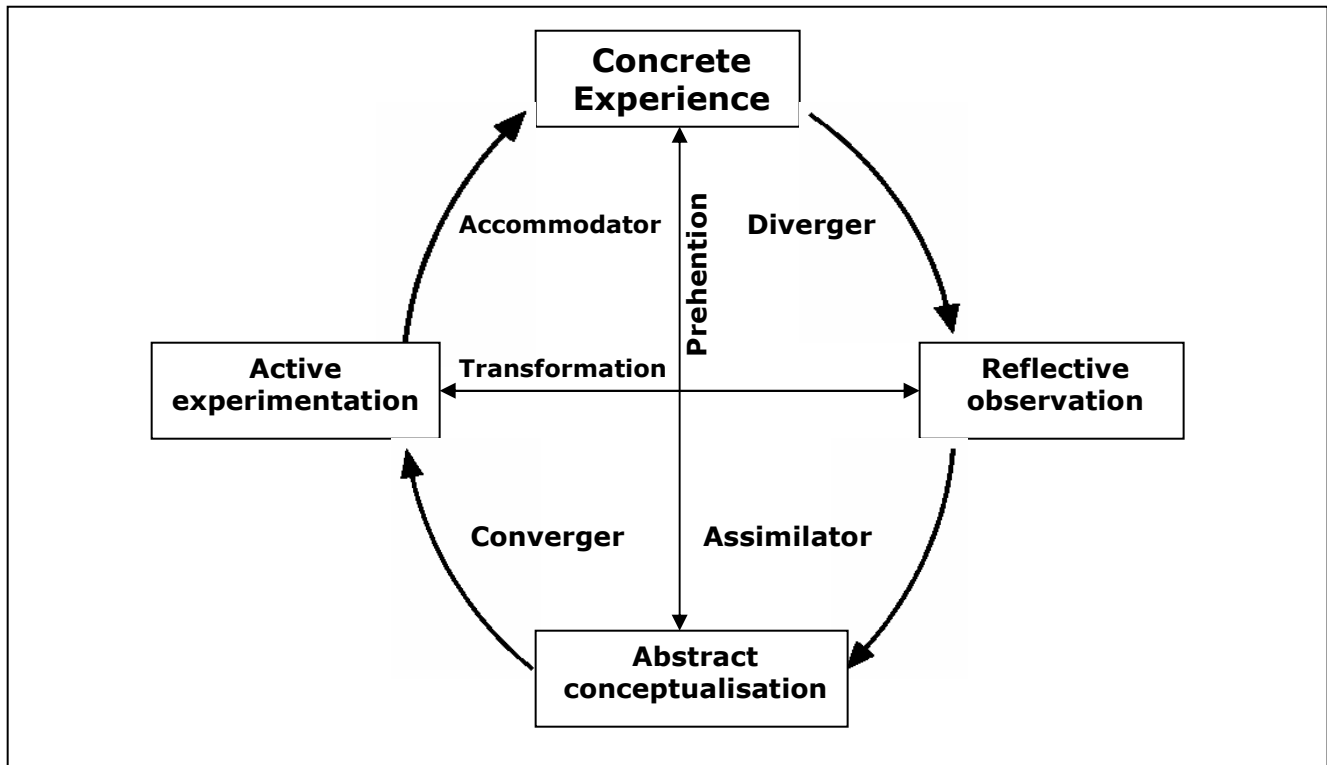
Figure 2.1: Kolb's cycle of learning (Sadler-Smith, 2006)

The four adaptive learning modes are concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation (Kolb, 1984):

- **concrete experience – CE** (where the learner actively experiences an activity);

- **reflective observation – RO** (when the learner consciously reflects on that experience);

- **abstract conceptualisation – AC** (where the learner attempts to conceptualise a theory or model of what is observed); and

- **active experimentation – AE** (where the learner tries to plan how to test a theory or model; in other words, to experiment with new behaviour patterns and thoughts).

Effective learning requires the individual lifelong learner to pass through all four modes in the course of the learning experience.

Kolb (1984) concludes that two dimensions are present in all learning, namely prehension (knowledge grasping) and transformation (knowledge construction).

The vertical axis in Kolb's cycle represents the knowledge grasping dimension, or prehension dimension, by means of which knowledge can be grasped through apprehension (the concrete experience extreme); or by comprehension (the abstract conceptualisation extreme); or by a combination of both. The horizontal axis represents the knowledge transformation or knowledge construction dimension. The construction can be done via intention (the reflective observation extreme), or via extension (active experimentation).

According to Kolb (1984), optimal learning takes place when an adequate balance of all of four modes are present or where the individual learner passes through all of the four modes. Chapman (2010:65) concludes that it is important to note that "these dimensions are independent but mutually enhancing, and each makes a contribution to the learning process".

In applying the methodology of experiential learning, Chapman (2010) concludes that in order to facilitate growth and development, the individual needs to move through the experiential learning process. Within this context, this research aims to use the same methodology of experiential learning to facilitate lifelong learning.

2.4.3 Transformative learning

Transformative learning is central to lifelong learning/education. The theory, according to Mezirow (1994:222), is intended to be a model comprising the processes of adult learning. Rossiter and Clark (2007) contend that adult development is the realisation of an adult's capacity to participate in rational dialogue in order to achieve an integrative understanding of his/her experience as a guide to action. Becoming autonomous is a transformation processs where the individual is freed from the constraints of distorted meaning perspectives (Cranton, 1994).

Transformation theory seeks to explain how adult learning is structured and to determine by what processes the interpreted experiences (meaning perspectives) are changed and transformed. Transformative learning results either in transformed meaning schemes, or when reflection focuses on premises, in transformed meaning perspectives (Mezirow, 1991). We interpret our experiences as a result of our perceptions of experiences.

Transformative learning is a process of examining, questioning, validating and revising these perceptions (Gravett, 2006; Mezirow, 2000).

This type of learning involves a deep, fundamental shift in terms of the revision of our beliefs, principles and feelings. It implies a perception that has the potential to alter our understanding of ourselves and others, and of our sense of possibilities (Mezirow, 1990). More practically, transformative learning is the process of transforming mind-sets, to make them more discriminating and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true, thereby serving to guide action (Mezirow, 2000). Meaning perspectives need to be challenged if deep learning is to occur.

Mezirow (1991) describes a process of personal transformation that includes ten phases:

- Experiencing a disorientating dilemma;

- Undergoing self-examination;

- Conducting a critical assessment of internalised role assumptions and feeling a sense of alienation from traditional social expectations;

- Relating one's discontent to similar experiences of others or public issues – recognising that one's problem is shared and not exclusively a private matter;

- Exploring new ways of acting;

- Building competence and self-confidence in new roles;

- Planning a course of action;

- Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one's plans;

- Making provisional efforts to try new roles and to assess feedback; and

- Reintegrating into society on the basis of conditions dictated by the new perspective.

Our experiences are filtered through our meaning perspectives, which for most people are uncritically assimilated ways of knowing, believing and feeling. These include distortions, prejudices, stereotypes, social context, and lack of knowledge.

Learning occurs when an individual enters a process of reconciling newly communicated ideas with the presuppositions of prior learning. According to Mezirow (1991:6), "Reflective learning involves the assessment or reassessment of assumptions," and "reflective learning becomes transformative whenever assumptions are found to be distorting, inauthentic, or otherwise invalid".

According to this model, the ideal conditions for learning are those that allow for full participation in reflective discourse. In other words, when a person is interpreting the meaning of a new experience and examining the validity of prior learning, discussions with others provide a vehicle for learning.

In transformative learning theory an adult's psychological and cognitive development is marked by an increased ability to validate prior learning through reflection, and to act on the insights obtained (Mezirow, 2000). The person then moves towards more inclusive, differentiated, open, and integrated meaning perspectives.

Stout Rostron et al. (2009:128) conclude that learning should be relevant and significant for the individual, and by facilitating new learning the potential arises "to reconstruct their own thinking and feeling to gain perspective and become self-directed learners".

2.5   FACILITATING ADULT LEARNING

The concept of facilitation has been a dominant influence in adult education for many years (Foley, 2004). Rodgers (1969) expanded the notions of "meaningful learning" and "facilitation", proposing a shift to meaningful, experiential learning and the notion of teaching learners how to learn.

Although dated, Brookfield (1986:9–11) cautions that before proceeding to any further discussion of facilitating learning, one should clarify the principles of effective practice. The following six principles of effective practice apply to the facilitatation of learning:

1. Participation in learning is voluntary
Adults engage in learning as a result of their own decision. The circumstances that prompt this learning may be external, but the decision to learn is the learner's.

2. Effective practice is characterised by a respect among participants for each other's self worth.

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Foreign to facilitation are behaviours, practices, or statements that belittle others or that involve emotional or physical abuse. The attention to increasing adults' sense of self-worth should underlie all facilitation efforts.

3. Facilitation is collaborative
Facilitators are engaged in a cooperative enterprise and the process involves continual renegotiation of activities and priorities.

4. Praxis is placed at the heart of effective facilitation
Learners and facilitators are involved in a continual process of activity, reflection upon activity, collaborative analysis of activity, further reflection and analysis (this then becomes a cycle of experimentation and learning).

5. Facilitation aims to foster a spirit of critical reflection in adults
This implies that adults will come to question many aspects of their personal, professional and political lives.

6. The aim of facilitation is the nurturing of self-directed, empowered adults.
Such adults see themselves as proactive, initiating individuals engaged in a continuous re-creation of their personal relationships, work worlds and social circumstances.

These six principles of facilitation have numerous implications for practice. They are observable in many different settings, such as in adult education, continuing education and workplace learning. Within the context of the research (lifelong learning, coaching, empowerment and learning organisations), a number of direct implications are derivable from each principle:

1. Voluntary participation
Should adults be coerced into learning, the facilitator has to spend a considerable amount of time and energy dealing with defiance or veiled opposition. The voluntary nature of participation of adult learners can easily be withdrawn if learners feel that the activity does not meet their needs or is not relevant to them (Lisker-Mostaghimi, 2006; Resnick & Anderson, 2002; Sharma, 2006). In andragogy, learners are allowed to be autonomous. Within this context and according to andragogical practice, Raelin (2002:148) argues that facilitators need

to become "andragogical facilitators", implying that they need to pay close attention to the individual (adult) and the adult learning process. Sadler-Smith (2006) argues that themes and topics to be discussed have to be grounded in the adult's experience. At the very least, explicit connections must be made between unfamiliar concepts or bodies of knowledge and the current preoccupations or past experiences of learners. This points toward an experimental approach to learning (Wlodkowski, 2008).

The concept of participatory learning methods associated with the facilitation of adult learning (Mezirow & Taylor, 2009) implies active participation from the adult learner, which bodes well for applying the concept of an empowered individual involved in lifelong learning.

2. Mutual respect

A fundamental feature of effective facilitation is to make participants feel they are valued as separate, unique individuals deserving of respect (Brookfield, 1986).

Within a coaching context, this could strengthen the relationship between the facilitator and the learner (Coetzee, 2007). Central to effective facilitation of learning is the development of powers of critical reflection (Milheim, 2008), which means that the facilitator will challenge the adults to consider alternative ways of thinking, behaving, working, and living. This challenging of the adult learner's ideas and attitudes and the prompting of one's own behaviours and beliefs must occur in a setting where there is no criticism or judgement (Sharma, 2006).

From an organisational perspective, one of the most difficult (but essential) tasks of the facilitator of adult learning is to set a climate for learning (Jarvis et al., 2004; Knowles, 1980; Sharma, 2006) where adults feel free to challenge one another and are comfortable with being challenged. In creating such a culture of learning and development, the facilitator will promote trust, conversation, and the probing of assumptions underlying beliefs, behaviours, and values. Without such a culture, the learning encounters run the risk of becoming nothing more than exchanges of entrenched opinion and prejudice (Brookfield, 1986).

3. Collaborative spirit

The existence of some kind of participatory and collective element is a key dimension in adult learning (Corey, Corey & Callanan, 2007). It is also a key element in the lifelong learning context (Luts, 2006) during the coaching process (Lumsden & Lumsden, 2003). It will be indicative of empowerment (Foley, 2004), and more particularly within an organisational context of learning (Foley, 2004).

Acknowledging the individual and the adults' accumulated experiences and accepting that they are valuable educational resources constitute a defining principle of adult education, but this can only be achieved through some collaborative medium (Brookfield, 1986). The distinct tradition in the facilitation of adult learning is that of adults meeting in small groups to explore issues and concerns, and then to take action as a result of these explorations. This is indicative of a learning organisation where there is co-operation between individuals and groups, as well as free and reliable communication (Argyris, 1999).

4. Action and reflection

The term praxis is associated with the ideas and literacy activities of Freire (1985), aimed at helping illiterates to acquire literacy skills. In developing these skills, learners would gradually become aware of forces and structures that had been keeping them in a position of dependence.

Such an educational process centres on the need for educational activity to engage the learner in continuous and alternating processes of investigation and exploration, followed by action grounded in this exploration, followed by reflection on this action, followed by further investigation and exploration, followed by further action, and so on (Brookfield, 1986).

The notion of praxis as alternating and continuous engagement by both the facilitator and the learner in a situation of exploration, action, and reflection is central to adult learning. This shows a strong association with experiential learning as proposed by Kolb (1984), where learning involves concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation.

Brookfield (1986) proposes that explorations of new ideas, skills, or bodies of knowledge do not take place in a vacuum, but set within the context of adult

learners' past, current and future experiences. In settings where skills are being learned, this praxis is readily observable. Learners become acquainted with skills, apply these in real life settings, reflect on this experience, redefine how these skills might be altered by the context, and re apply these in real settings. Brookfield (1986) further proposes that in activitiesconcerned with changes in consciousness, attitudinal shifts, explorations of new interpretations of the world, or paradigm shifts of some kind, the same principle of praxis remains. In these instances, the process is less easily observable, as it occurs chiefly through the acquisition of new mental sets.

Brookfield (1986) concludes that facilitators should anticipate, build upon the tendency of adult learners to interpret, understand, codify and assign meaning to new ideas, insights, skills, and knowledge in the context of their own experience.

5. Critical reflection

Facilitating adult learning is a collaborative enterprise (Raelin, 2002). Brookfield (1986) proposes that the facilitator must present alternative interpretations of the learners' work lives, personal lives, personal relationships, and views of the social and political world. This is typical of the coaching context.

This type of facilitation is concerned with developing a critically aware frame of mind, and stands in contrast with many training activities defined by organisational priorities (Merriam, Caffarella & Baumgartner, 2007). Within the context of a learning organisation, Argyris (1999) proposes that a focus on the ability of workers to become aware of underlying norms, policies and objectives could lead to workers becoming proactive in advocating change and innovation.

6. Self-direction

The concept (or aspects thereof) of self-direction has been proposed by Lindeman (1926), Rodgers (1969), Knowles (1975), Ellinger (2004) and Tennant (2006).

Brookfield (1986) argues that the most important aspect of self-directedness is the adult's control over setting educational goals and generating personally meaningful evaluative criteria.

Brookfield (1986:19) concludes that "Self-directed learning in adulthood is a matter of learning how to change our perspectives, shift our paradigms, and replace one way of interpreting the world by another". Brookfield (1986) states that adults are generally enclosed within their own self-histories, as they assimilate and gradually integrate behaviours, ideas and values derived from others, until they become so internalised that adults define themselves in terms of these self-histories. Unless an external source introduces some alternative ways of thinking, behaving, and living, individuals do not change. One task of the facilitator is therefore to present learners with alternatives to their current ways of thinking, behaving and living. When adults engage in this type of learning in which they reflect critically on their assumptions and try to imagine alternatives, they are fully autonomous, self-directed learners.

Within the context of empowerment, the highest level of autonomy is realised when adults make a conscious and informed choice among learning formats and possible activities to achieve their personal learning goals. Autonomy is only possible when learners have an awareness of the process of learning (Brookfield, 1986; Kolb, 1984).

According to Brookfield (1986), the heart of self-directed learning is autonomy, which is defined as the possession of an understanding and awareness of a range of alternative possibilities. Hence, self-directed learning is based upon adults' awareness of their separateness (distinctness/individual uniqueness) and their consciousness of their personal power. When individuals come to view their personal and social worlds as dependent (on uncertain events or circumstance) and therefore accessible to individual and collective interventions, they have the internal disposition for self-directed action. When adults take action to acquire skills and knowledge in order to effect these interventions, they are exemplifying principles of self-directed learning. They are realising their autonomy in the act of learning and investing in that act with a sense of personal meaning.

Self-directed learning is concerned as much with an internal change of consciousness as with the external management of learning events. This consciousness involves an appreciation of the contextuality (how it is formed) of knowledge and an awareness of the culturally constructed form of the value frameworks, belief systems, and moral codes that influence behaviour and the creation of social structures.

According to Brookfield (1986) the most complete form of self-directed learning occurs when process and reflection are joined in the adult's pursuit of meaning. Brookfield (1986) further expands on this concept and argues that the highest level of self-directed learning is one in which critical reflection on the contingent aspects of reality, the exploration of alternative perspectives and meaning systems, and the alteration of personal and social circumstances are present. The external technical and the internal reflective dimensions of self-directed learning are integrated when adults come to appreciate the culturally constructed nature of knowledge and values, and when they act on the basis of that appreciation to reinterpret and recreate their personal and social worlds. In such praxis, thought and action are manifested.

Brookfield (1986) concludes that learning is far too complex to claim that one particular approach is always likely to produce the most effective results with adult learners.

Brookfield (1986) further acknowledges that it is inappropriate to prescribe any standardised approach for facilitating learning, because individuals find themselves in learning groups consisting of different personalities, all of them having different past experiences and current orientations. Individuals also show different levels of readiness for learning and possess individual learning styles. The researcher is of the opinion that coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) has the potential to facilitate one-on-one learning, thus accommodating unique individual learning styles and preferences.

Within the context of fulfilling the role as a facilitator of adult learning, Raelin (2002:148), concludes that the facilitator should exhibit the following skills:

- listening and attending;

- clarifying goals, agendas, and norms;

- promoting the airing of problems and diverse points of view;

- reflecting and enquiring;

- looking at the underlying assumptions in a situation;

- revealing one's own assumptions and inferences;

- disclosing;

- giving feedback in a non defensive way;

- soliciting and receiving feedback from the other person/s; and

- reinforcing an open, participative environment.

These skills are very appropriate to the research and show many similarities to skills that a coach or adult learning facilitator would aspire to exhibit, as discussed in Chapter Three.

2.6 INDIVIDUAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Learning can be described as the process by which an individual constructs new knowledge, skills and capabilities (Deb, 2006). By its very nature, learning is an individual process. The focus of this research is on individual lifelong learning.

Individual learning and development implies an unique learning and developmental approach to a specific person. Coaching (as a learning and development activity) allows focused attention to a specific individual, making the approach unique to the individual, and thus creating a unique learning experience for each individual. Within the context of the research, each coaching interaction involves a different middle manager; each within a unique perspective and depth of experience allowing for a unique learning experience.

Although not applied in this research, Wilber (1995) offers a holistic perspective on approaching individual development, and is of the opinion that growth and development is a process of limitless potential. Wilber's model is a hierarchical developmental model, as opposed to a simple linear developmental model. The hierarchical model consists of a complex web of developmental lines or streams that are relatively independent (Chapman, 2010). Wilber (1995) identifies three phases of individual development, namely prepersonal, personal and transpersonal. This is indicative of a transition through the different stages. The prepersonal phase is dominated by emotions and the body (Chapman, 2010) and the transition from the prepersonal to the personal stage is one of moving from a physical way of functioning to a more mental way of functioning. The transpersonal stage implies a higher level of existence, referring to the spiritual realm. Chapman (2010) alludes to such an approach as unlikely to be used in the modern organisation due to time constraints and the busyness of individuals. He is of the opinion

that Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model is superior to providing a practical, experiential way to learn and grow in an integrated way.

The human being is very complex (Wilber, 2000); however, Kolb (1984) argues that learning is a process through which development occurs. Individual development is a unique process for each individual. Within this context, facilitating individual learning could empower the individual to grow and develop. This, however, requires an unique individual approach. Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991:27) define learning as the person "growing and developing", as well as reaching for "greater awareness", and investing in "new patterns of thought".

Within the context of individual development, the underlying ontological and epistemological views (paradigms) need to be explored. These paradigms refer to an encompassing system of interrelated practice and thinking (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006). Ontology is the theory of the nature of being and existence, whereas epistemology is the philosophical theory of knowledge (Sieler, 2005). Ontology (the nature of reality) is constructed through human interaction that is multiple, holistic and divergent (which could be typical of a learning and development activity such as coaching). Similarly, epistemology (the nature of knowledge) points to events that are understood through mental processes of interpretation, which are influenced by and interacts with social contexts, implying mutual simultaneous shaping (EASA, 2001).

Individual learning and development activities, such as coaching, may provide a useful framework by integrating ontological and epistemological perspectives. This type of approach could allow for the increase in the nature of being (ontology) and an increase in the nature of knowledge (epistemology) through mutual interaction. Sadler-Smith (2006) points to an integrated developmental approach of individuals. This perspective sets out to equip individuals/managers with an appreciation of the dynamics of change and the potential of their own development, as well as of others in the organisation and the larger society within which they operate.

Within the broader context of learning, Flaherty (1999) suggests that women approach learning in a way that highlights connectedness, active listening and collaboration. Skiffington and Zeus (2003) are of the opinion that culturural factors also affect learning and that some culture groups prefer to learn in different ways, such as group situations.

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Within the context of the research, coaching was used to facilitate individual learning. This allowed for a uniquely individual (one-on-one) approach, and within a learning context, the Experiential Learning Model (Kolb, 1984) was used to facilitate learning and development.

2.7   EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Kolb (1984:42) is of the opinion that "learning is not just an active, self-directed process, but also a process where knowledge is created through the transformation of experience". Kolb (1984:133) further expands on this perspective and states that "It is the process of learning from experience that shapes and actualises developmental potentialities".

Within a coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) context, Stout Rostron et al. (2009:145) state that the coaching conversation is essentially about reflecting upon experience, and that as the coaching conversation helps to "transform their knowledge into workable knowledge; learning then becomes an emergent experience within a cycle of continuous learning".

Within the context of the research (using Kolb's Experiential Learning Model, 1984), the basis of the learning process (using coaching as a method to facilitate learning) is to integrate the four adaptive modes of Kolb's learning model, termed concrete, reflective, abstract and conceptual.

Lifelong learning could be seen as capacitating individuals to reform in response to the changing conditions of modern life. Such activity could motivate individuals to engage in self-directed learning activities. The researcher holds the view that the objective of lifelong learning is to build the individual adult learner to deal with all aspects of life.

Learning has the potential to empower, and by using coaching (as a method to facilitate learning), such learning could facilitate empowerment. In working with the coachee, the coach and coachee work within the larger system, namely that of the organisational system. In the following chapter (Chapter Three), the three other major constructs, namely coaching, empowerment and learning organisations are reviewed.

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW AND A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR COACHING, EMPOWERMENT AND LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Organisations in nearly every sector of business are facing increases in the rate of change where employees (especially managers) are required to adapt in order that their organisation may be better positioned to the new conditions (Mabey, 2003). Increased competition, technological innovation, and more sophisticated customers with a wider range of needs have led organisations to look at more effective ways to capacitate and empower their managers to adapt to such changes (Daft, 2008).

As organisations are constantly changing, so do the required knowledge, skills and capabilities of employees and managers (Hunt & Weintraub, 2007; Malloch, Cairns & O'Connor, 2004). This implies a need for individual learning within an organisational setting. As learning is an individual process, the question could be posed whether it is possible to put interventions in place that would encourage people to learn and develop (Jarvis et al., 2004).

Madura (2006), Sims (2007) and Hunt and Weintraub (2010) agree that organisations should do more to develop the learning skills of their employees and managers. There has also been a shift from training to learning, with a more developmental and individual-centred approach (Sadler-Smith, 2006).

The dynamic nature of the South African food retail environment demands a more flexible approach to facilitating learning and developing managers (Meyer & Fourie, 2006). The research proposes that coaching could be used as a method to facilitate learning (and development) to empower middle managers. Parsloe (1999:8) is of the opinion that coaching is "a process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve". According to Jarvis et al. (2004), organisations may have their own motives for introducing coaching; however, the most cited objective for

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introducing coaching is to improve individual performance. Other reasons for introducing coaching are for personal development and the growing of future staff (Jarvis et al., 2004).

According to Whitmore (2002:8), coaching means helping a person learn. Coaching can also be described as an interactive and developmental process where the coachee finds his or her own solutions, discovers new opportunities and implements actions (Rosinski, 2003). Whitmore (2002:7) concludes that coaching has the potential for "unlocking potential" and he defines coaching within this context as "the process of empowering others".

Pressures of time, and the complexity of those pressures, point strongly to a mode of learning which brings learning out of its segregation (traditional learning environment) into the more convenient locations of everyday life (Fong, Kwan & Wang, 2008). This type of learning should also be instrumental to evaluating the effect of the learning activity (Rosinski, 2010). Smith and Spurling (2001) conclude that from a lifelong learning perspective, coaching can help individuals learn consistently over time, but they caution that learners need to express commitment, a proactive attitude and involvement.

3.2　OVERVIEW OF COACHING

The Dublin Declaration on Coaching (2008) called for practioner-led research that would constitue coaching as a key element in the knowledge base within the field of coaching. In line with this, Cox et al. (2009) make their main philosophy and assumptions transparent in relation to the knowledge base of coaching. They give an overview of the current literature and research which increasingly show that coaching has been described and explored in at least four major dimensions (Figure 3.1).
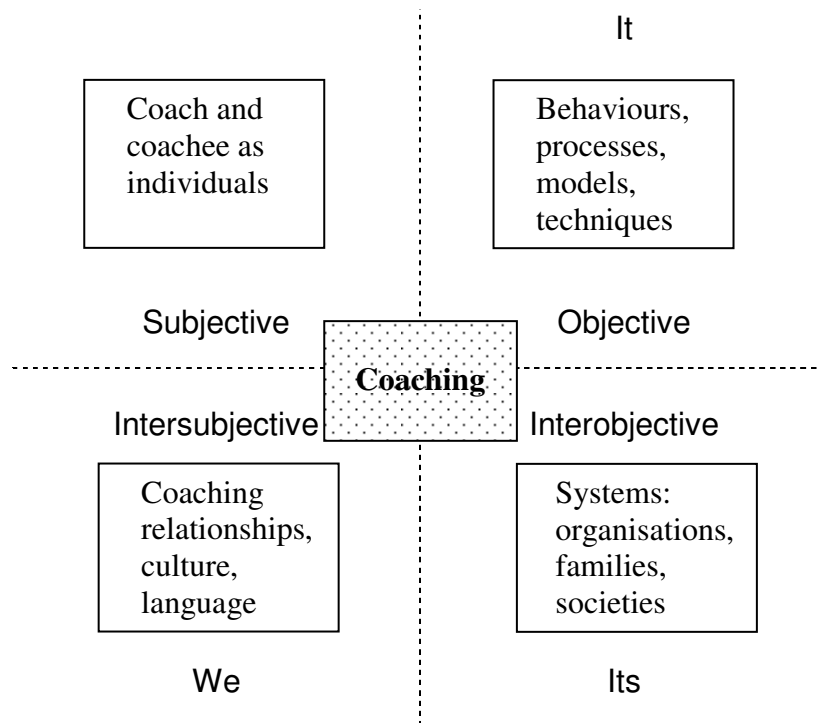
Figure 3.1: Four dimensions of coaching (Cox et al., 2009)

- "I" – a first person perspective on the coaching process by the coach/coachee describing individual experience of both parties involved.

- "We" – a second person perspective that emphasises the relationship between coach and coachee, the role of language and culture in their interaction.

- "It" – more tangible elements of the coaching process that are able to be observed by a third party and even measured if necessary, such as particular interventions and tools of coaching, specific behaviours and models.

- "Its" – the systems that are present as a background and an influencing force of the coaching process, such as sponsoring organisations.

Similarly, this research draws from all of these dimensions, namely the coach and coachees involved in the learning process, establishing a relationship within the context of coaching, drawing from different coaching models, and looking at the organisation

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from a systems perspective. This is in line with Wilber (2000) who promotes an integration of all of these dimensions.

These dimensions correspond to four quadrants described by Wilber (1996; 2000) as essential perspectives that are important to take into account if we want to understand any phenomenon or event that involves human beings (Chapman, 2010). Cox et al. (2009) note that perspectives and approaches may differ significantly from one country to another, which makes the context of the research unique.

3.2.1 Theoretical traditions of coaching

Within the context of this research, it is important to establish the theoretical traditions as well as the genres and contexts of coaching pertaining to the research. This research has a strong developmental approach as it involves ten middle managers undergoing coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) to empower and develop them as individuals.

Table 3.1 represents the different traditions as well as the genres and contexts (the tradition and genres and contexts used in this research are highlighted):

Table 3.1: Theoretical traditions, genres and contexts of coaching (Cox et al., 2009)

Section 2: Genres and contexts of coaching

Section1 Theoretical traditions of coaching	Skills & Performance	Developmental Coaching	Transformational Coaching	Executive & Leadership	The Manager as Coach	Team Coaching	Peer Coaching	Life Coaching	Career Coaching	Cross-Cultural Coaching	Mentoring
The psychodynamic approach to coaching	*	*		**		*				*	
Cognitive-behavioural coaching	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	**	*	
The solution-focused approach to coaching	**	**		*	*	*	*				
The person-centred approach to coaching	*	**		*		*	**	**	**		*
The Gestalt approach to Coaching	*	*	*		*	**		*		*	
Existential coaching	*		*	*				*	*	*	
Ontological coaching	*	*		*	*					*	
Narrative coaching		**			*	*				*	
The cognitive-developmental approach to coaching		**	**			**				*	
The transpersonal approach to coaching	*	*	*	**		**		*	*		
Positive psychology approach to coaching	**	*		*		*		*	*	*	
Transactional analysis and coaching				*	*	*		*	*	*	
The NLP approach to coaching	**	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	

According to Cox et al. (2009:11), "developmental theories usually include essential elements such as main concepts and assumptions about human nature, obstacles to development and essential process and dynamics". The following section aims to use

the same pattern in expanding on the theoretical tradition, genres and contexts applicable to the research.

The theoretical tradition that informed the research was the solution-focused approach. The following section gives a brief overview of this approach to coaching.

3.2.1.1   The solution-focused approach to coaching

Within the context of the research, Cavanagh and Grant (2010) give an accurate perspective in proposing that coaching is a solution-focused process whereby the coach facilitates the enhancement of self-directed learning, as well as the personal growth of individuals.

The solution-focused approach to coaching places primary emphasis on assisting the coachee to define a desired future state and to construct a pathway in both thinking and action that assists the client in achieving that state (Cavanagh & Grant, 2010). The primary emphasis of the solution-focused coaching is on defining the desired solution state and potential pathways to get there (Jackson & McKergow, 2007).

The solution-focused approach focuses on a constructionist philosophy, as referred to in paragraph 2.3. The first assumption of this approach concerns the way in which the coachee (as well as the coach) thinks and talks about events that construct those events as problematic. The problem is not something given in reality, but constructed in the discourse between the coachee and others in the coachee's world. The second assumption of the solution-focused approach sees the coachee as fundamentally capable of solving their problem. This implies that the coachee has all he/she needs to create the solution state (Berg & Szabó, 2005). This conceptualisation of the coachee sees the person as whole, and as resourceful.

The core characteristics of solution-focused coaching is to uncover with the coachee his/her own resourcefulness and bring this in line with the coachee's goal. Once the goals have been identified, the coach seeks to assist the coachee in identifying the simplest and easiest path to achieve a result that is satisfactory for the coachee.

The second core characteristic of this approach is the goal of building capacity for self-directed learning within the coachee (Cavanagh & Grant, 2010). The same authors (Cavanagh & Grant, 2010:57) conceptualise this concept and explain that "Self-directed

learning seeks to build self-efficacy and self-reliance through the process of discovering personalised solutions to identifying problems, identifying solution steps that work for the individual, assessing effectiveness through feedback, and then altering one's behaviour to maximise the effect of attempts to reach the goal. Such a process seeks to elicit a curious, experiential and experimental mindset. Once this learning capacity is activated in service of the coachee's goal, the expectation of the coach is that the coachee will continue to self-regulate and integrate these skills into other aspects of their life". The role of the coach is to facilitate this type of learning, while holding the focus of the coachee's goal.

The solution-focused approach seeks to enhance two types of change, namely to "change the viewing" and "change the doing of the coachee" (Cox et al., 2009).

Changing the viewing is central in the solution-focused approach. Two processes, namely sensitisation and amplification, are used to change viewing. Sensitisation refers to the process whereby we learn to notice, or become sensitive to a particular class of stimuli. Amplification refers to the perceptual impact of what we notice. Changing the viewing shifts the perceptual cycles of sensitisation and amplification from problem to solution.

According to Cavanagh and Grant (2010:59), changing the viewing is not enough, and they affirm that "If the coaching conversation is to be more than an interesting exercise in how we perceive the world, it must result in action". In this part of the coaching process, the task is to identify patterns of behaviour that support goal attainment, and to change any patterns of behaviour that interfere with goal attainment. An experimental mindset is preferred when it comes to changing the doing. Cavanagh and Grant (2010) argue that identifying what has worked in the past and experimenting with new possibilities are both important, and that it is consistent with a scientist practitioner model of coaching practice.

Within the context of the research, and mindful of the fact that this approach has its roots in therapy, the researcher acknowledges that this research is not focused on therapy, but rather (in line with Chapman, 2010) about facilitating lifelong learning (using a coaching methodology). This approach avoids delving deep into the coachee's problems and is rather a more refreshing intervention in helping the coachee shift from a problem-

focused to a solution-focused mindset as quickly as possible. The Co-Active Coaching Model is very closely aligned with the solution-focused approach, in that the Co-Active Model encourages the coachee to find the answer within him-/herself.

As the coaching conversation unfolds, the coach works with the coachee to build up a picture of their preferred future through reflection and reframing. Cavanah and Grant (2010) caution that failure to reflect with empathy is likely to result in a break of rapport and trust, which must be restored as the coaching conversation continues.

As shown in Table 3.1, the solution-focused approach is applicable within a wide range of coaching settings, but within the context of the research, it is applied to *skills and performance coaching* as well as *developmental coaching* (which is the focus of the research).

Skills and performance coaching is probably the most common form of coaching in organisational coaching (Bianco-Mathis, Roman & Nabors, 2008; Moore & Tschannen-Moran, 2009). In skills and performance coaching, the task is to focus on the development and application of specific knowledge skills and abilities in order to enhance workplace performance or achieve organisational goals. Within the context of the research, the focus was on creating a better understanding of the concept of management and how to apply management principles in the food retail environment, as well as on interpersonal and communication skills to improve overall performance.

Developmental coaching is seen to have two meanings in literature (Cox et al., 2009). The first refers to the holistic development of the coachee, aimed at improved self-actualisation and authenticity, while the second meaning refers to the vertical development, or accommodation. This type of development requires the development of one's ability to make meaning in order to accommodate new goals and practices. Kegan (1994) explains that this is the type of development needed when a person's current way of responding to the world needs to change in order to meet the new challenges they are facing.

Cavanagh and Grant (2010) conclude that within the solution-focused approach, one should "value the tension" between the different expert knowledge bases brought to the coaching session by the coach and the coachee. The idea that the solution lies within the coachee, points to the function of the coach as a facilitator of the process. Solution-

focused coaches also spend much time asking questions, as well as trying to clarify thoughts/actions, helping the individual to construct a solution. There is also a strong emphasis on thinking (viewing), but more importantly on doing. This approach implies drawing from experience, reflecting upon that experience, conceptualisation (creating concepts), and actively experimenting with the new behaviours and thoughts, which shows many similarities to the experiential learning model as proposed by Kolb (1984).

The solution-focused approach uses the learners' own input (based on their unique perspectives and experiences) to create learning pathways (Berg & Szabó, 2005).

According to the researcher, the solution-focused approach is relevant within the retail environment in that the approach focuses on what is desired, rather than on problems, while the time available is spent on learning, as well as on edifying and encouraging the individual.

As the research has a strong developmental approach, as the intervention primarily concerns the development of the individual learner, the following section focuses on developmental coaching.

3.2.2 Genres and contexts of coaching

The following section provides an overview of *developmental coaching* as a genre or context:

3.2.2.1 *Developmental coaching*

Development is associated with the learning and growth of individuals (Laske, 2008) and within this context, developmental coaching should incorporate learning to facilitate growth and development. Jackson and Cox (2010) refer to development coaching as supporting the coachee to make the necessary changes to grow and mature.

Developmental coaching strives to be personalised and individually focused (Sadler-Smith, 2006). Bachkirova and Cox (2007) state that the developmental coaching perspective is built on a complex worldview and the belief that man is adaptive rather than reactive. Sugarman (2000:3) refers to developmental coaching as an assumption of movement from where the coachee finds him-/herself at a particular moment in time, to where he or she wants to be. This could relate to making practical changes in the

working environment, making changes in response to emotional pressure or making changes in levels of understanding and responses to the world around them.

Within the context of the research, developmental coaching aims to not only address one specific area of the coachee's work or life, but also to help the individual achieve personal growth. Knowles et al. (2005) emphasise the role of experience in constructing the course of development in adults, and that this process should be facilitated.

Bachkirova and Cox (2007:221) argue that the term "developmental" has an implication for the way in which the coach works, in that "learning sits at the centre of the relationship, and that the concept of learning is specifically related to the experience of the individual, hence it is experiential". Developmental coaching is humanist in outlook and involves the "whole" person (Cox et al., 2009; Sadler-Smith, 2006).

The benefits of developmental coaching are that it gives the one-on-one assistance that may be essential for the realisation of personal and career goals. This mode of coaching is flexible and can be tailored to fit in with work schedules to improve the individual's commitment to the learning process (Sadler-Smith, 2006). Hunt and Weintraub (2010) conclude that developmental coaching requires that the coach must carefully observe the individual and the learning context, as well as maintaining a high level of trust in the coaching relationship. In the following section the coaching models applicable to the research are discussed.

3.2.3 Coaching models

There are a variety of different coaching models. Many of them have emerged from management or organisational development, emphasising improved productivity, team building and other organisational performance goals (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003). A model, by definition, is a representation that mirrors, duplicates, imitates or illustrates a pattern observed in nature or data.

Within the context of the research (to facilitate lifelong learning using coaching as a method of learning), it is important to note that not all coaching models are learning based (Botha, 2010). Botha (2010) further concludes that an experiential based approach (as proposed by Kolb, 1984) could be a more effective way to facilitate coaching.

The purpose of this section is to review three coaching models, namely the Co-Active Coaching Model, the Behavioural Coaching Model, and the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model.

The Co-Active Coaching Model and the Behavioural Coaching Model were used to facilitate lifelong learning (using coaching as a method of learning) during the research. The researcher used Kolb's Experiential learning Model to guide the learning process through the four adaptive modes, namely concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. The Integrated Experiential Model was not used during the research; however, it is used as conceptual framework to inform the research.

McDermott and Jago (2005) and Passmore (2007) are of the opinion that models can be used individually and that certain elements of different coaching models can be integrated, although unlike Chapman (2010), they do not make the injunction explicit. The Co-Active Coaching and Behavioural Coaching Models were used as conceptual framework due to their unique nature, as discussed in paragraph 1.9. In the following sections (3.5.1.and 3.5.2) each of these coaching models are discussed. Certain words are **highlighted**, and later used in the critique of each model as to how it could relate to the experiential learning model as proposed by Kolb, 1984.

3.2.3.1   *The Co-Active Coaching Model*

The term *Co-Active* refers to the fundamental nature of the coaching relationship in which the coach and coachee are active collaborators. This model was developed by Whitworth et al. (2001) and sets a coaching model to help managers become more self-aware, lead a more balanced life, and become better at goal setting. According to Whitworth et al. (2001), the Co-Active Model (see Figure 3.2) is a model of specific techniques and a comprehensive way of organising the components of coaching. The model can also be broadly applied to different occupations and coaching needs, and is presented in Figure 3.2.
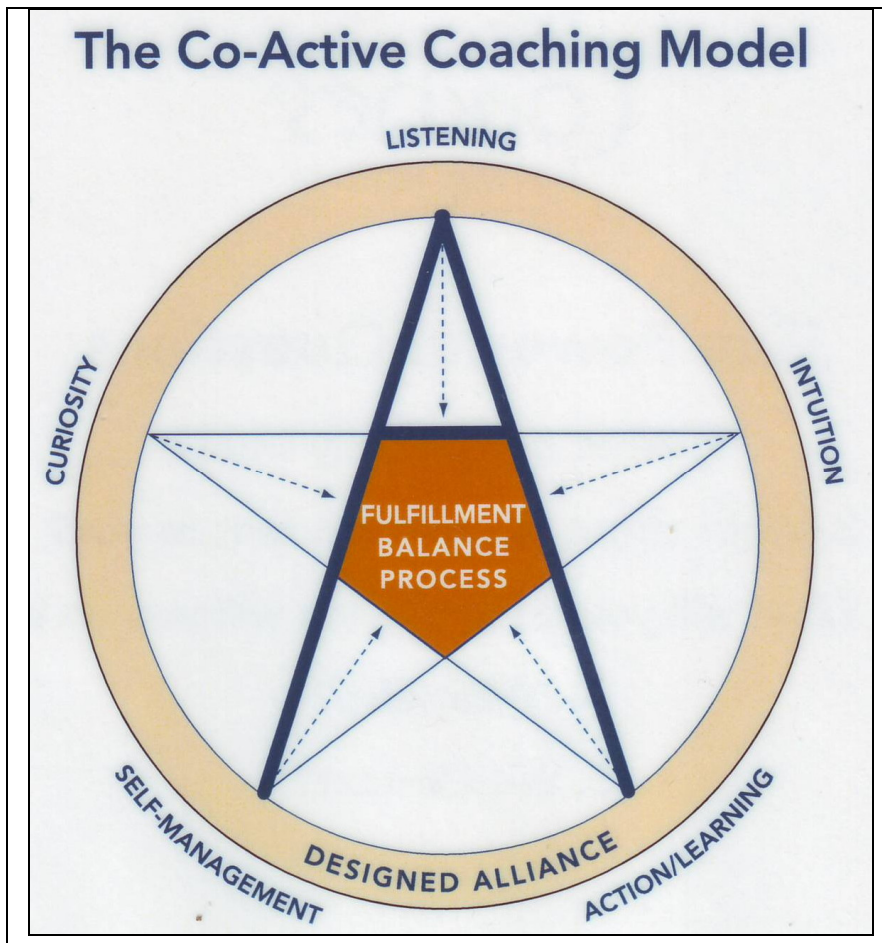
Figure 3.2: The Co-Active Coaching Model (Whitworth et al., 2001)

In Co-Active Coaching, this relationship is an alliance between two equals for the purpose of meeting the coachee's needs. In process, the coaching relationship grows and develops, and eventually it becomes more effective. The impact of coaching increases as coach and coachee get to know each other better.

3.2.3.1.1   The four cornerstones of Co-Active Coaching

There are four cornerstones that form the foundation of Co-Active Coaching (Whitworth et al., 2001), namely:

1. The client is naturally creative, resourceful, and whole.

2. Co-Active Coaching addresses the client's whole life.

3. The agenda comes from the client.

4. The relationship is a designed alliance.

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In the following section the four cornerstones are explained briefly:

The first cornerstone implies that the client/coachee has the answers or they can find the answers. From the Co-Active Coach's point of view, nothing is wrong or broken, and there is no need to fix the client/coachee.

The second cornerstone acknowledges that choices contribute to creating a life that is more fulfilling. The choices contribute to a more effective life process.

The third cornerstone acknowledges that in the Co-Active relationship the agenda comes from the client/coachee, and not from the coach.

The fourth cornerstone acknowledges that the client/coachee work together to design an alliance that meets the client/coachee's need. In Co-Active Coaching, clients/coachees are involved in creating a powerful relationship that fits their working and learning style. Lastly, the clients/coachees learn that they are in control of the relationship and ultimately of the changes they make in their lives.

The ongoing relationship centres on the client's/coachee's agenda and the agenda addresses three central aspects. They are principles because they are fundamental to life.

3.2.3.1.2   Principles

In the Co-Active Coaching Model there are three fundamental principles (Whitworth et al., 2001) – three essential attributes of a client's whole life: the client's Fulfillment, Balance and Process. These three principles are organic and dynamic. Clients are moving towards more fulfillment, more balance and more effective processes in their lives.

The definition of what fulfillment means to the client/coachee is always intensely personal. A fulfilling life is a valued life, and the coachee will have his/her own definition of what they truly value. According to Whitworth et al. (2001:7) fulfillment is about finding and experiencing a life of purpose, and about "reaching one's full potential". Co-Active Coaching approaches the whole person's life.

Coaching for balance focuses on **widening the range of perspectives,** and therefore adding more choices. Ultimately, balance is about **making choices**: saying yes to some

things and no to others. Balance is a fluid state, always in motion, because life itself is dynamic. Whitworth et al. (2001) argue that it makes more sense to look at whether a coachee is moving toward balance or away from balance – rather than offering the coachee "balance" as a goal to be achieved.

Parsloe and Wray (2001) argue that coaching is effective at achieving results, but warn that both coaches and coaches can be drawn into the "results" trap – focusing entirely on the destination and not on the process. The coach's job is to notice, point out and be with the coachee wherever they are in the process. For the coach, the process of coaching and the process unfolding in the coachee's life allow an **understanding of self** and coachees in a much wider context (Whitworth et al., 2001).

Co-Active Coaches work with clients to forward the action and deepen the learning on specific issues. In the following section, the contexts are briefly explained.

3.2.3.1.3   Contexts

In the Co-Active Coaching Model there are five contexts (Whitworth et al., 2001) namely: listening, **intuition**, curiosity, action/learning and self-management.

- Listening – The coach listens on many levels at the same time to hear where clients are in their process, to hear where they are out of balance, and to hear their progress on their journey of fulfillment. Effective coaching listens for much more than the words of the story (Starr, 2003; Thorne, 2004; Whitworth et al., 2001:31–47).

- Intuition – Listening gives the coach more access to their intuition. A coach receives much information from the coachee and then, in the moment of coaching, combines it with previous information as well as experience not only in coaching, but in operating in the world (Sieler, 2005; Starr, 2003; Whitworth et al., 2001:49–61).

- Curiosity – One of the fundamental tenets of Co-Active Coaching is that the coachee is capable and resourceful and has the answers. The context of curiosity gives a certain frame to the question–asking process. Curiosity should be open, inviting and spacious (Whitworth et al., 2001:63–77).

Action/learning – The purpose of Co-Active Coaching is to generate action and learning. The coachee takes account for his/her own action and learning. Accountability makes the process of change more tangible and disciplined (Whitworth et al., 2001:63–77).

Self-management – This implies that the coach has the ability to set aside his or her personal opinions, preferences, pride and defensiveness. Self-management means giving up the need to look good and to be right. Self-management also implies empathy and becoming "immersed" in the coachee's situation (Whitworth et al., 2001:95–112).

Each of the different contexts also implies an underlying coaching talent and skill. The coach consistently draws from these skills in the practice of coaching.

3.2.3.1.4   Skills

The following coaching skills are generally associated with the five contexts of coaching:

Listening – The following coaching skills are generally associated with the context of listening: listening at level 1, 2 and 3: articulating; clarifying, meta-view; metaphor; acknowledging (Whitworth et al., 2001:40–41).

Intuition – The following coaching skills are associated with intuition, although they are not exclusive to the context of intuition: intruding, blurting (Whitworth et al., 2001:57–58).

Curiosity – The following skills are associated with curiosity: powerful questions, inquiry (Whitworth et al., 2001:69–74).

Action/learning – The following skills are associated with action/learning: brainstorming, planning/goal setting, requesting, challenging, structures (Whitworth et al., 2001:86–90).

Self-management – The following skills are associated with self-management: asking permission, bottom lining, championing, clearing, reframing, separating interpretations (Whitworth et al., 2001:103–106).

The cornerstones, principles and contexts are graphically represented within the Co-Active Model in Figure 3.2.

3.2.3.1.5   Critique of the Co-Active Coaching Model

In the following section, the Co-Active Coaching Model is critiqued (within the context of using an experiential approach) to facilitate learning. The Co-Active Coaching Model is a very fluid and flexible model, ideally suited to the retail environment (within a very busy/time-bound environment); it also has weaknesses, however. The researcher is of the opinion that the strengths of the Co-Active Coaching Model lies in its use of *reflective observation (RO)* and *abstract conceptualisation (AC).*

The Co-Active Coaching Model emphasises the dialogue very strongly and draws from this dialogue to reflect (*reflective observation – RO*) and think (*abstract conceptualisation – AC)* about issues that were raised in the dialogue. This is an important strength in that the coachee can express him-/herself freely in dialogue, reflect freely and conceptualise without restraint. Highlighted words that reflect this are:

- **widening the range of perspectives (AC/RO)**

- **making choices (AC/RO)**

- **understanding self (AC/RO)**

- **intuition (AC)**

According to Chapman (2010), one of weaknesses of the Co-Active Coaching Model is that it does not lead to action (*active experimentation – AE*), and by its very nature, learning should lead to action. Another critique of the model is that it could be seen as intuitive, therefore not really incorporating any tangible aspect. Within the context of the research, one also needs to keep in mind the background of each individual learner, as well as their specific background and experience within a learning environment. With this in mind, the model does not have a specific agenda. Without tangible/concrete goals, it might create a sense of things hanging in the air and not being able to bring things to action, thereby "earthing" things.

In summary, the two modes of learning (within an experiential learning approach) that the Co-Active Coaching Model exemplifies, which could be seen as strengths and therefore used to complete the experiential learning cycle in the research, were:

Reflective observation; and

Abstract conceptualisation.

The second model (Table 3.2) used in the research is the Behavioural Coaching Model, developed by Skiffington and Zeus (2003). The following section provides an overview of the Behavioural Coaching Model.

3.2.3.2   The Behavioural Coaching Model

According to Skiffington and Zeus (2003), the Behavioural Coaching Model is built upon a number of assumptions, such as:

- Coaching is widely accepted as a powerful tool for personal and professional growth.

- Successful coaching interventions focus on individual, team and organisation business objectives and goals.

- Change is at the heart of any coaching intervention.

- Changing behaviour involves learning. Behavioural Coaching therefore incorporates principles of adult learning.

- Coaching outcomes are more likely to be successful when coachees develop a strong commitment to the learning process.

- Coaching outcomes can and should be measured against the stated objectives of the individual, team or organisation.

- It provides a baseline measure for behaviours that are targeted for change.

- The baseline and post-coaching data can be evaluated in relation to the coaching outcome (for example, business and financial, return on investment).

In order to make the model more explicit, The Behavioural Coaching Model (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003) is presented in Table 3.2, which allows for a visual conceptual overview. The matrix points towards explicit interaction between the stages of change, as well as the forms of coaching relevant to each stage and to the seven-steps coaching process.

Table 3.2: An overview of the Behavioural Coaching Model (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003)

Stages of change	Five forms of coaching	Seven-steps coaching process
Reflective	Coaching education	EDUCATION
Preparation	.... Skills coaching Rehearsal coaching	DATA COLLECTION PLANNING (target; goals; action plans) .... BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE
Action	Performance coaching	MEASUREMENT .... EVALUATION
Maintenance	Self-coaching	MAINTENANCE

Due to the minimal research material (see paragraph 1.7) on coaching, there is a growing recognition of the need to assess, strengthen and evaluate changes of coaching within a scientific framework. As coaching interventions are expensive, accurate findings about returns on the investment is important to justify the implementation of expensive coaching interventions. The Behavioural Coaching Model is a prominent **structured process** – a driven relationship between a coach and an individual or team. According to Skiffington and Zeus (2003:123), behavioural coaching is an integrative model founded on the behavioural sciences. This research does not endeavour to explore the behavioural sciences (or even behaviour), but rather to use the Behavioural Coaching Model as a framework for facilitating lifelong learning. Although behavioural change techniques play a crucial role in behavioural coaching, the model is not simply based on behavioural modification methods.

The following points distinguish behavioural coaching from traditional coaching (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:30–33):

- Assessment in behavioural coaching is specific and related to individual required competencies and areas of development.

- Behavioural Coaching emphasises the importance of self-understanding on the part of the coachee in order to achieve changes and to generalise learning and skills to other situations.

- Behavioural Coaching explores the individual's life stage development and the tasks associated with it. Self-concept, self-efficacy and self-esteem are explored.

- Behavioural Coaching is not a "quick fix" and does not offer any magical solutions to individuals or organisations. Rather, it underscores the necessity of effort, practice and rehearsal to obtain lasting changes.

The last point is reiterated by Chapman (2010), who draws from the work of Leonard (1992) in stating that individuals need to commit themselves to the discipline of lifelong learning. Chapman (2010) concludes that "It is only through disciplined long-term practice that change and development come about."

In the following section, a more detailed overview of the Behavioural Coaching Model, as represented in Table 3.2, is presented and discussed accordingly. Four stages of change interrelate with the forms of coaching and the seven coaching process steps.

An overview of the model will be structured in the following way to cover the following aspects:

(i) Stages

(ii) Forms

(iii) Steps.

3.2.3.2.1   Stages

There are four stages of change, namely the reflective stage, the preparation stage, the action stage and the maintenance stage.

a) The reflective stage

At the reflective stage, coachees are in one of two states. They are either in a state of unknowing or they may accept that changes have to be made, though they have not yet made a commitment to move ahead. At this stage the coach functions as an educator (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:107–108).

b) The preparation stage

At the second stage of change, the coachees appreciate that there is a need for change through coaching, but they are unsure of how to proceed and not totally committed to coaching. Here, the role of the coach is to collect data, conduct assessments, target specific behaviours for change, set goals and develop action plans (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:108–109).

c) The action stage

During this stage, coachees look **to implement** the agreed-upon and **practised** behaviours in the workplace and to measure these according to established criteria. These are monitored, measured and evaluated by the coach on an ongoing basis (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:109–110).

d) The maintenance stage

The emphasis at this stage of change is on sustaining the behavioural changes and overall gains, making sure that coachees do not revert to earlier behavioural patterns (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:111–112).

The research was focused on individual middle managers, and within this context, it can be argued that individuals change (whether personal or professional) due to the situation in which they find themselves (Mabey, 2003). Some individuals are reluctant to change at all. Change models focus on **action** and coaches need to move into action to ensure that the emphasis is on maintenance and processes to ensure that **learning** and change are sustained and in line with goals and objectives.

3.2.3.2.2   Forms

During the coaching intervention the coach practises five distinct forms of coaching. These are coaching education, skills coaching, rehearsal coaching, performance coaching and self-coaching. As shown in Table 1, these five forms of coaching occur at various stages of change, as well as the seven-step coaching process. In the following section, the five forms of coaching are discussed briefly:

a) Coaching education

If an organisation decides to engage in a coaching intervention, a coaching needs analysis and a proposal will follow. The proposal will document the identified needs and how changes will be measured and evaluated. During all these stages, the coach acts in

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an educational capacity. Coachees also require education regarding the facets of the coaching intervention. Additionally, they need to be educated about the nature of the coaching relationship, coachees' responsibilities, the role and accountabilities of the coach, the nature of change and the need for ongoing measurement. Education and teaching continue throughout the seven coaching process steps (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:127).

b) Skills coaching

The coach collects data and conducts assessments; and together the coach and coachee target behaviours to change, set goals and develop action plans. Once these are in place, the coach begins to teach coachees the requisite skills. For example, the coach may teach coachees planning skills, presentation skills, assertiveness skills and communication skills (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:128). From a lifelong learning perspective, Smith and Spurling (1999) argue that lifelong learning skills, such as forward planning and assertiveness skills, are needed to succeed in learning.

c) Rehearsal coaching

Once a coachee has learned new skills, he or she has to rehearse these before performing in the workplace. Rehearsal occurs within the coaching sessions and involves video rehearsal, role-play and analogous situations (artificial scenario). These rehearsals are monitored and measured (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:128).

d) Performance coaching

The coachee is now at the action stage of the change model; that is, they are fully applying the learned skills in the workplace. During this phase, the coach supports the coachee. Performance coaching involves a considerable amount of measurement, so that the coachee's behaviours can be compared with their precoaching performance. In performance coaching, the coach has to manage fluctuations in a coachee's performance and deal effectively with resistances within the coachee or the work environment. The coach provides ongoing, effective and constructive feedback on the coachee's **performance** of the learned skills (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:128).

e) Self-coaching

At the maintenance stage and step seven of the coaching process, the emphasis is on maintaining the gains made during the coaching intervention. During coaching

education, skills coaching, rehearsal and performance coaching, the coach is the key driver. Each form of coaching aims to make the knowledge and skills accessible to the coachee, so that ultimately, they can develop autonomy and independence from the coach. During this period, coachees learn to recognise triggers for desired and undesired behaviours and ways to self-correct and self-regulate. The coach aims to establish the coachee's self-efficacy in these areas as well as conducting a preliminary exploration of what might present obstacles to the coachee once the coaching relationship has ended. Together the coach and coachee identify potential barriers and develop strategies to avoid or overcome these (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:128–129).

Within the context of the research, the coach (the researcher), provided information to the different middle managers about the coaching intervention, the coaching process, mutual roles, and responsibilities in the "partnership". The coach (researcher) facilitated the learning of the coachees (the individual middle managers) using the experiential model of Kolb (1984), and applying the requisite knowledge and skills to meet objectives and goals. The researcher monitored the practice of elements of the new knowledge and skills in the workplace throughout the learning and development intervention. Support and feedback were provided to each of the coachees regarding their performance and skills in the workplace. Lastly, the coach (researcher) worked towards ensuring coachee autonomy, confidence and competence in self-regulating skills. Maintenance and follow-through strategies (the ability to finish) were pursued to ensure overall effectiveness.

3.2.3.2.3   Steps

Skiffington and Zeus (2003:129) indicate that although the coaching process follows a linear seven-step progression, with each step following the previous one in a logical order, these steps represent a recommended framework only. In the following section, the seven-step coaching process is described briefly:

a) Step one: Education

Behavioural Coaching offers individuals, teams and organisations information about behaviour, together with techniques to alter and maintain behavioural change. Education is the information platform from which any coaching intervention is launched. As noted, coachees require significant amounts of knowledge regarding the nature of coaching, its benefits and how a coaching intervention is conducted and evaluated.

According to Skiffington and Zeus (2003), the coaching intervention is a collaborative process that will succeed only if the organisation and individual coachees are aligned in an open and trusting commitment to achieving mutual objectives. Coachees also need to understand the importance of self-awareness in relation to learning and taking action, and the need for practice and rehearsal.

The coach's behaviour is also critical, particulary in terms of how the coaching relationship is conducted. A deep-rooted interest in the coachee will allow the coach to learn more about the coachee's perceptions and reality. Questions that generate reflection and new understanding, together with authentic relating and trustworthiness, serve to deepen relationships and model crucial aspects of the coaching collaboration (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:129–131).

b) Step two: Data collection

Data collection is an essential step in the coaching process. A considerable body of information is gathered during the coaching needs analysis. Depending on the scope of the coaching intervention, such as the number of coachees, the number of sessions, the time frame and the coachee's level in the organisation, data is collected from various sources. According to Skiffington and Zeus (2003), the most common methods are interviews, questionnaires, observation by the coach and analogue observation.

Interviews can be structured or unstructured, depending on the information required. During these meetings the coach collects data that relates to the company's business objectives, and also to their learning and developmental needs, in order to place coaching as a relevant vehicle to help companies achieve these goals. The coach must develop a clear sense of the "gaps" that the coaching intervention is designed to bridge.

Questionnaires are another effective means of gaining information. If they are conducted methodically and efficiently, they can furnish the coach with helpful information that not only serves to guide goal setting and **action** planning, but can also be used in pre-coaching and post-coaching evaluation.

Observation of the coachee in the workplace is an effective and reliable means of data collection and is usually conducted by someone who is generally not part of the work environment, such as a coach.

Analogue observation, such as situational analogues, entails that the coachee is assessed in an artificial scenario resembling a work situation. The interaction can then be videotaped, whereafter the coach views the tape and assesses the coachee on the agreed behaviours.

All of the above methods were integrated into the research, as will become evident form 5.2.1, 5.3.1 and 5.3.3.1.

c) Step three: Planning

Planning relates to targeting or selecting behaviours for change, setting goals and developing action plans. Through the process of data collection (step two), the overall objectives of the coaching programme are determined. Having identified the behavioural shortcomings, the coach and coachee work on these areas. Setting goals is a core component of the behavioural coaching model. Goals provide the coach and coachee with a focal point for determining strategies to help the coachee move forward. At the same time these goals provide a reference standard to assess performance tasks in terms of difficulty, self-efficacy, task performance and post-coaching performance. Action planning involves documenting the steps or actions that coaches will implement to achieve their goals. Several factors have to be taken into consideration when constructing an action plan. These include whether the coachee has the knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the action; how much time the action will take; what the individual and organisational constraints are; and what impact the actions will have on others in the workplace (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:146–151).

d) Step four: Behavioural change

Having established the coachee's goals and action plan, the coach and coachee can focus on changing the targeted behaviours through established behavioural change techniques. These techniques include modeling, prompting and relaxation, using alternative responses and reframing, to name but a few. Coaches may also work with an individual or team's belief systems, as they affect goal achievement. This may help coachees to manage their emotions more effectively (self-regulation) and to encourage self-awareness and reflection on performance and achievement (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:151–152).

e) Step five: Measurement

At this step in the process, the coachee approaches the action stage of change, while the coach is employing performance coaching. As noted earlier, performance coaching involves working with coachees as they apply the **learned skills** in the workplace. The coach plays a significant role in measuring the coachee's performance by observing or shadowing the coachee as he or she executes the newly acquired skills (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:152–153).

f) Step six: Evaluation

Behavioural Coaching is based on results and linked to specific business objectives. Measurement and evaluation are therefore necessary to establish this linkage. Evaluation allows the coach to establish whether the objectives of the coaching project are being achieved. The overall purpose of any evaluation is to show how the individual and the organisation have changed as a result of coaching (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:153–160).

g) Step seven: Maintenance

Maintenance, or making sure that the gains made in coaching are not lost, is the final step in any learning or change process. The role of the coach seems to become increasingly redundant. The coaching intervention has guided the coachees towards self-reliance, self-mastery and self-leadership and they are equipped to use the knowledge, skills and abilities gained in coaching to achieve a position of self-management (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003:160–161).

3.2.3.2.4   Critique of the Behavioural Coaching Model

From a lifelong learning perspective, the model acknowledges and incorporates many aspects of lifelong learning, adult learning, adult education and the adult learner.

The strength of the model is that it can be perceived as very "real" and tangible. Within the context of experiential learning, this places an emphasis on the *concrete experience (CE)*. Another strength of the model is its focus on "doing"*,* which implies a focus on *active experimentation (AE).* Highlighted words that reflect this are:

- **"structured process" – (CE)**

- **"to implement" – (AE)**

- **"practised" – (CE/AE)**

- **"action"** (verb) **– (AE)**

- **"learning"** (verb) **– (AE)**

- **performance – (CE/AE)**

- **learned skills – (CE/AE)**

Although the above amounts to a well-structured process, the researcher is of the opinion that the model does not allow too much flexibility, which could cause the process to dominate the natural flow of the interaction. Coaching within the retail sector requires flexibility and the Behavioural Coaching Model could create a sense of being trapped in all the different steps. Another point of criticism could be that aspects of behaviourism does not always include wholeness (the internal dimension) of the unique individual, and that the individual person is far too complex to be limited to one such approach.

In summary, the two modes of learning (within an experiential learning approach) that the Behavioural Coaching Model exemplifies, and that could be seen as strengths and therefore used to complete the experiential learning cycle in the research, were:

Concrete experience
Active experimentation

3.2.3.3 *Integration of the two coaching models*

In an attempt to make the research explicit, the basis of the learning process (using coaching as a method to facilitate lifelong learning) is to integrate the four adaptive modes of Kolb's learning model. Kolb's model was used to structure the coaching conversation and the overall coaching journey.

In synthesising the two coaching models, the researcher reached the conclusion that neither of the coaching models (on its own) would be sufficient to take the learner through all of the four modes of learning (namely concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation) to complete the experiential learning cycle.

However, drawing from the strengths of the one coaching model (The Co-Active Model's strengths being abstract conceptualisation and reflective observation) and combining/integrating it with the strengths of the other coaching model (the Behavioural

Coaching Model's strengths, being concrete experience and active experimentation) allowed the full cycle of learning to be completed.

According to Chapman (2010:80), "The beauty of Kolb's (1984) model is that it is context – and content – independent. The same methodology can be used to facilitate other methods of learning…".Each individual learner was at a different level of readiness to learn; however, the process (following Kolb's learning model) allowed for a unique approach to each learner, being a middle manager in this case. Stout Rostron et al. (2009:264) argue that due to unique life experiences, question frameworks (within a particular coaching context) need to be tailored to the individual coachee.

The researcher approached each coachee (middle manager) from a uniquely individual perspective to facilitate each individual learner's learning. Although each individual has a preferred learning style, as discussed in 5.3.2 and 5.3.3, the ideal is to "move through all four learning styles/modes to optimise learning and growth" (Chapman, 2010:71). Stout Rostron et al. (2009:147) offer a practical perspective in understanding, as "Some people prefer to step into the experience itself; others prefer to watch, reflect and review; some like to conceptualise, hypothesise and theorise; others like to experiment with doing something new". The focus remains an integration of the four learning modes, namely concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation.

The researcher's aim was to facilitate one-on-one learning, using the same content, but in a different context with each individual learner. This allowed a unique approach and focus in steering each individual learner (middle manager) to move through the four modes of learning.

Within the context of the research, Stout Rostron et al. (2009:264) assume that the basis of the coaching conversation is the concrete experience of the coachee. Within this context, experience is the foundation and the source of learning, and always subject to interpretation. The researcher sought to pinpoint and clarify the concrete experience of the coachee (middle manager). The researcher then set out to get the coachee to reflect upon such experiences. Stout Rostron et al. (2009:266) argue: "The way in which we interpret experience is intimately connected with how we view ourselves" and "This determines how we develop confidence and self-esteem…". This could be seen as a form of empowerment within the individual learner. Stout Rostron et al. (2009:267) conclude that "reflection on experience leads to awareness and an ability to identify what is working as well as what needs to change", implying that conceptualisation leads to

action. Within the context of the research, the researcher used the same method (moving through the four modes of learning, namelyconcrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation) with each middle manager throughout the coaching sessions (in 2.4.2).

In the following section, another coaching model, the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model (as developed by Chapman, 2010) is discussed briefly. This coaching model was not used during the research; however, it is used to inform the research conceptually.

3.2.3.4   *The Integrated Experiential Coaching Model*

The Integrated Experiential Coaching Model (see Figure 3.3), was developed by Chapman (2010), who proposes an integration of theoretical ideas and models, such as those supported by Kolb (1984), Wilber (1996) and Almaas (1998), for developing an integrated coaching model.

The Integrated Experiential Coaching Model proposes that coaching is about facilitating integrated experiential learning in individuals in order to enhance personal growth and development. Within this context, the model uses Kolb's Experiential Learning Model to facilitate experiential learning (Chapman, 2010:218).

Interior   Exterior

Reflective
Observation   Individual

Transformation
via intention

Abstract   Grasping via   Grasping via   Concrete
Conceptualisation   Comprehension   Apprehension   Experience

Transformation via
Extension

Collective

Active
Experimentation
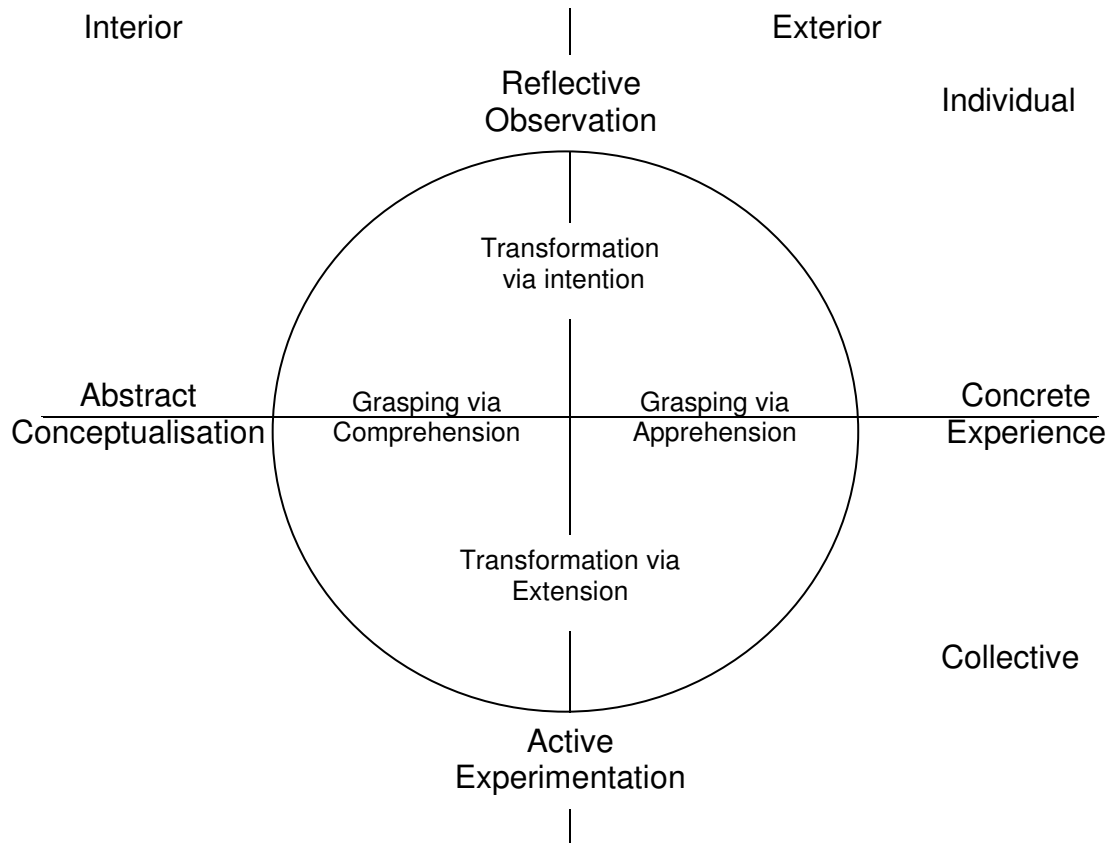
Figure 3.3: The Integrated Experiential Coaching Model (Chapman, 2010)

The focus of the three coaching models (The Co-Active Coaching Model, The Behavioural Coaching Model, and the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model) involves the unique individual adult learner. There is also an emphasis on the role of the coach and the relationship between the coach and the coachee, and within this context, it is essential to explore the relationship within the coaching process.

3.2.3.5   *Coaching and relationships*

Thorne (2004) and Hargrove (2003) agree that the ability to build relationships is at the core of being a good coach, as well as the coaching process itself. According to Starr (2003:6) the coaching relationship is unlike any other, because of its combination of objective detachment and a commitment to the goals of the individual. Coaching relationships can help people learn and develop faster in ways that enable them to have or achieve what they really want (Starr, 2003:7).

In Co-Active Coaching, the relationship has a particular design (see Figure 3.2), because it is customised to meet the exclusive needs of the client. It is an alliance, because both the coach and coachee are intimately involved in making the relationship work. The relationship is like a triangle: the coach at one point, the coachee at another point, and the relationship at the third point. This is depicted in Figure 3.4.
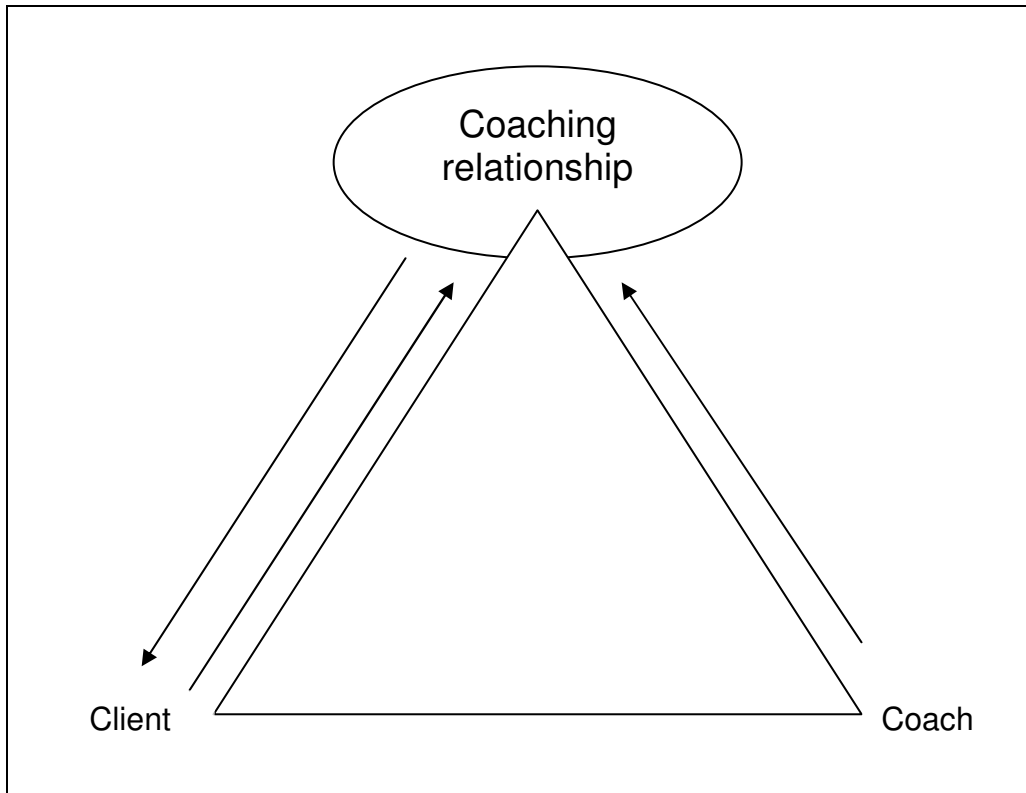
Figure 3.4: The Coaching Triangle (Whitworth et al., 2001)

In the Co-Active Model, the coachee grants power to the relationship and not to the coach. According to Whitworth et al. (2001:13), the coachees are in turn empowered by the relationship, and empowered to take charge and change their lives. The coach also grants power to the relationship, so that in the Co-Active Model all the power in the relationship serves the coachee. The diagram (Figure 3.4) simply emphasises the unique nature of the relationship, in that it is mutually created and entirely focused on the coachee.

Behavioural coaching emphasises the coachees' relationship with all aspects of themselves, in other words the cognitive, emotional, physical and behavioural selves.

Behavioural coaching also strives to engender self-knowledge and the self-regulation of thinking, feelings and action. According to Skiffington and Zeus (2003), the art of coaching is linked to the relationship between coach and coachee, and to the personal input of the coach, together with the unique interpretation and use of methodologies.

The first step in building an effective coaching relationship is to create a safe and spacious (emotional) place for the coachee. According to Whitworth et al. (2001:15–18), for an environment to be safe and spacious, it should meet certain conditions:

- *Confidentiality.* The relationship starts on the bedrock of confidentiality. If coachees are going to risk making significant changes, they must be able to talk freely about their lives. This disclosure is crucial, because it leads to the personal discovery that is at the heart of learning.

- *Trust.* Trust starts with the creation of a safe, confidential space, but trust is built gradually as both coach and coachee learn that they can be counted on, and as the coachee learns that the relationship delivers results. The experience of trust is empowering for coaches.

- *Veracity.* A safe space for change must be, by definition, a place where the truth can be told. This creates an environment without judgement, where the coach expects the truth from the coachee, because there is no consequence other than growth and learning.

- *Spaciousness.* This is a place open to change and wide-ranging possibilities, and a place where failure is acknowledged as a road to learning.

Parsloe and Wray (2001:175) suggest that within the coaching context, relationships can be strengthened by adhering to the following simple rules:

- *Success comes from doing simple things consistently*. Coaches should not overcomplicate the roles or erect unrealistic and unnecessary barriers and expectations.

- *Make sure you meet*. Coaching fails due to the inability of role-players to meet.

- *Keep coaching sessions brief.* Formal coaching sessions in the workplace should be productive if they are short and focused.

- *Stick to the basic process when meeting.* At the most basic level, coaching sessions are one-to-one meetings where the learner talks about issues they choose to raise, while the coach listens and asks questions.

Within the context of the research, these guidelines ensured continuity, as well as keeping the coaching sessions interesting and exciting. The consistency of meeting not only built trust, but added momentum to the process.

Clutterbuck and Meggison (2004) view the purpose of the relationship as being integral to the learning and development process. Parsloe and Wray (2001) conclude that the quality of the outcomes from coaching activities depends on the quality of the relationships between the people involved. Peters (1996) suggests that to benefit from coaching, the person being coached needs to be interested and willing to change, prepared to ask for help and share feedback, which can only occur in a sound relationship. Cilliers (2005) concludes that the relationship can be described as the most critical component of the learning process.

Stout Rostron et al. (2009:268) conclude that due to the relationship that develops, the relationship allows a "shift" to move the client from the level of "doing" to developing competence and capacity through "learning" – ultimately "becoming" and living out their full potential as a human being.

3.2.3.6   The role of the coach

The coach is the individual guiding the coaching process. The coaching process is a "focus", rather than a series of events (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

According to Skiffington and Zeus (2003), a coach's philosophical position (the way the coach views the world) underpins his or her coaching practice, and it is critical that this position should be examined. Coaching is not confined to assessing, monitoring, evaluating and measuring the behaviour of coachees; it also recognises the importance of examining and evaluating the coach's own behaviour. Parsloe (1999:8) stresses that "…to be a successful coach requires a knowledge and understanding of process as well as the variety of styles, skills and techniques that are appropriate to the context in which the coaching takes place".

Starr (2003) is of the opinion that a good coach can be defined by the principles/values from which he/she operates, and that these principles/values create a foundation for everything he/she does. For example, operating with a commitment to openness, honesty and trust can often do more for the coaching relationship than conscious rapport-building techniques. Mulligan (1999) concludes that the use of principles/values can sometimes have more impact than technical skills.

Whitmore (2002) offers a unique perspective in describing the intent of a development relationship (such as coaching) as being beneficial for both parties (the coach and the coachee) to learn and to further their own self-development. As coaching is about learning, the coach and the coachee enter into a learning partnership together. The coach is not a teacher who delivers content and skills. The coach is a facilitator of learning, and as such, he/she generates contexts that produce relevant, practical and potentially powerful learning for the coachee. From a lifelong learning perspective, coaches set out to nurture lifelong learning in every individual they work with.

Kram (1995) argues that the coach has as much to learn as the coachee. Developing others can be considered to be a critical managerial competency, especially in an age when team structures and two-way communication have become commonplace. Coaches therefore need to be equipped with clearly defined competencies to allow effective learning to take place. There are many perspectives on the qualities and competencies of a good coach, and these are explored in the following section:

The competency model proposed by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD, 2004), provides an overview of all the competencies required by HRD practitioners. Within the context of the research, it could be applied to coaches in the modern work environment. This model is represented in Figure 3.5.
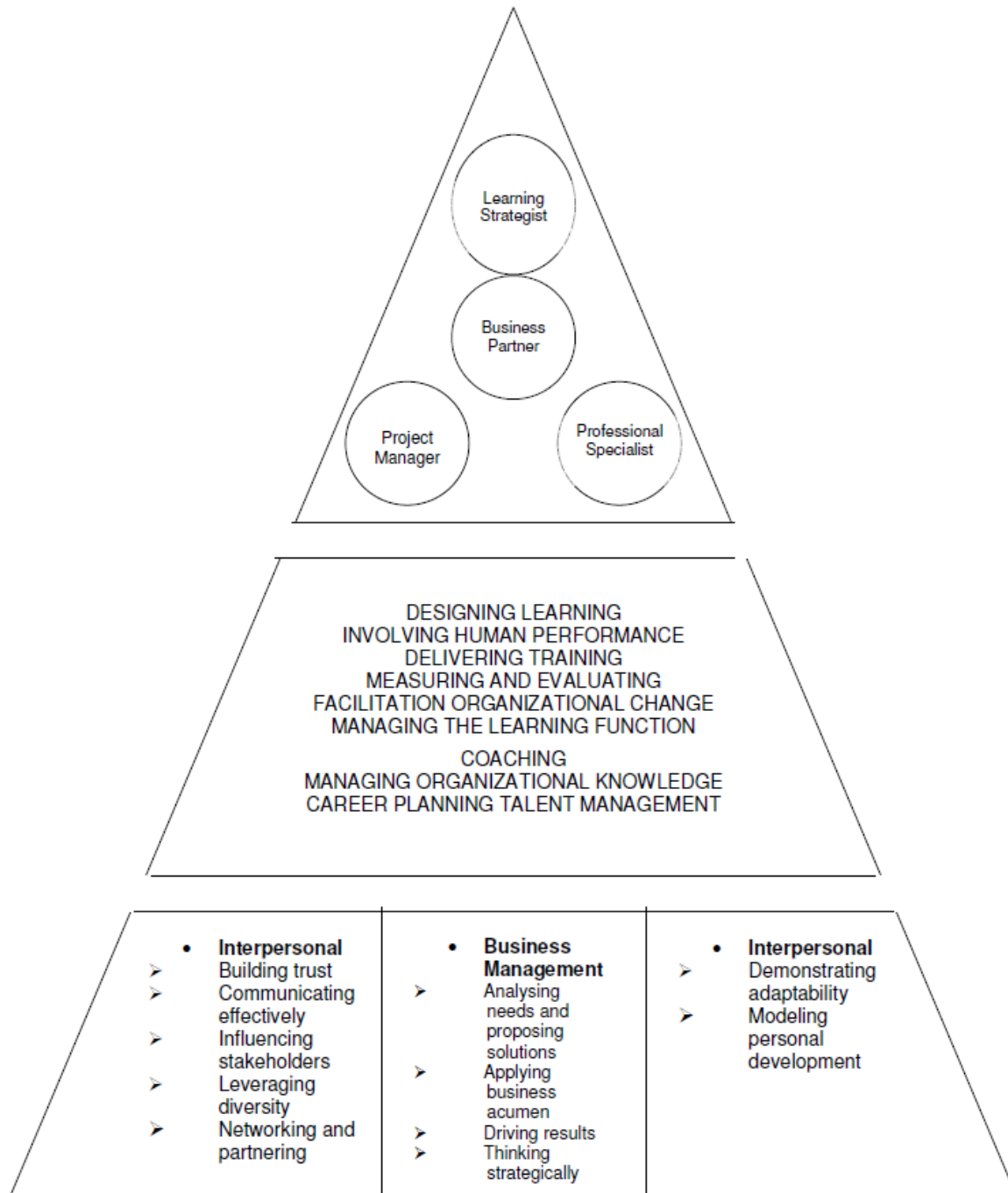
Table 3.3: The American Society Training Development competency model (ASTD, 2004)

The lower section of Figure 3.5 deals with the foundational competencies categorised under interpersonal, business management and personal competencies. For example, an HRD practitioner/coach needs to be able to communicate effectively, build relationships and apply business acumen. The middle part of the model covers the areas

of HRD, for instance designing and delivering learning interventions. Other areas include coaching, measuring and evaluating, facilitating organisational change and improving human performance. At the top of the model, the four roles needed to execute effective HRD strategies are highlighted. These are:

- learning strategist (developing learning solutions for the company and its people);

- professional specialist (professionally executing all the HRD functions such as design, facilitation, evaluation);

- project manager; and

- business partner (forming good relationships with management and meeting their needs and the needs of the business).

Within the context of the research, the researcher executed all of these roles. The role of a learning strategist includes incorporating a lifelong learning strategy into learning and coaching programmes (Sadler-Smith, 2006). The International Coaching Federation (ICF, 2005) identified the core competencies that coaches (and facilitators of learning) should strive and work toward.

These core competencies are grouped into four clusters (A to D) according to those that fit together, logically based on common ways of looking at the competencies in each group:

A. Setting the foundation (meeting ethical guidelines and professional standards, establishing the coaching agreement). B. Co-creating the relationship (establishing trust and intimacy with the client, coaching presence). C. Communicating effectively (active listening, powerful questioning and direct communication). D. Facilitating learning and results (creating awareness, designing actions, planning and setting goals, managing progress and accountability).

Thorne (2004:64) agrees with most of the competencies as prescribed by the ASTD and ICF, but also highlights the "softer" attributes that make up a good coach, such as: they are trusted and respected, have good communication skills as they question, build, clarify, summarise. Good coaches offer encouragement and support, take time to listen, focus on an end goal and take joint responsibility for the outcome.

Stout Rostron et al. (2009) highlight two other frameworks, namely that of The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC); and within a South African context, the Coaches and Mentors of South Africa (COMENSA). COMENSA (2006) developed a framework that defined competencies in five functional areas. The five functional areas were:

- questioning;

- listening;

- building rapport;

- delivering measurable results; and

- upholding ethical guidelines and professional standards.

These attributes are very much in line with the Behavioural Coaching Model (one of the models used as a conceptual framework), which promotes the following attributes or core competencies: interpersonal relating, managing emotions, cognitive skills, decision-making skills, planning and tuition (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003). The Co-Active Coaching Model (used as conceptual framework) does not subscribe to a list of predetermined competencies.

According to the researcher, a coach needs to have the following core competencies to be effective: interpersonal relating, trust, taking time to listen, openness, cognitive skills, and intuition. Moreover, the researcher is of the opinion that an effective coach enables the coachee to see fresh perspectives, make new decisions, and move forward productively. Hargrove (2003) concludes that coaches should strive to excel in empowering others to grow and move forward in life, continually positioning themselves from an even more conscious vantage point. Interpersonal relations are at the heart of coaching, and form the foundation and most important element of any successful coaching relationship.

3.3   EMPOWERMENT

3.3.1 Introduction

Both in a global and a uniquely South African context, empowerment is emerging as a force in individual and organisational life (Smith, 2005b). Within the context of Black

Economic Empowerment (BEE) there is a shift towards developing and empowering individuals in organisations (RSA, DoL, 2009). This implies a focused approach to identify and capacitate previously disadvantaged individuals (PDIs) within organisations.

If organisations are going to develop the capacity to use their valuable human resources fully and gain a competitive edge, empowered managers are needed (Whichard & Kees, 2007). According to Hargrove (2003), developing managers have to pursue new opportunities, and markets demand individuals with a strong sense of their own competence, self-worth, independence and confidence. Cranton (1994) points out that learner empowerment can be described as a goal of lifelong learning.

The facilitation of empowering processes and employee involvement requires that individuals learn from the widest possible variety of opportunities. Mumford (2000) argues that by creating such opportunities, employers empower individuals to be in command of their personal destiny.

From an individual perspective of empowerment, Oxtoby (1999) and Albertyn (2001) agree that there is both an objective and a subjective side to being empowered. Oxtoby (1999) is of the opinion that removing the objective limitations does not enable or impart power to something. Albertyn (2001) argues that it is the subjective side (the "internal" dimension – how people feel about themselves, their self-image and their self-limiting beliefs) that holds individuals back, adding that this should be addressed in any meaningful empowerment programmes. Albertyn (2001:70) concludes that "[i]t is what individuals do that depends crucially on what they believe to be true about themselves, and their confidence that they can make a success of tasks", which is an indication of their subjective power.

From an organisational perspective, the concept of empowerment can be found within a systems theory of organisations (Yammarino & Dansereau, 2006). Within this context, empowerment is a process by which the role of employees becomes redefined in order to enable the organisation to achieve new goals and adapt to a changing environment (Luthans, 2006). According to Waterman (1987), the empowerment process is one of directed autonomy whereby employees are given an overall direction, yet enjoying considerable leeway in terms of how they follow that direction. Understanding the concept of empowerment can provide managers and organisations with a framework

that would enable them to react to new realities in a positive rather than a defensive way.

In simple definitional terms, the verb to *empower* means to *enable*, to *allow* or to *permit*,and can be conceived as both self-initiated and initiated by others. Rappaport (1995) notes that it is easy to define empowerment by its absence, but difficult to define it in action, as it takes on different forms in different people and contexts. Empowerment is sometimes described as the ability to make choices, but it must also involve being able to shape what choices are on offer (HAP International, 2008).

The researcher is of the opinion that empowerment is the process of setting the right environment and providing the structure in which people can learn and make a full contribution in life. Clutterbuck and Meggison (2004) argue that power lies within the individual and that for the potential of human capacity building to be realised, there must be a steady expansion of opportunities that would enable individuals to make improved choices (Sadler-Smith, 2006).

The research (using coaching as method to facilitate learning) is a move towards a more adult-focused, empowering, humanistic form of facilitation and learning. In implementing such an empowerment-orientated intervention, the focus is on changes that take place in the individual (Parsons, 2001). On an individual level, people need to construct their own knowledge as they assimilate new experiences that make sense to them.

Adult education learning theory and experiential learning are frameworks that recognise the individual's ability to be an active agent in the learning process. Both these frameworks harmonise well with the concept of empowerment (Sadler-Smith, 2006).

In the following section, the different levels of empowerment are discussed in more detail.

3.3.2 Levels of empowerment

Empowerment is a multi-faceted concept aimed at a personal, interpersonal and political level (Tamasane, 1998). Both Tamasane (1998) and Albertyn (1995) view empowerment as an outcome and a process whereby people and organisations gain control over their lives through participative action in development activities. It is an interactive process

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whereby the process of empowerment expands the power in the situation as opposed to merely distributing it (Murrel, 2000).

This process enables people to take more control of their lives. It takes place on three different levels, namely the personal level (micro-level), the interpersonal level (interface) and the political or macro-level (Albertyn, 2001).

Speer and Hughey (2008) advocate that the process of empowerment fosters power, allowing individuals to act on issues that they define as important. This implies that the individual can make choices. Rubin and Rubin (1986) define power as the ability to accomplish one's will with or without opposition. From this multidimensional definition of power, it is evident that empowerment has several different and inter-related aspects.

From the literature it becomes clear that the concept of empowerment can be measured on three levels, namely the micro-, interface and macro-level. According to Albertyn (2001), the indicators are characterised by the following outcomes as indicated in Table 3.3:

Table 3.4: The three levels of empowerment and their outcomes (Albertyn, 2001)

Empowerment Levels		
Micro level (Outcomes)	Interface level (Outcomes)	Macro level (Outcomes)
Self-efficacy	Mutual respect	Belief in their ability
Self-confidence	Support	To take action
Positive self-concept	Caring	To effect change
Leadership	Assertiveness	Critical reflection
Coping skills	Making a difference	Aware of rights
Sense of agency		Problem solving
Personal responsibility		Decision-making

In the following section, each level and its outcomes are described briefly:

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Micro-level empowerment refers to the way that an individual feels about him-/herself; including issues of self-confidence, self-concept, leadership, coping skills, sense of agency and personal responsibility.

Interface level empowerment refers to the relationship immediately around the individual, consisting of mutual respect, support, caring and the ability to make a difference.

Macro-level empowerment refers to taking action, being able to reflect critically, solving problems and making decisions.

According to Albertyn (2001), for effective empowerment to take place, it is essential that it occurs at each of the three levels. Empowerment is a concept that is defined by individuals in a specific context (Reid & Barrington, 1997), and within the context of this research, the setting is specifically focused on the retail sector. In the following section, each level of empowerment will be discussed in more detail:

3.3.2.1 *Micro level of empowerment*

Micro-level empowerment refers to personal empowerment: the individual's sense or feelings of control over their specific environment, and having control over the direction of their own lives (Albertyn, 1995:13). Tamasane (1998) describes empowerment on the micro-level as the development of a personal feeling of increased power or control without an actual change in structural arrangements. An individual will experience a change in attitude, be more proactive and believe that it is possible to achieve success.

According to Swanepoel (1997), dignity is enhanced when people become self-reliant, self-sufficient and capable of organising themselves. In other words, dignity grows as people fulfil their potential (Gran, 1983:327).

3.3.2.2 *Interface level of empowerment*

The interface level of empowerment is characterised by the ability to act collectively to solve problems and influence conditions immediately affecting the individual (Albertyn, 1995:14). Interface level empowerment refers to the relationships immediately around the individual, for example the management team and significant others.

3.3.2.3   Macro-level of empowerment

This level of empowerment involves the individual's power to effect political, economic or social changes in his/her immediate environment by means of consciousness-raising and participation (Albertyn, 1995). The individual thus understands society and his/her role in it. Tamasane (1998) specifies that empowerment at this level involves an increase in the individual's power to effect political, economic and social change in his/her immediate environment by means of participation and the ability to manage these changes. Problem solving and decision-making (critical skills needed by managers) would also be included on the macro level.

3.3.3 Measuring empowerment

Albertyn (2001) developed a standardised questionnaire to ascertain empowerment outcomes evident in individuals. The measuring instrument developed by Albertyn (2001) was used during this research, as no other instruments measuring empowerment were available. This instrument (Appendix A) is a valid and reliable measuring tool that provides statistical information and quantifies the state and changes occuring in the individual. In this way, both the growth in the individual and the quality of empowerment are measured. Cadena (1991:67) argues that once an empowerment intervention has been implemented, the facilitator needs to evaluate the effect of the intervention in terms of the aim of empowering the target group.

3.3.4 Models of empowerment

Different authors propose numerous models of empowerment, and although dated, the models of Hopson (1981) and Kieffer (1984) still remain most relevant.

Hopson (1981) argues that there are five phases to the empowerment process, namely:

Phase 1: Awareness

The individuals become aware of themselves and others. The individuals are subject to and react to their upbringing, daily events and social changes.

Phase 2: Goals

Individuals take charge of their own lives by exploring their values and developing commitments. After reflection, the individual is challenged to act.

Phase 3: Values

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During this phase, the individual chooses freely from alternatives, having weighed the consequences of alternatives.

Phase 4: Life skills

During this phase, alternatives are taken further and skills must be developed so that they can be translated into action.

Phase 5: Information

Information, whether internal or external, is a source of awareness of self and the surrounding world.

Kiefer (1984) developed a model of the empowerment process to indicate the eras or phases that are necessary in the process of empowerment, namely:

- Era of entry: The individual's participation in the process is of an exploratory nature, while at the same time power structures are being "demystified".

- Era of advancement: The individual becomes more involved in peer group activities. The individual participates in mutually supportive problem solving and action, and starts to develop a critical understanding of the given situation.

- Era of incorporation: The individual confronts institutional barriers and develops other skills in the process.

- Era of commitment: In this stage, the individual integrates the newly acquired knowledge with the reality of everyday life.

It is evident that although the models of Hopson (1981) and Kieffer (1984) differ, the phases often occur simultaneously or more or less in the same order. Firstly, both models indicate an idea of growing awareness during the first stages. This is followed by the development of knowledge and skills which are finally translated into action. The eventual outcome for both models includes participation (action) and critical reflection.

It is evident that reflection and action are indicators of empowerment. Within the context of the research they could be seen as dimensions that need to be developed or facilitated throughout the learning activity.

The empowerment of individuals, groups and organisations is an essential part of human development. Empowerment is not merely an outcome, but a process. It is a way of being, a way of thinking – not merely a quick solution. Empowerment is a personal, life-long process that requires fundamental changes that can only be elaborated on gradually. Connelly (2008) proposes opportunities for organisations to structure empowerment processes that would help managers (and specifically middle managers) to find a sense of purpose in their work and to integrate it into their entire life experience.

Within a coaching context, Ellinger and Bostrom (1999) identify four empowering behaviours that a coach/facilitator could use within an organisation, namely:

1. Questions – framing to encourage employees to think through the issues at hand.

2. Being a resource – removing obstacles.

3. Transferring ownership to employees.

4. Holding back – not providing the answers.

Learning and development activities, such as coaching as a method to facilitate learning, have the potential to facilitate empowerment. Learning is said to empower (Gwazdauskas, 2009; Knight, 2008) and within this context, those responsible for this type of development will need to implement a model of the empowerment philosophy, making sure that the learning and development offered are consistent with the philosophy.

According to Knowles (1990), the concept of lifelong learning is central to empowerment, as human beings are constantly striving for self-development and are able and willing to continue learning. If an organisation does not have a culture that is supportive of learning or coaching, it could lead to barriers, which could ultimately affect learning (Jarvis et al., 2004). In the following section, the concept of learning organisations will be discussed.

3.4   LEARNING ORGANISATIONS

Although definitions of learning organisations abound, it is generally agreed that while individuals learn, the organisation provides a holding environment for knowledge.

Organisations are places where people learn and accumulate knowledge, and they control the processes by which knowledge is created, acquired, distributed and used to reach long-term business objectives (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003). The conclusion can be drawn that organisations then learn through the learning of their members.

The researcher supports the concept of a learning organisation as one where individual learning is facilitated on a one-on-one basis. In turn, this needs to be supported by a learning and development culture that values and promotes individual learning.

The modern business environment is characterised by uncertainty, rapid change, competitiveness and and the continuous pursuit of excellence (Meyer & Botha, 2004). Even though their argument is not new, Argyris and Schön (1996) propose that organisations that are at the forefront of institutionalising what they are learning from the environment, are the ones that will survive and prosper in turbulent times. Pettigrew and Whipp (1991:238) define a learning organisation as having the ability to shed outdated knowledge, techniques and beliefs, as well as learning and deploying new ones, which enables companies to carry out given strategies. According to Downs (2002) an increased focus on learning and development activities (such as coaching) could be seen as a critical means of ensuring organisational effectiveness and a sustainable competitive advantage, all of which is becoming a reality within large organisations.

Jarvis et al. (2004) argue that coaching can help individuals overcome gaps in their knowledge, skills, behaviour and ability. This can be paralleled with the importance of learning throughout a person's life (lifelong learning), because organisations and individuals need to develop their skills in order to keep up with a fast-paced, turbulent world (Jarvis et al., 2004:24).

Parsloe and Wray (2001:22) define the aim of coaching within the learning organisation as follows: "The aim is to help and support people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and enable them to become the person they want to be". This approach requires a fundamental shift to the individual as well as to organisational learning within the organisation.

As individuals constitute the primary learning entity in companies (Dodgson, 1993; Easterby-Smith, Aráujo & Burgoyne, 1999; O'Keeffe, 2006), this implies an increased

focus on both the individual learner and the facilitation of the individual learning process. Gilley and Maycunich (1999) and Holton and Baldwin (2003) argue that the orientation of the learning organisation is simply *learning*. According to Senge (2006:191), "learning has very little to do with taking in information. Learning, instead, is a process that is about enhancing capacity. Learning is about the capabilities to create that which you previously could not create. It ultimately leads to action".

The principle assumption of learning organisations is that if the learning capacity of individuals is improved, organisational capacity will also improve. Gilley and Maycunich (1999:16) are of the opinion that within such a context, learning should:

- be tied to business objectives

- should attach importance to the learning process (learning how to learn) as much as to the learning content

- be continuous, as learning is essential for survival and success in today's world

- be facilitated, as facilitators can accelerate learning by helping people to think critically

- accommodate and challenge different learning style preferences

- involve a cyclical, cognitive process and reflecting on action.

Although dated, Senge (2006) reflects on five learning disciplines that provide vital dimensions in building organisations that can truly learn, namely:

Systems thinking – is a conceptual framework employed to make full patterns clearer, suggesting ways to change them effectively. According to Senge (2006:69), systems thinking is "a sensibility – for the subtle interconnectedness that gives living systems their unique character". Today, systems thinking is needed more than ever, because we are becoming overwhelmed by complexity. According to Senge (2006), systems thinking is the conceptual cornerstone that underlies all of the five learning disciplines. All are concerned with a shift of mind from seeing parts to seeing wholes, from seeing people as helpless reactors to seeing them as active participants in shaping their reality.

Personal mastery – means a special level of proficiency (Senge, 2006), and involves the individual's willingness to become committed to their own lifelong learning. Personal mastery is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening personal vision, focusing energy, developing patience, and seeing objectively (Senge, 2006). Senge (2006) concludes that "the organisation's commitment to learning can be no greater than that of its members". It could be argued that few organisations encourage the growth of their people in this manner.

Mental models – are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalisations, pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action. Senge (2006) cautions that people are very often not consciously aware of their mental models or the effects they have on their own behaviour. Senge (2006:9) argues that the discipline of working with mental models starts with "turning the mirror inward; learning to unearth our internal pictures of the world, to bring them to the surface and hold them rigorously to scrutiny".

Building shared vision – the practice of shared vision involves the skills of unearthing shared "pictures of the future" that foster genuine commitment and enrollment, rather than compliance.

Team learning – according to Senge (2006), the discipline of team learning starts with dialogue whereby members of a team suspend assumptions and start thinking together.

Within the context of a learning organisation, Senge (2006:13) uses the word "metanoia", which implies "to grasp the deeper meaning of learning", because learning also involves a fundamental shift or movement of the mind. According to Senge (2006:68), a system perspective can bring insights by facilitating an overall view in which interrelationships and changing patterns become visible, rather than just "things" and "snapshots". The following table (Table 3.2) presents an overview of different perspectives (including that of Senge, 2006) of learning organisations. Concepts that are relevant to the research are highlighted to indicate relevancy, although they will not be discussed.

Table 3.5: Characteristics of learning organisations (Argyris, 1999)

	The learning company	Global learning organisation	Essence of a learning organisation	The five disciplines
Super-ordinate category	*Pedler et al. (1997)*	*Marquardt and Reynolds (1994)*	*Gephart et al. (1996)*	*Senge (1990)*
Participation and strategic learning	Learning approach to Strategy	Strategy Vision		Shared vision
Knowledge Acquisition	Participative policy-making Boundary workers as environmental scanners Inter-company learning	Empowerment Environmental Scanning		
Knowledge dissemination and sharing	Information Formative accounting and control Internal exchange	Teamwork and networking Knowledge creation and transfer	Continuous learning at the systems level Knowledge generation and sharing	Team learning Mental models
Adaptability	Reward flexibility		Spirit of flexibility and experimentation	
Organisational structure and culture	Enabling structures A learning climate	Appropriate structures Corporate learning culture Supportive atmosphere	Culture of learning People-centered	
Learning and development	Self-development opportunities for all	Learning technology		Personal mastery
Integrated thinking			Critical systemic thinking	Systems thinking
Continuous improvement		Quality		

Within the context of the research, personal mastery is associated within the context of learning and development, implying an individual approach.

Practically, Senge (2006) and Hodgkinson and Sparrow (2002) agree that the most defining characteristics of a learning organisation are that it encourages critical thinking, encourages reflection and that learning is "generated". This involves a capacity to create

a vision, trust between members, open communication, recognition of members who are responsible for their own learning, and reflection that is non-judgemental, which encourages different perspectives and paradigms.

A significant proportion of investment is wasted as learning and development activities are not followed through in the workplace (Sadler-Smith, 2006). Substantial follow-through is critical to a successful learning and development intervention. According to Mabey, Salaman and Storey (1999), the most important factors influencing post-learning follow-through are often found outside the context of the learning situation, for example, competing priorities and commitments. Lack of follow-through is frequently attributed to time pressure, with individuals feeling that there is not enough time, and that they have no control over their own time. Another critical factor regarding follow-through is accountability. Ideally, a senior manager can be appointed to ensure that learning continues after the intervention has ended. This person is responsible for guaranteeing that coachees have the opportunity to continue practising their new skills. In turn, coachees report to that person, indicating what they have done to follow through their learning.

Coaches cannot create a learning organisation. Nevertheless, understanding the qualities of such an organisation can help them to foster self-learning and accountability. Learning organisations do not occur spontaneously; they have to be developed through conscious interventions, such as coaching and other learning and development activities to ensure that individuals do learn. This can then be systemised and passed on to the team. In turn, the team's knowledge is available to the organisation/s as a whole, forming part of an ongoing cycle.

Within the context of learning organisations, the concept of organisational learning has relevance. According to Sadler-Smith (2006:209), there are many definitions of organisational learning; however, one of the simplest and most clear-cut descriptions is that of Senge (2006), who defines organisational learning as "an increased capacity for action". Argyris and Schön (1996) distinguish between two types or levels of organisational learning, namely single-loop learning and double-loop learning. Single-loop or adaptive learning is the process of adjusting effectively to given goals under existing norms by mastering the environment (Probst & Buchel, 1997). Double-loop or generative learning occurs when an organisation responds to discontinuities in the

internal and external environment by modifying the assumptions that guide behaviour (Sadler-Smith, 2006). Probst and Buchel (1997) conclude that double-loop learning involves a process of questioning and building new frames of reference. Sadler-Smith (2006) notes that an interest in such type of learning was initiated by the perception that double-loop learning had the potential for leveraging a competitive advantage through enhanced creativity, organisational change and innovation. In considering how organisational learning (more specifically double-loop learning) may be facilitated, it is important to couch this type of learning within the context of the learning organisation.

Bacon and Spear (2005) highlight that even though change may be effected in many arenas within the organisation, human change at the micro-level of the individual remains among the most difficult challenges that organisations face. The aim of learning is to facilitate constructive, self-initiated change – in one person at a time. For this to occur, learning and development activities (within the context of lifelong learning) should become a vastly more adaptive and responsive process.

Goldsmith and Lyons (2006:95) conclude that today successful managers must embrace self-development and learning, and at a time when organisations can no longer guarantee work for life, individuals can take on "Learning for Life" as a paradigm model. The coach fits perfectly into this new learning model as he/she strives to facilitate effective, individual learning, allowing the individual to become more empowered through learning and applying suitable approaches to scenarios at work.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION (RESEARCH PROCESS)

In the previous two chapters, the literature related to the study was discussed to provide a theoretical framework. This chapter describes the design, as well as the procedure, that was followed during the research to ascertain the effect of coaching (as a method of learning) as a means to facilitate the empowerment of middle managers within the retail sector. The research is evaluative in nature, in that it seeks to establish the effect of learning (using a coaching methodology) to facilitate empowerment.

The case study was used as research design for this research. Thomas (2011:10) defines a case study as follows: "Case study is an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives of the complexity and uniqueness of a particular project, policy, institution, programme, intervention or system in a real-life context. The primary purpose is to generate in-depth understanding of a specific topic, programme, intervention, policy, institution or system to generate knowledge and/or inform policy development, professional practice and civil or community action".

The research is critical/emancipatory with regard to the paradigm, in that research that has the goal of bringing about change through a scientifically rigorous and structured process could fit into this paradigm (Babbie & Mouton, 2006). The research also draws from the interpretive paradigm alluding to a "straddling of paradigms" (Mouton, 2008). Within this context, it is important to note that paradigms are not limited by a method(ology) alone. Yin (2009) argues that case studies can also be part of a larger, mixed methods study.

Case study methods have a distinctive place in evaluation research (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009), and allow for four different applications, namely:
1. To explain causal links in real-life interventions.

2. To describe an intervention, and the real-life context in which it occurred.

3. To illustrate certain topics within an evaluation.

4. To enlighten situations in the intervention.

Yin (2009) describes how the case study method allows researchers to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real life. As alluded to in Chapter One, a case study is a linear but process-iterative process (Yin, 2009), which is depicted in Figure 4.1.
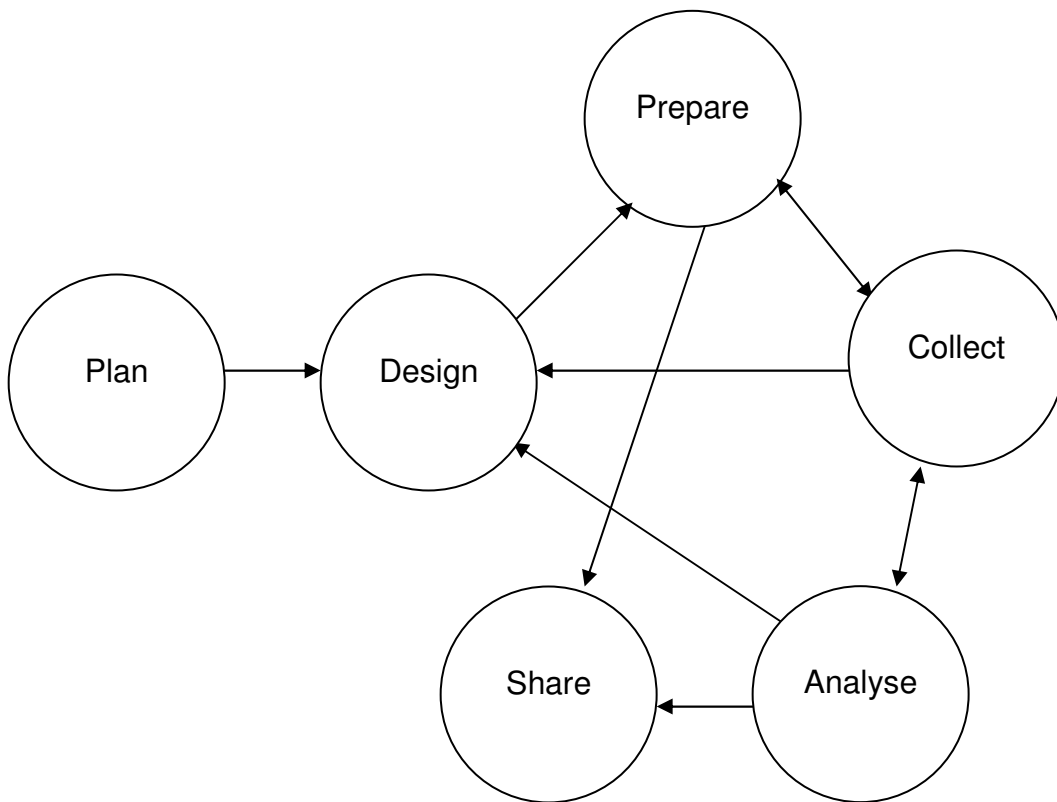
Figure 4.1: Doing Case Study Research: A linear, but iterative process (Yin, 2009)

This chapter sets out to describe the research design and the research methodology. In an attempt to explain the research design and methodology in detail, the components of the research process (Figure 4.1) are described. Under the heading "*research design*", the following components are discussed:

- Plan
- Design

Under the heading, "*research* methodology" two other components are discussed, namely:

- Prepare
- Collect

Chapter Five (presentation, analysis and interpretation) will focus on the last two components, namely:

- Analyse

- Share.

4.2 RESEARCH DESIGN (PLAN AND DESIGN)

A research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and the execution or implementation of the research (Mouton, 2001). A research design ultimately declares one's approach and in the following section, the research design for this research is discussed in more detail.

Case study research design incorporates an analysis of persons, events, decisions or other systems that are studied holistically by one or more methods (Thomas, 2011). Drawing mostly on the work of Yin (2009), this research purposes not only to *evaluate*, but also to *explore* in developing pertinent hypotheses and propositions for further enquiry. Within the context of case study research, the design requires a theoretical framework for the case study to be conducted.

In designing case studies, a primary distinction is made between *single-* and *multiple-case designs*. The research is based on a multiple-case design and within the context of this research, it is depicted as follows in Figure 4.2:

CONTEXT	CONTEXT	CONTEXT	CONTEXT	CONTEXT
Case	**Case**	**Case**	**Case**	**Case**
CONTEXT	CONTEXT	CONTEXT	CONTEXT	CONTEXT
Case	**Case**	**Case**	**Case**	**Case**
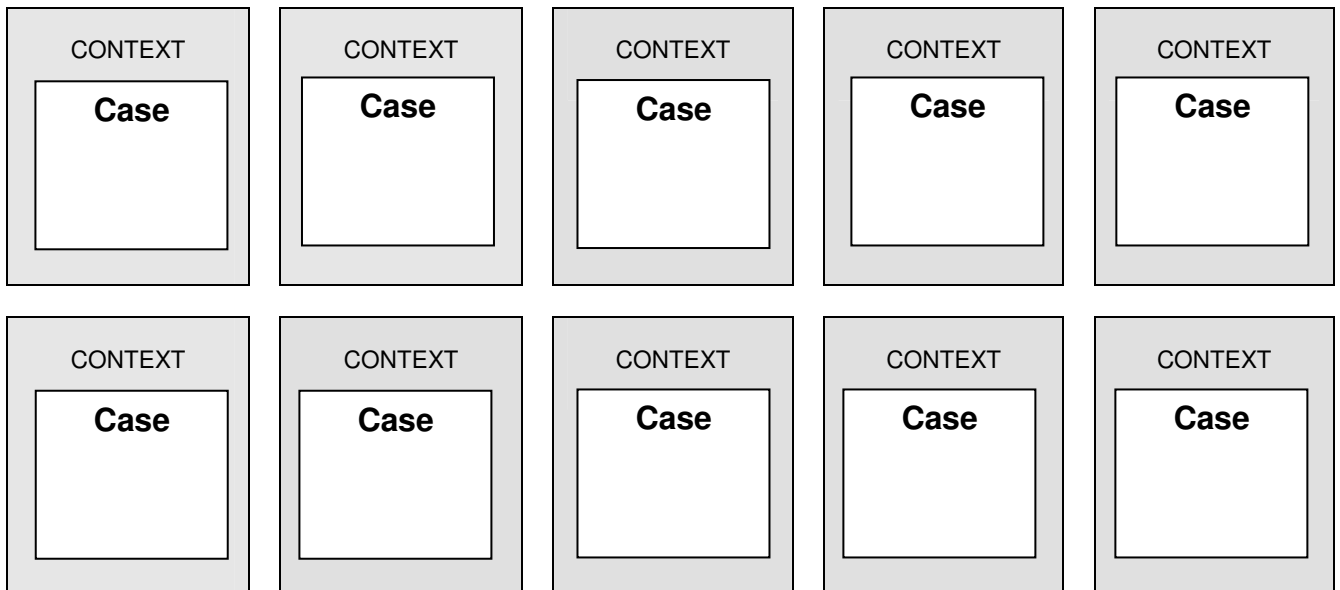
Figure 4.2: Multiple-case designs (Yin, 2009)

The research involved ten middle managers. Yin (2009) explains that within a multiple-case design, each individual case consists of a "whole" study, in which convergent evidence is sought regarding the facts and conclusions for the case. Thomas (2011) explains that although each individual case can be seen as being uniquely important, each case could also be seen as being of less importance in itself, and therefore less so than when compared to others.

According to Yin (1994; 2009), in multiple-case study designs there are no rules as to how many cases are required to satisfy the requirements of the replication strategy, but it is suggested that six to ten cases should provide compelling support.

The conclusions of each case are then considered to be the information needing replication by other individual cases. Replication (Yin, 2009) involves *literal replication* – the conditions under which a particular phenomenon is likely to be found (with similar results), and a *theoretical* replication – the conditions when it is not likely to be found (with contrasting results). Yin (2009) cautions that with case studies one can never form a sample from which to generalise.

The approach to designing multiple-case studies is presented in Figure 4.3.

Define and Design Prepare, Collect and Analyse Analyse and Conclude
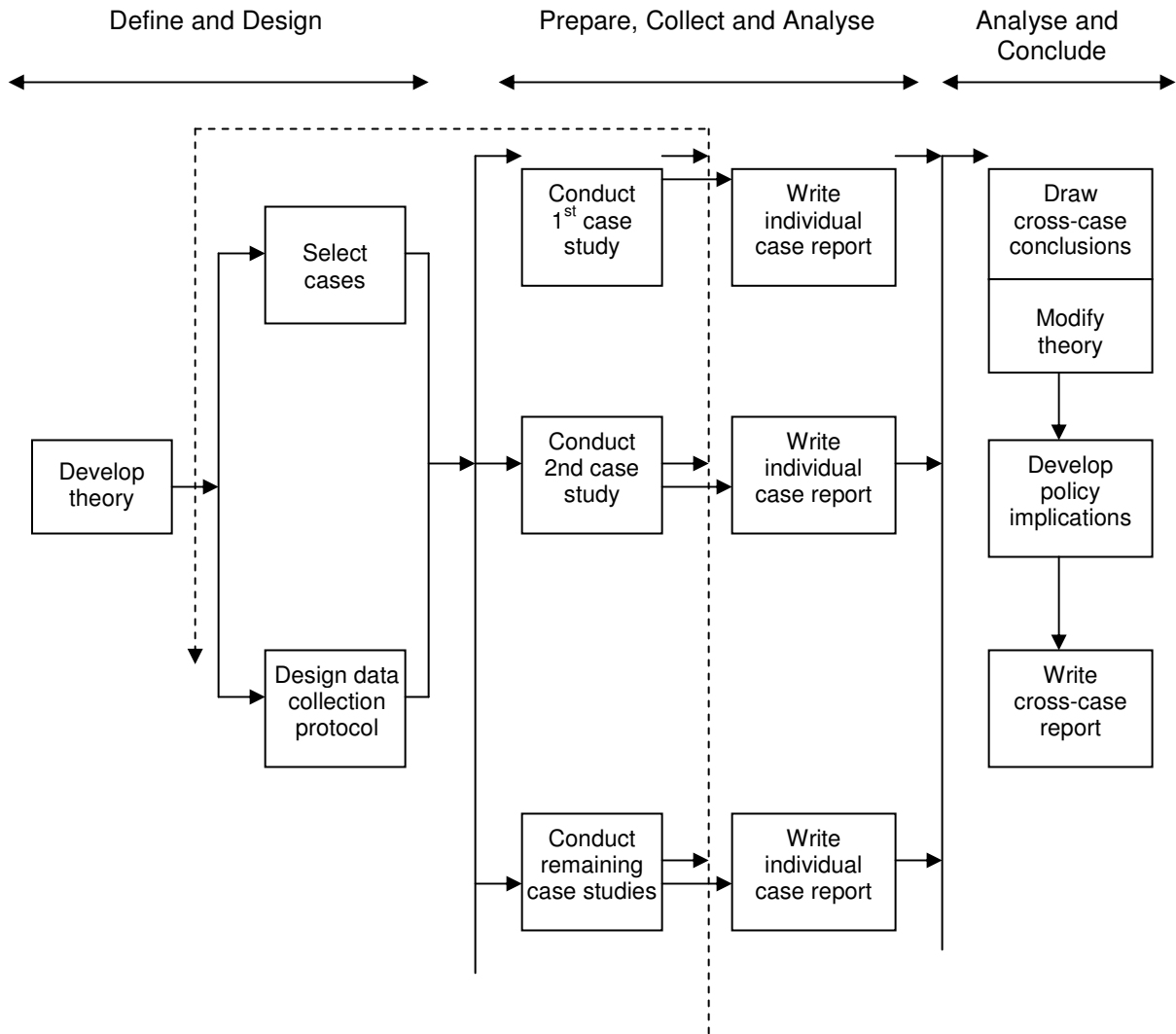
Figure 4.3: Multiple-case study method (Yin, 2009)

4.3   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY (PREPARE AND COLLECT)

4.3.1 Introduction (Prepare)

As noted in Chapter One, the research methodology focuses on the steps or methods for data generation, data collection, analysis and interpretation, and data presentation (Mouton, 2001). In this chapter, the process of preparing (prepare) to collect the data, as well as the actual collection of data (collect), is discussed. The research was conducted over a period of twelve months, from December 2005 to December 2006, in one of the biggest stores within the largest food retail organisation in South Africa.

The store's different departments include receiving, floor, butchery, bakery, perishables, fruit and vegetables, frontline, cash office, customer services and liquor. The manager of each of these departments takes full responsibility for his/her particular department. From a management classification, the managers are classified as middle managers. Each middle manager runs a department (with ten to 50 employees) and is responsible for all aspects within that department. Many of these managers have been in the food retail business for many years, with a diverse range of experience in similar settings. Many of them had also been working within the specific store for a number years.

The ten middle managers report to a store manager, who is classified as a senior manager. From a human resources (HR) perspective, each store manager reports to a human resources manager, who ultimately reports to the HR director.

The researcher worked as training manager within the organisation between 1999 and 2001. Ensuing from a working relationship with the HR director, the researcher was approached by the HR director to find a more effective way to facilitate learning and development for this specific group of ten middle managers within one store. The context was wider than learning and development, as the aim was to "empower" these ten middle managers. Profit centre management is a futurist perspective to managing a particular store, in that each department is set up as a cost centre, with a mandate of generating its own income as well as managing the department (Warren, 2010). The organisation was interested in the concept of profit centre management; hence the need for an effective learning and development intervention to facilitate this type of learning. It is important to note that the main objective was to "empower" the ten individuals. Within the uniquely South African context, many older individuals (specifically those seen as "Previously Disadvanted Individuals", being African, Coloured and Indian) could still feel disempowered to act within themselves and within a work environment.

The following section provides an overview of the sample's biographical data and is presented from a lifelong learning/coaching perspective.

4.3.2 Description of the study group (lifelong learners)

The demography of 10 middle managers took into consideration gender, language spoken, age, ethnic group, educational level and number of years spent with the company.

4.3.2.1   Gender composition of participants

The researcher sought to establish the composition of gender in order to ascertain differences in the responses between the genders. From a total of ten respondents, six (60%) were males and four (40%) females.

4.3.2.2   Language of participants

As coaching requires personal interaction, the language of the respondents had to be taken into consideration. The majority of the participants were Afrikaans speakers (70%). The other respondents spoke English (20%) and one other spoke Xhosa. Both the participants and the facilitator (researcher) spoke and understood English and Afrikaans well. Most of the content material was in English, as demonstrated in appendix G.

It is very important to keep in mind that language could affect the learning capacity within individuals and the way in which they express themselves. This aspect becomes even more relevant when considering individual empowerment.

4.3.2.3   Ages of participants

As lifelong learning is concerned with adult learners and learning throughout life, the diversity in age should be reflected. The comparatively richer life experiences of individual adults are a key factor in analysing data. Accumulated life experiences may also differentiate one adult from another. From a transformative perspective, Mezirow (1991:193) asserts that: "transformations likely to produce developmentally advanced meaning perspectives usually appear to occur after the age of thirty". Kegan (1994) further asserts that most people do not even enter the highest levels of consciousness until in their forties. Table 4.1 gives a summary of the participants' ages across categories.

Table 4.1: Age distribution of participants

	N	%
19 years or younger	0	0
20-29 years	2	20
30-39 years	3	30
40-49 years	3	30
50-59 years	1	10
60 years or older	1	10
TOTAL	**10**	**100**

Table 5.1 indicates the range of age distribution. The age group 30-49 had the highest representation (60%), followed by the age group 20-29 (20%). The age group 50–59 had one participant, and the oldest participant was 61. This represents more mature learners, which has implications for learning and development activities.

4.3.2.4   Ethnic group

Every culture is different and unique. Not all individuals uphold the predominant values and beliefs of their own culture; however, within a coaching context, the coach appreciates and respects individual differences. Within the South African context, and within an empowerment framework, the facilitator/coach needs to take note of individuals who have previously been disadvantaged (PDIs – Previously Disadvantaged Individuals, which includes Black/African, Coloured and Indian individuals). Table 4.2 gives a breakdown of the different ethnic groups.

Table 4.2: Ethnic group of participants

Ethnic group		
	N	**%**
Black	2	20.0%
Coloured	7	70.0%
Indian	0	0.0%
White	1	10.0%
Total	10	100.0%

The majority classified themselves as belonging to the coloured ethnic group (70%). There were two black middle managers (20%) and one white middle manager (10%).

4.3.2.5   Level of education

Coaching is not limited to a qualification level; however, from a needs point of view, the previous level of education of participants has to be established. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Level of education

	N	%
No schooling	0	0
Std 5 (Grade 7 or less)	0	0
Std 6-10 (Grade 8-12)	7	70
Diploma	2	20
Degree	1	10
TOTAL	**10**	**100**

Most of the participants (70%) stated their highest qualification was Grade 8-12 (High school). Two respondents had diplomas and there was one graduate.

4.3.2.6   *Number of years in the company*

Within a learning context, the coach needs to ascertain the depth of experience and knowledge of the different middle managers to structure relevant learning opportunities (Davis & Davis, 2001). Within the context of the research as well as the coaching/learning interaction, this has a direct implication as certain individuals had a wealth of experience to draw from. This is presented in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Number of years in company

No. of years in company		
	N	%
1 year & less	2	20.0%
1-5 years	2	20.0%
6-10 years	5	50.0%
11-15 years	1	10.0%
16 years & longer	0	0.0%
Total	10	100.0%

The majority of the participants (50%) had been working at the company for between six and 10 years, while two respondents were newly employed (having worked for the company for less than one year). Two respondents had been working for the company for between one and five years. One respondent had more than 11 years' service.

Within the context of the research, the sample was drawn from one store within the larger organisation. The sample consisted of ten middle managers within one store; however, Thomas (2011:62) is of the opinion that in a case study design the word "sample" should be avoided, and he suggests the term "selection".

The ten middle managers were selected on their job function and role (that of a middle manager) within the store. As there were only ten middle managers in that specific store, no middle manager was omitted from the research. This has an important implication for the context of "consent". Thomas (2011:70) explains that a distinction should be made between kinds of consent, namely *opted in* and *implied consent.*

- With *opting* in, participants have to make a real choice about becoming involved and actively indicate their willingness to take part in the research. The researcher has to invite participants to become involved, making it clear that they are free to withdraw at any time.

- With *implied consent,* participants are told about the research and it is *assumed* that they give their consent, unless they express the contrary.

Within the context of the research (being set inside a store/organisation with a very strong command structure), consent involved "*implied consent*", whereby the HR director "informed" the ten middle managers that they would be involved in an unique learning and development actitivity. The HR director also introduced the researcher who would then further explain the learning and development activity. The HR director felt that giving middle managers the option of "*opting in*" would lead to few individuals joining in, in which the intervention would not form part of a whole. Further, within the culture of the organisation, power is seen from a hierarchical perspective.

The HR director elaborated on the concept of profit centre management, and explained that the focus of the intervention (using coaching as a learning and development activity) was on "empowerment" of self (through learning) and on operating more effectively within a future context. Together with a brief explanation on empowerment, the HR director gave the participants an overview of the learning activity that would focus on the operational areas (also developed by the HR director) critical to future functioning. These mostly included areas of knowledge, skills, and capabilities. The areas were identified as:

1. Understanding and knowledge of management (such as planning, organising, leading and control).

2. Understanding of budgets and calculations pertaining to Pick n Pay.

3. Understanding and knowledge of different contracts used within the company.

4. The effective handling of labour and interpersonal relations issues.

These areas made up the content of the learning material of the coaching intervention, as well as skills and capability needed. The "internal dimensions" of the process (that of coaching and the individual) were not discussed.

Within the context of the research, the role of the manager may be considered to have two facets: firstly, the "what" or the content of management, for example, planning, organising, controlling and leading; and secondly, the "how" or the process of management, for example interpersonal and decisional roles. Management content and process interact in and with the features of the manager's environment, including business processes, technology, financial systems, organisational culture and structure, power and the politics in the organisation.

In the following section the procedure of the research will be explained.

4.3.3 Research procedure

The research was conducted in three phases, namely a pre-test, a post-test and a post-post-test phase.

4.3.3.1 *Phases of the research*

a) The first phase of the research (the pre-test phase)

Based on the areas of development (understanding and knowledge of management; understanding of budgets and calculations; understanding of knowledge of different contracts; and the handling of labour and interpersonal relations issues) an evaluation of current skills and knowledge around these areas was sought to establish the current levels of knowledge, skills and capability of each middle manager. Almost all of the middle managers had become managers by "moving through the ranks" and most of them had no formal academic background. The researcher had trained some of the middle managers when they were supervisors, while others only had work experience within the company.

A formal evaluation was set up to evaluate the middle managers. The evaluation was not an assessment centre, which, according to Frost (2003:38), use "proven, validated and reliable instruments and exercises", and where "performance [is] being observed and

rated by a team of assessors" (Thornton & Rupp, 2006). These criteria were not used in this evaluation.

This part of the research can be described as an "in-depth evaluation", forming part of a base line test/assessment for establishing the current knowledge, skills and capabilities of the individual middle managers. The evaluation was rather seen as a form of "evaluation of need" as proposed by Babbie and Mouton (2006), to inform the researcher about each uniquely individual manager.

As Table 4.3 indicates, most of the respondents (7 respondents) had schooling up to grade 12. The fact that the evaluation was new to many of the respondents cautions a very sensitive approach (Brookfield, 1986; Knowles et al., 2005; Yin, 2009).

The evaluation consisted of:
- A test with questions pertaining to areas of development (management; planning; calculations; examining contracts used within the company; and the handling of labour and interpersonal relations issues) as borne out by Appendix C.

- Role-play sessions with a professional actor depicting labour and interpersonal situations, as referred to in Appendix D.

- The application of two learning style inventories, namely the Learning Style Inventory proposed by Kolb (1984) and the Learning Style Questionnaire proposed by Honey and Mumford (1992), as mentioned in Appendix H.

- The application of a standardised questionnaire measuring empowerment, as supplied in Appendix A.

- The administration of a structured interview pertaining to empowerment, as referred to in Appendix E.

b) The second phase of the research (the post-test phase of the research)

This phase of the research incorporated the actual coaching intervention (using coaching as a method to facilitate the learning). The content of the learning was structured to suit the development areas, namely that of an understanding and knowledge of management; understanding of budgets and calculations; understanding

of knowledge of different contracts; and the handling of labour and interpersonal relations issues. These matters are exemplified by Appendix G.

Due to the critical shortage of time in a retail environment, the coaching intervention was designed to accommodate each individual for a short period on a weekly basis. Considering each middle manager's responsibilities at work, coaching sessions were flexible, though structured on a weekly basis.

One day per the week was set out for the coaching sessions, with allocated times for each individual middle manager. This schedule was followed for approximately nine months, during which time the coaching process unfolded. The two coaching models (the Co-Active Coaching Model and the Behavioural Coaching Model) were used as conceptual frameworks for the coaching process. The learning was facilitated by the researcher (coach), using the Experiential Learning Model of Kolb (1984). The two coaching models were integrated to allow each respondent to move through all the learning modes, comprising concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. Three theories of adult learning, namely andragogy, experiential learning and transformative learning formed the basis of this process. At the end of the coaching intervention, the participants completed a standardised empowerment questionnaire, which was the same as the one used during the pre-test). This was followed by a structured interview pertaining to empowerment.

c) The third phase of the research (the post-post-test phase of the research)
The third stage of the research was conducted three months after the post-test. The participants completed the same empowerment questionnaire and a structured interview was conducted with each of the individual respondents.

Referring to the conceptual overview of the three phases of the research, Yin (2009) cautions that most people associate the "doing" of a case study with the collection of case study data. However, Yin (2009) also states that preparation precedes actual data collection techniques.

Good preparation covers five topics and begins with the *desired skills* of the case study researcher. Other topics include *training* for the specific case study, developing a *protocol* for investigation, *screening* candidate cases, and conducting a *pilot case study*.

Each of the topics was mentioned and explained briefly if they had relevance for the context of the research:

1. Within the context of *desired skills* the common skills required are:

- asking good questions;

- being a good "listener";

- exercising adaptiveness and flexibility;

- having a firm grasp of issues being studied; and

- avoiding bias.

Within the context of the research, these skills are similar to those needed by an effective facilitator of lifelong learning, as described in 2.5, as well as to those needed for being an effective coach, as mentioned in 3.1.7.

2. *Training* for the specific case study. This refers to training other case investigators in the area of human subjects' protection. In the context of the research, no other case investigators (apart from the researcher) were involved. This, however, amounts to a bigger responsibility. Yin (2009) cautions that within the context of human subjects' protection, the researcher should always conduct all research with the highest ethical standards. Yin (2009) and Thomas (2011) agree that the researcher should conduct the case study with special care and sensitivity. This usually involves:

- gaining informed *consent* from all persons who may be part of the case study, and alerting them to the nature of the case study;

- protecting those who participate in the study from any *harm*, including avoiding the use of *deception* in one's study;

- protecting the *privacy* and *confidentiality of those who participate*; and

- taking special precautions that might be needed to protect those who are *vulnerable*.

This point alludes to the aspect of ethics in case study research. Thomas (2011:68) cautions that it is very important to consider ethics in case study research, since "the

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researcher may be very closely involved with the research participants." Thomas (2011:68) emphasises the need for respect when working with people and points out that the researcher should take care not to assume "that participants would not mind… " There are many reasons why people do mind, such as:

- they may be embarrassed;

- they may feel under pressure for having been asked;

- they may fear a loss of respect among their peers; and

- they may feel hesitant to take part in a project endorsed by management.

These reasons could all be relevant within the context of the research.

3. A case study *protocol* should consist of the following sections:

- an overview of the case study project;

- field procedures (access to the site; language use pertaining to the protection of human subjects; sources of data);

- case study questions;

- a guide for the case study report.

The case study *protocol* keeps the researcher focused on the case study and forces the researcher to anticipate problems (Yin, 2009).

4. Another preparatory step is the final *screening* of candidates. However, within the context of the research, the selection was straightforward in the sense that the study was a unique case.

5. The role of a *pilot case study* is also not relevant to the study, for the same reason as noted in point no. 4.

Thomas (2011) cautions that when using a case study design, the researcher needs to examine the case (whether single or multiple) in detail to establish the range of applicable methods for gathering and analysing data.

4.3.4 Data collection (Collect)

Case study research makes use of of both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Case study research can employ interviews, field notes, questionnaires, observation, tests and statistics (Thomas, 2011; Yin, 2009). Within the context of the research, the following methods, as depicted in Table 4.5, were used for data collection:

Table 4.5: Data collection methods used in the research

1. interviews	
structured interviews	
unstructured interviews	**mainly use words**
2. field notes	
3. questionnaires	
4. observation	
direct observation	**use words and/or numbers**
participant observation	
5. tests	
6. official statistics	**mainly use numbers**

Yin (2009:114–125) is of the opinion that the sources of evidence can be maximised if the following three principles are adhered to:

Principle 1: Use multiple sources of evidence. This involves the triangulation of sources of evidence.

Principle 2: Create a case study database. This refers to developing a formal, presentable database, so that other investigators can review the evidence directly, instead of being limited to written case study reports. In this manner the reliability of the case study is increased.

Principle 3: Maintain a chain of evidence. This principle allows an external observer to follow the derivation of any evidence from initial research questions in reaching case study conclusions.

If these objectives are achieved, a case study will also have addressed the methodological problem of determining construct validity, thereby increasing the overall quality of the case study.

Babbie (2001) further cautions that the principal researcher is responsible to know and understand the data recording standards specific to the research, as well as assuming responsibility for access to the data. As all stored data is vulnerable, a range of measures can be taken to minimise risks that might compromise confidentiality.

Within the context of the research, the researcher kept all hard copy documents, audio tapes, video tapes, CDs and DVDs in a secured filing cabinet in a locked room. For securing computer files, best practice is to anonymise, password protect and keep a backup copy (Babbie & Mouton, 2006).

Quality assurance of the data was obtained by through drawing from the university's academic expertise, as well as by consulting with the University's recognised statistical services. In the following section, each method of data collection is explained theoretically, while also providing details ofl how it was applied in the research. The following methods focused on collecting qualitative data:

4.3.4.1   *Interviews*

In a *structured* interview, the researcher asks a predetermined list of questions (Babbie, 2001). The structured interview has a limited range of strengths, in that it can be easily administered, while responses are easy to code (Thomas, 2011). The fact that the structured interview was conducted in a face-to-face manner was particulary relevant in the context of facilitation and individual coaching.

Application in the research:

The *structured* interview, as set out in Figure 4.4, was applied to the middle managers during all three phases (pre-test, post-test, post-post-test) of the research. The interview consisted of questions categorised on three levels, namely knowledge, behaviour and attitude (Albertyn, 2001). The same interview (with predetermined questions) was conducted during the post-test and post-post test phases to determine changes in knowledge, behaviour and attitude.

KNOWLEDGE

- How would you describe yourself?

- Can you tell me what your strengths and weaknesses are?

BEHAVIOUR

- How do you cope with your life and relationships at home?

- How do you cope with your life and relationships at work?

- How do you cope with your life and relationships in the community?

ATTITUDE

- How happy/content would you say that you feel with yourself right now?

- How do you feel about the future?

Figure 4.4: Structured interview schedule

According to Thomas (2011), *unstructured* interviews are likely to be used in an interpretative case study. The same author likens the unstructured interview to a conversation. Babbie (2001) explains that there is no fixed way to conduct such an interview. Thomas (2011:163) states that the interviewees set the agenda and determine the direction of the interview, as well as the topics that emerge, implying that "[a]s the researcher, you go in with an open mind and just try to listen and facilitate".

Application in the research:

Within the context of the research, the *unstructured* interview took the form of the coaching conversation used throughout the research. In terms of process, the unstructured interview needs to be clear and must lead to action and learning (Chapman, 2010), as it is not the conversation that informs, explains and rectifies.

One of the main areas in which a coach can help a coachee, relates to how the coachee sees things. Courteously pointing out to the coachee what he/she is doing can enable the coachee to see things in a new way and gain fresh insight.

Effective questions that were used include:

- What makes you say that?

- Are you sure about that?

- Is it a fact or a feeling?

- Do other people share your opinion?

- What would it look like from another point of view?

- How could you see it differently?

These types of questions force the coachee to reflect upon his/her position. According to Whitworth et al. (2001), powerful questions are provocative queries that are generally open-ended, thereby creating more possibilities for expanded learning and fresh perspectives. These types of questions are typically used in a coaching dialogue and can be categorised under appropriate headings. Examples (Figure 4.5) of this type of question include:

Anticipation
- What might happen?

- What if it does not work?

- What is your backup plan?

Assessment
- What do you think is best?

- How do you feel about it?

- How does it look to you?

Clarification
- What do you mean?

- What does it feel like?

- Can you say more?

- What do you want?

Figure 4.5: Unstructured interview

Inquiry is also used during coaching conversations. According to Whitworth et al. (2001), inquiry is a powerful type of questioning that is typically used as a homework assignment between coaching sessions. Instead of looking for one correct answer, the coachee experiences a mode of self-reflection, discovery and learning. The following list provides examples of questions used during the research:

- What do you want?

- What is a choice? What does it mean to choose?

- What is the difference between a wish and a goal?

- What does being powerful/resourceful/empowering/determined mean?

- How have I withheld myself from life?

- What can I do to my situation so that it will empower me?

- What does being proactive mean?

- What have you learned about yourself?

- What is the next step?

4.3.4.2   Diaries and field notes

A diary and field notes may involve the researcher or a participant in the research, making a record of ideas, reflections, thoughts, emotions, actions, reactions and conversations (McCaig & Dahlberg, 2009).

Field notes (provided in Appendix I) were taken of the coaching sessions to support findings in the interviews, questionnaires, observations and the empowerment questionnaire. Silverman (2000) suggests two practical rules for making field notes, namely that the researcher should record what is seen as well as what is heard, and that field notes must be expanded beyond immediate observations. Alexander and Renshaw (2005) warn about the danger of documenting coaching sessions, saying that it can lead to a break in the flow of conversation and a loss of focus on the part of the coachee.

Application in the research:

Within the context of the research, the researcher tried to write field notes immediately after each coaching session. Should one need to make notes during the coaching session, one should be aware that the coaching process or conversation could be derailed if too much attention is drawn to the writing activity. The researcher further reflected on the different coachees by writing detailed descriptions on each individual learner or, in this case, the specific middle manager.

These notes included qualitative remarks made by the coachees, the feelings of the researcher and general changes that were discerned. Due to coaching being such an intense process, it is critical to capture all the aspects during or after the engagement or session. Field notes can be considered a central data collection tool in the research process. High quality field data capture the participants' subjective viewpoints and provide the observer with an understanding of their experience (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). Neumann (1997) is of the opinion that it is almost impossible to make good field notes in the field and suggests that the researcher should make a habit of writing notes immediately after leaving the field. According to Hammersley and Atkinson (1995), field notes should be triangulated with different tests and other sources of evidence.

The following methods focused on collecting both qualitative and quantitative data:

4.3.4.3   Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a written form of questioning. Babbie (2001) states that questionnaires are most frequently used in research involving evaluation. The focus of questionnaires is on description and measurement. Sapsford and Jupp (2008) are of the opinion that questionnaires serve as a major tool for collecting primary data, apart from providing a wealth of descriptive data relating to individuals or groups.

A questionnaire can be tightly structured, but it can also allow for a more open response, if required (Thomas, 2011).

Application in the research

Three different questionnaires were used in the research, namely:
  1. The empowerment questionnaire (Albertyn, 2001)

2. The Learning Styles Inventory (Kolb, 1984)

3. The Learning Style Questionnaire (Honey & Mumford, 1992)

1. The empowerment questionnaire (presented in Appendix A) was developed by Albertyn (2001) and has been used within a South African context to measure different levels (micro-, interface and macro-) of empowerment.

The questionnaire was based on the outcomes of empowerment identified in the literature on three levels: Micro-level, Interface level and Macro-level. Statistical procedures were applied to validate the questionnaire. The summated rating method was used to design, reduce and validate the questionnaire. Accordingly, item analysis was conducted where two criteria were applied. The first was the utilisation of the 4-point Likert scale with a 90% cutoff point. This was done to determine the questionnaire's discriminative power. The second criterion in the process of questionnaire reduction was the application of the Spearman correlation to determine the extent to which all the responses to the respective statements were correlated with the total score.

The instrument consists of 61 statements that cover the three levels of empowerment, namely:

- Micro-level of empowerment (internal dimension of empowerment – individual).

- Interface level of empowerment (how the individual sees him-/herself in a group context).

- Macro-level of empowerment (how the individual sees him-/herself in a bigger context).

The empowerment questionnaire was applied on three different occasions, namely at the pre-test, post-test and post-post-test.

The pre-test scores of the middle managers represented the baseline measure against which the post-test and post-post-test scores were measured to determine the change in level of empowerment for each middle manager. Mouton (1999:64) states: "Without a reliable benchmark, one cannot argue convincingly that changes had in fact occurred during a particular programme".

Another critical reason for applying the questionnaire as a post-test was not only to generate post-test data, but also as a process to monitor the implementation of the coaching intervention.

The reliability and validity of the empowerment questionnaire had already been proved in previous research (Albertyn, 1995), and the questionnaire had also been applied cross-culturally. According to Mouton (2001:102). this improves the validity of the instrumentation.

The score of each middle manager was compiled separately. The empowerment status of each middle manager was measured longitudinally over a period of twelve months (December 2005 – December 2006). Longitudinal studies (also called diachronic research) involve the observation of units of analysis (in this case the middle managers) over a period of time.

2. The second questionnaire used in the research and included in Appendix H, was the Learning Style Inventory (LSI), as developed by Kolb (1984). The LSI was developed to identify an individual's preferred learning style (Chapman, 2010). The LSI is a self-descriptive questionnaire that measures an individual's relative emphasis on each of the four modes, as described in 2.4.2.

Based on extensive research, Kolb (1984:77–78): developed the following descriptions of the characteristics of the four learning styles:

- The convergent learning style

- The divergent learning style

- The assimilation learning style

- The accommodative learning style

These are preferred learning styles, each with their unique attributes, indicating the individual's unique preference in learning.

The LSI was applied at the pre-test to determine the preferred learning style of each middle manager/coachee as point of reference in facilitating experiential learning .

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3. The third questionnaire used in the research was the Learning Styles Questionnaire (LSQ), presented in Appendix H, as developed by Honey and Mumford (1992). The authors built on the work of Kolb (1984) and developed their own model of learning (the learning cycle). Four different learning styles were identified, namely:

- Activist

- Reflector

- Theorist

- Pragmatist

The LSQ was applied at the pre-test to determine the preferred learning style of each middle manager/coachee and was used to confirm the unique learning style of each individual. It is important to re-iterate that the focus of the research was the use of the LSI as proposed by Kolb (1984). The LSQ (Honey & Mumford, 1992) was only used as backup to confirm the results of the LSI.

4.3.4.4 *Observation*

Two types of observation were used in the research, namely *direct observation* and *participant observation*.

Direct observation: Case studies usually take place in the natural setting of the "case", thereby creating the opportunity for direct observations. During this kind of observation, the researcher systematically looks for particular kinds of behaviour. Thomas (2011:165) indicates that this might be "individual pieces of action or language". Direct observation can also take the form of videotaping role-play, whereby the researcher can observe an individual in detail, as indicated in Appendix D. Direct observations can also be less formal, such as the observation of individuals during interaction and meetings (Yin, 2009). Yin (2009) concludes that observational evidence is useful for providing additional information about the case.

Participant observation can be used in everyday settings within a large organisation (Yin, 2009). According to Henning et al. (2004) and Maree (2007), researchers must design a way of observing individuals naturalistically.

Thomas (2011) describes how the researcher is positioned "in" the situation, recording and watching from within. Yin (2009) cautions that in this type of observation, the researcher is not merely a passive observer. Participant observation allows the researcher to gain access to individuals and groups that would otherwise be inaccessible. Yin (2009:112) describes this as "the ability to perceive reality from the viewpoint of someone inside the case study". The strength of participant observation is that it has high construct validity, because it has its roots in the world of the subjects (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

Reliability in field research depends on the internal and external consistency of the facilitator's observations. Internal consistency means that observations about a certain person are coherent over time, while external consistency means that other evidence confirms the researcher's observations (Neumann, 1997:368).

Application in the research

Both direct observation and participant observation are evidenced throughout the research. Direct observation took the form of a role-play, which was videotaped, as reported in Appendix D, during the pre-test phase of the research. Other forms of direct observation included observation of individual middle managers as they were facilitating their departmental meetings and interacted with customers, subordinates, superiors and colleagues.

From a participant observational perspective, the fact that the researcher was directly involved in the lives of the individual middle managers, facilitated a relatively easy entrance into the social situations, allowing the researcher to experience the values, conflicts and pressures under which the individual middle manager operates.

The following section focused on generating quantitative data.

4.3.4.5   Tests

According to Thomas (2011), tests are used to check the extent of something, and are usually given in the form of numbers. Tests can exist in simple, informal measures devised for a particular and local purpose, as well as in complex, standardised forms. An informal test assesses something that has been taught on a level of pre-existing knowledge. Thomas (2011) concludes that for an evaluative case study, the researcher may devise a test to assess the extent of learning.

Tests can either be norm-referenced or criterion-referenced:

- a *norm-referenced test* compares the person being tested to a sample of similar people

- a *criterion-referenced test* assesses whether or not someone meets any given criterion, irrespective of how well other people perform in the test.

Application in the research

A norm-referenced test, as provided in Appendix C, was written during the pre-test phase of the research. The test was related to the areas of development as mentioned in 4.3.3.1.

4.3.4.6 Official statistics

Statistical analysis offers some explicit criteria for the interpretation of data. By convention, the social sciences consider a p-level of less than 0.5 to demonstrate that observed differences were "statistically significant" (Yin, 2009).

Application in the research

Statistical analysis was applied to the empowerment questionnaire to detect statistically significant differences between scores on pre-test, post-test and post-post-test.

4.4 TRIANGULATION

The use of multiple methods of collecting data is called methodological triangulation or triad (Creswell & Clark, 2007; Walker, 1990). A combination of dissimilar methods such as interviews, field notes, questionnaires observations, tests and official statistics was used in the research.

Within the context of this research, data triangulation involves the creation of multiple data sets by collecting these in a variety of contexts and settings at different points in time. This may involve the same method on more than one occasion, or using different methods at different times. Examples of methodological triangulation involve the administering of the same questionnaire on separate occasions, or attempting to address the same phenomena using a combination of other data collection methods (Creswell & Clark, 2007).

According to Yin (2009) and Thomas (2011), triangulation (in different forms) is used as strategy in many case-study designs. Creswell and Clark (2007) are of the opinion that the triangulation of interviews, questionnaires, observations and other interpretations can provide validation for data. This implies the use of more than one method of measurement to increase the validity of the findings.

Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:83) promote the idea that "methods must be selected according to purposes". This research predominantly made use of qualitative data, but also incorporated quantitative data to a lesser degree. The aim of the qualitative data was to enrich the data and to validate the empowerment-measuring instrument.

Within the context of the research, sources of error with this type of inquiry (observer/interviewer bias, as well as lack of rigorous control versus no-control group) were overcome by making use of the triangulation of different sources.

In summary, Figure 4.1 represents how the different sources of data were used to complement other forms of data. During this research, questionnaires/observations/interviews and informal tests were triangulated with the field notes/diary and the empowerment questionnaire as a means to validate data. This is presented in Figure 4.6.
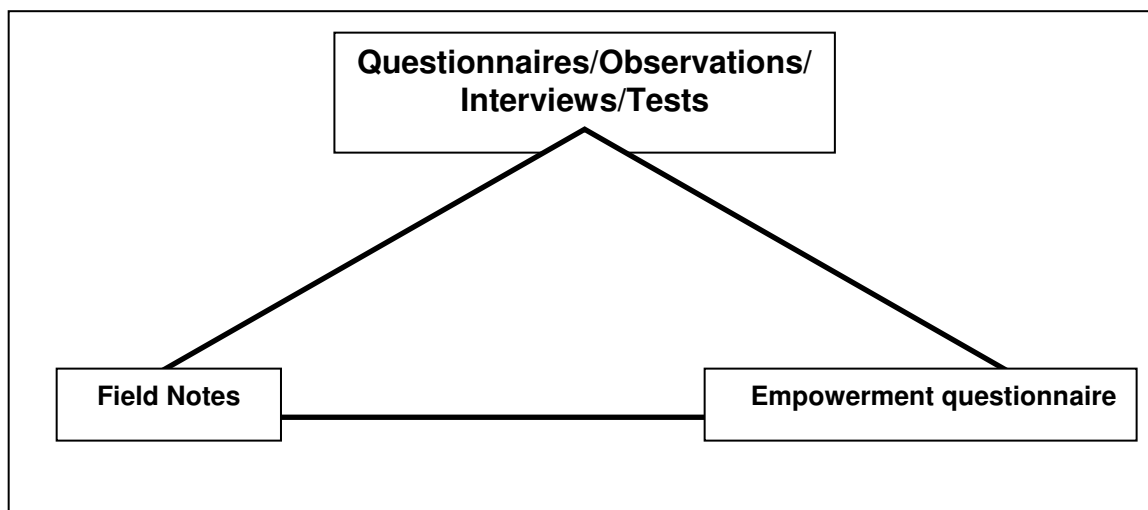
Figure 4.6: Validation of data

This implies that if more than one method of measurement is used, the validity of the findings increases.

4.5   CONTENT ANALYSIS

Most social research is based on interviewing and written texts. Within the context of the research, content analysis was used for the field notes written on each individual respondent throughout the research. According to Bauer (2000:14), content analysis is *a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context*.

Coding and classifying the responses is a constructive task that brings together the theory and the research material (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). A coding frame is constructed, allowing for systematic comparison. This is made up of a set of questions (codes) by means of which the coder (researcher) addresses the materials, and to which the coder obtains answers within a predefined set of alternatives (code values). Content analysis interprets the text in the light of the coding frame only, which constitutes a theoretical selection that embodies the research purpose (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). A content analysis represents what is already a representation, binding the researcher to a research project (Bauer, 2000).

Open-ended questions, where the researcher or interviewer takes down verbatim what the informant says, require more attention at the analysis stage (Hall, 1996). The various responses to the question are grouped into a logical and orderly set of discrete categories. The answers to each question have to be written out so that all the answers can be viewed together. Where the same words appear in different people's responses, one can confidently group the replies together. However, Hall (1996) cautions that simplifying the task of analysis may lead to losing some of the "richness" of information.

Pragmatically, the aim is obtain a manageable set of categories that encapsulate the variety of responses. Once the provisional categorisation has been applied to the questionnaire and a frequency count for the question has been produced, the researcher finally has to review the coding for the questions to see whether:

- it makes good sense (face validity);

- it is comprehensive (covers all responses); and

- it discriminates between responses (Hall, 1996).

Within the context of the research, content analysis was used to analyse answers to questions and questionnaires, to analyse responses obtained during interviews, and for the identification and analysis of similar words in the field notes.

Content analysis, also known as textual analysis, is shown in Appendix J, which was used as a systematic analysis of observations obtained from records, documents and field notes. This method of content analysis enables the researcher to include large amounts of textual information and systematically identify its properties, for example the frequencies of most used keywords.

CHAPTER 5:   PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

The presentation, analysis and interpretation of results provide the basis for this chapter. Presentation forms part of the general process of discussion and argument, whereas analysis involves "breaking up" the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships. Finally, interpretation involves the synthesis of one's data into a larger coherent whole (Mouton, 2001).

The research findings are presented in accordance with Chapter Four, namely interviews, diaries and field notes, questionnaires, observations, measurements and tests, and official statistics.

In the final section, an individual profile of each lifelong learner is constructed by integrating all the data to provide an individual profile for each of the middle managers. Within the context of the findings for each individual, an overview is provided regarding the effect of the coaching intervention on each individual lifelong learner.

5.2   QUALITATIVE DATA

5.2.1 Interviews

In the following section, an overview of both the structured interviews (administered in the pre-test, post-test and post-post-test phases) and the informal interviews (coaching conversation) is presented in respect of each individual respondent.

During the *structured interview*, the answers to the questions were tape recorded (as shown in Appendix F), so that the researcher could replay the answers and reflect on them, allowing for deeper understanding and interpretation of the different answers. The three testing occasions (pre-test, post-test and post-post test) made it possible to identify changes as the learning activity progressed.

The *unstructured interview* (the coaching conversation) was a natural conversation covering a wide array of conversations and discussions. The researcher had formerly

worked with four of the respondents (Respondent 1, Respondent 4, Respondent 8 and Respondent 9) in presenting a supervisory programme (of which they were part) when they were still fulfilling their roles as supervisors. This allowed for more open and easier conversations, as well as for a higher level of trust.

5.2.1.1   Structured interviews

5.2.1.1.1   Respondent 1

Respondent 1 was very quiet and known to be someone of very few words. During the pre-test, the respondent did not expand on any of the questions, but mentioned that one needs perseverance and a belief in oneself. During the post-test, there was much more engagement and the respondent expressed overall excitement about the future. During the post-post-test, the respondent's answers showed more reflection and thought (conceptualisation) on a deeper level, as well as showing that she was implementing what she had learnt.

5.2.1.1.2   Respondent 2

Respondent 2 did not communicate well and did not engage in conversation. During the pre-test phase, the respondent answered abruptly (without really considering the questions) and responses were very short and kept to a minimum. This was also evidenced during the post-test and post-post-test interviews, where the respondent did not engage in any deep conceptualisation or reflection on self. The respondent did not seem to act on anything that he had learnt (active experimentation).

5.2.1.1.3   Respondent 3

During the pre-test, Respondent 3 described himself as a dedicated, hardworking individual. One area that he felt he needed to work on was that of confronting people directly. He also felt he should communicate better in the workplace as well as at home. He felt that he was open to new learning opportunities and future challenges. During the post-test and post-post testing occasion, the respondent reflected much more. He expanded on what he had learnt, as well as on how he implemented what he had learnt. Within the context of experiential learning, the respondent's answers pointed to the idea that he had completed the full cycle of learning. Where he had a particular experience, he reflected on it; he conceptualised and actioned what he had learnt.

5.2.1.1.4   Respondent 4

Respondent 4 was a very quiet person by nature. During the pre-test structured interview, the respondent noted that she needed to work on communication, especially within the work environment. The respondent also noted that she was looking forward to what the future might hold. Other than that, the respondent did not expand any further. During the post-test, however, the respondent expanded in much detail what she had learnt (conceptualised and reflected), as well as on how she applied (experimented) what she had learnt and the effect that her actions had. The respondent answered the questions with much confidence, indicative of an empowered learner.

5.2.1.1.5   Respondent 5

Respondent 5, the eldest of all the respondents, displayed the most enthusiasm during the pre-test structured interview. The interview also took the longest to complete. Unlike the other respondents, the respondent went into much detail regarding all questions. The respondent felt acknowledged and appreciated and privileged to be part of the process. During the post-test and post-post-test interviews, the respondent once again went into much detail about his experiences. He reflected extensively on what he had gained (conceptualised) from the learning experience (within a work and individual capacity) and how he implemented what he had learnt (active experimentation). Within the context of experiential learning, it became evident that the respondent had passed through all four modes of learning, namely concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation.

5.2.1.1.6   Respondent 6

The respondent was very negative throughout the structured interview process (during the pre-test) and kept his answers short to demonstrate his lack of interest. The respondent felt that he had enough "experience" and needed no further development. The respondent failed to complete both the post-test and the post-post-test interviews, without giving a reason for not attending.

5.2.1.1.7   Respondent 7

Respondent 7 had a speech impediment, and when he became nervous, he found it extremely difficult to speak. During the pre-test, Respondent 7 described himself as being very observant and peace-loving. He noted his strengths as being patient and being a good organiser. He noted that he is good at solving problems and usually tries to

find a solution that benefits both sides. Overall, the respondent had a positive outlook on work and life. Like Respondent 6, Respondent 7 failed to complete both the post-test and the post-post-test interviews, also giving no reason for not attending.

5.2.1.1.8   Respondent 8

During the pre-test structured interview, Respondent 8 described herself as someone who panics too quickly. She added that she is sympathetic towards others, but is not easily intimidated. She noted one of her strengths as being a good communicator, and although very quiet at home, she maintains good communication with her family members. At work she felt she does not interact that well with certain people, and therefore sometimes felt that those individuals do not like her. She was involved in her community and on a more personal note she felt that she still needed to deal with certain things. She concluded by noting that one needs to "act" or do things to move ahead.

During the post-test structured interview, the respondent pointed to the fact that she implemented much of what she had learnt (active experimentation). She also reflected in much more detail than during the pre-test structured interview. During the post-post-test interview, it became clear that the respondent reflected from a deeper conceptualised state. The respondent also reflected on the deeper internal dimensions within herself. From the responses to the interview, it became evident that the respondent had moved through the experiential learning cycle, from concrete experience to reflecting upon the experience, to a deeper conceptualisation, to actively experimenting with what the respondent had learnt.

5.2.1.1.9   Respondent 9

At the time of the pre-test structured interview, the respondent informed the researcher that she was going through a divorce, adding that it was a very difficult time in her personal life. During the interview, respondent 9 stated that she communicates very well with people and that she is a problem solver. The respondent also noted that she was looking forward to the future.

During the post-test and post-post-test interview, the respondent did not really engage the researcher and most of her responses were superficial, lacking reflection or conceptualisation.

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5.2.1.1.10   Respondent 10

During the pre-test interview, respondent 10 noted that he works well with others and views his strengths as being able to give good instructions, as well as being a very practical person. He indicated that he regards his handling of administrative matters as a weakness. The respondent was involved in his community and most people in his community knew him, which according to the respondent, "means a lot". The respondent noted that he is looking forward to a better future within the company, but knows he still needs to learn more. The respondent gave the impression that he answered without really thinking about the questions.

During the post-test and post-post-test interviews, the respondent did not seem to engage in critical reflection or deeper conceptualisation. His answers to questions did not point to the respondent taking much action (active experimentation).

5.2.1.2   Unstructured interviews

The *informal* or *unstructured interviews* were the "coaching conversations" and many discussions were held with each of the individual managers.

The following section gives a general overview of each manager's responses in the course of the unstructured interviews:

5.2.1.2.1   Respondent 1

Respondent 1 had a quiet nature and acknowledged that she found it difficult to articulate her needs. One of the tasks given to her was to make her needs known at home. The objective was to get her to make her needs known progressively, until she would start to do so automatically. The respondent grew in confidence and started to speak up at work and in coaching sessions with the researcher. The respondent had a more gentle way with her staff, as opposed to others who resorted to shouting. This helped her to become very efficient, as she was well- liked by her fellow managers and her staff members. The respondent felt that she needed to work on her self-esteem and resource allocation, and on becoming more assertive.

5.2.1.2.2   Respondent 2

Respondent 2 did not make an effort to engage his employees, the researcher, or the coaching process in any way. During departmental meetings, as well as when the

respondent gave general instructions, the recipients were not sure what was required of them. As a result, things were "hanging in the air" and no action was taken. The respondent did not seem to act on anything that he had learnt (active experimentation).

5.2.1.2.3   Respondent 3

Respondent 3 was very hardworking. Initially, during informal sessions, the respondent did not come across convincingly and seemed reluctant to take charge. There appeared to be a sense of not really stepping into the position with authority and always having to check decisions with senior management. The respondent gave the impression that the approval of others was important to him. The respondent also noted, however, that he experienced not having much control over certain resources and he wanted to improve on this. Towards the end of the coaching sessions, the respondent spoke more directly and openly.

5.2.1.2.4   Respondent 4

Respondent 4 expressed herself more freely during each coaching session. She was open and went into much detail about people and situations. Initially the respondent only spoke about an incident or particular person. Over time, however, most of her conversations showed a considerable amount of critical reflection. Towards the end of the coaching intervention, the respondent would comment on how she enjoyed and learned from the experience. The respondent never missed a coaching session.

5.2.1.2.5   Respondent 5

Throughout the informal coaching conversations, Respondent 5 always engaged the researcher. He drew from his many life experiences. Conversations were long, open and honest, and very sincere. The respondent became more confident about the bigger role he was playing in the organisation and one could sense that he was becoming more empowered in the course of time, and as the process moved forward.

5.2.1.2.6   Respondent 6

Initially the respondent was very negative, and of all the participants he was the least known to the researcher. This might explain his apparent feeling of distrust towards the respondent. This changed slightly as the process moved forward; however, most of the conversations were superficial, lacking depth or connection. The respondent disengaged

completely at one stage, and towards the end of the coaching sessions the respondent failed to turn up.

5.2.1.2.7   Respondent 7

Initially, Respondent 7 did not communicate much, due to his speech impediment. However, as the coaching process progressed, he seemed to show more interest in himself and he wanted to know more about his individual traits. This opened up the informal conversations and the respondent became more inquisitive. The level of trust between the respondent (coachee) and the researcher (coach) improved slightly after the initial coaching sessions, although the respondent disengaged completely towards the end of the coaching intervention. After this disengagement, the respondent failed to turn up for coaching sessions.

5.2.1.2.8   Respondent 8

Respondent 8 was a very committed, intense and hard-working individual. As the researcher had previously worked with the respondent, there was a higher level of trust. Towards the end of the coaching intervention, the respondent noted that she was actually looking forward to the coaching conversations. The respondent opened up and disclosed both work-related and personal issues. It was encouraging to see the respondent initiate conversation and express dissatisfaction about certain matters towards the end of the learning intervention. The respondent tried out (actively experimented) new ideas and shared these experiences with the researcher.

5.2.1.2.9   Respondent 9

Respondent 9 seemed comfortable during most of the informal coaching conversations, although most of the unstructured interviews were superficial and lacked depth. The fact that the learning intervention coincided with a very difficult time in her personal life could be the reason why the respondent chose not to engage actively in open conversation.

5.2.1.2.10   Respondent 10

The respondent (coachee) gave the researcher (coach) the impression that he was not always being honest and genuine during the unstructured interviews in the informal coaching conversations. It seemed as if the respondent had difficulty to voice his opinion and that he did not want to do anything "wrong". Initially the respondent would agree with statements, even when both the respondent and the researcher knew it was not what

the respondent really thought or held true. Only towards the end of the coaching intervention did the respondent partially understand the value of the learning experience.

5.2.2 Field notes

In the following section, an overview of field notes made by the researcher. as presented in Appendix I, is presented (making use of content analysis – by referring to the frequency of words most used).

5.2.2.1   Respondent 1

Content analysis of the field notes showed that words or phrases such as "growing in confidence", "doing well" and "a sense of true empowerment" were often used.

Other notes pointed to the respondent managing her department well. It appeared that workers in her department were well-settled.

5.2.2.2   Respondent 2

Content analysis of field notes identified the frequent use of words such as "not taking action" and "not communicating".

5.2.2.3   Respondent 3

Content analysis of field notes highlighted words such as "doing well", "reflecting well" and "acting on". In most instances, this respondent acted on issues and areas that he had identified, such as being more direct and not holding back.

5.2.2.4   Respondent 4

Content analysis of field notes showed that words and phrases such as "doing well", "on time" and "growing in confidence", as well as "delegating" and "progress", were often used.

5.2.2.5   Respondent 5

Content analysis of field notes highlighted words such as "good interaction" and drawing from his "experience".

From a learning perspective, field notes pointed to the respondent being "engaged" in the learning process, and that he "acted" on things that he had reflected upon.

5.2.2.6 Respondent 6

Content analysis of field notes highlighted words such as "not interacting" and "not engaging the process".

5.2.2.7 Respondent 7

Content analysis of field notes initially showed words such as "engaging the process". However, towards the end of the coaching intervention, words such as "distant" and "not engaging" appeared.

5.2.2.8 Respondent 8

Content analysis of field notes showed the frequent use of the words "doing well". Other words such as "growing in confidence", "reflecting well" and "asserting herself" indicated overall engagement and testified that the respondent had made progress.

5.2.2.9 Respondent 9

Content analysis of field notes showed a prominent use of words such as "needs to be more assertive", "needs to take a firmer stand", "open to new learning opportunities" and "has much potential".

5.2.2.10 Respondent 10

Content analysis of field notes highlighted words such as "not understanding the process", "not being honest" and "not reflecting".

5.3 QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE DATA

The following section covers findings that include qualitative as well as quantitative data findings. The findings of the three different questionnaires are presented together with the findings of the two different types of observation.

5.3.1 Questionnaires

5.3.1.1 Empowerment questionnaire

In the following figures (figures 5.1 to 5.10, depicted in graphs), each individual manager's empowerment score is represented longitudinally, as tested on three testing occasions (namely pre-test, post-test, and post-post-test).

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5.3.1.1.1   Respondent 1

	Pre Test	Post Test	Post-post Test
Micro-Level	73.5%	87.9%	80.3%
Interface	75.0%	78.3%	81.7%
Macro-Level	67.3%	73.1%	86.5%
Total	72.5%	82.4%	82.0%
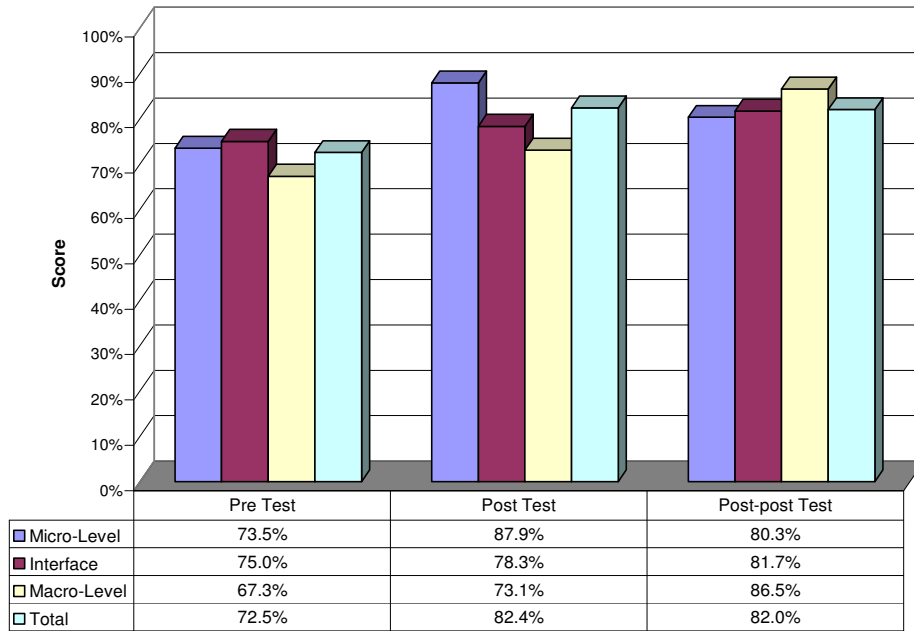
Figure 5.1: Graphic representation of empowerment status of Respondent 1

It is evident that for this respondent, there was an increase in the micro-level score directly after the learning and development intervention. On the interface and the macro-level, the empowerment score systematically increased from pre-test to post-test, to-post-post-test.

5.3.1.1.2   Respondent 2

	Pre Test	Post Test	Post-post Test
◻ Micro-Level	72.7%	78.8%	72.0%
◼ Interface	75.0%	76.7%	71.7%
◻ Macro-Level	71.2%	65.4%	69.2%
◻ Total	73.0%	75.4%	71.3%

Testing Occassion
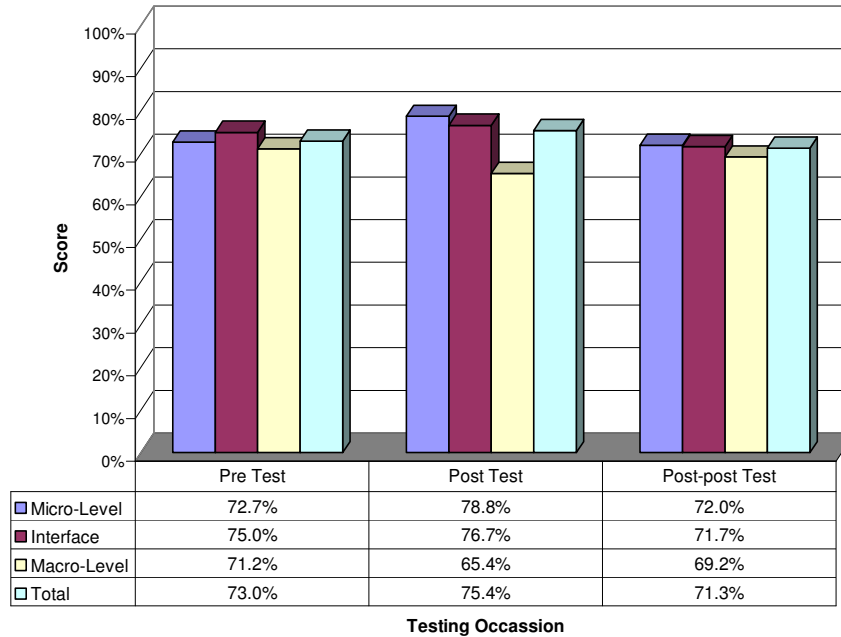
Figure 5.2: Graphic representation of empowerment status of Respondent 2

For this respondent there was a decrease in all the scores when comparing the post-post score with the measurement prior to commencing the learning and development activity. On the macro-level, there was a decrease in the score directly after the intervention, but it improved in the three-month period after completion of the intervention.

5.3.1.1.3   Respondent 3

Testing Occassion	Pre Test	Post Test	Post-post Test
Micro-Level	87.1%	93.2%	93.9%
Interface	88.3%	85.0%	85.0%
Macro-Level	67.3%	71.2%	71.2%
Total	83.2%	86.5%	86.9%

Testing Occassion
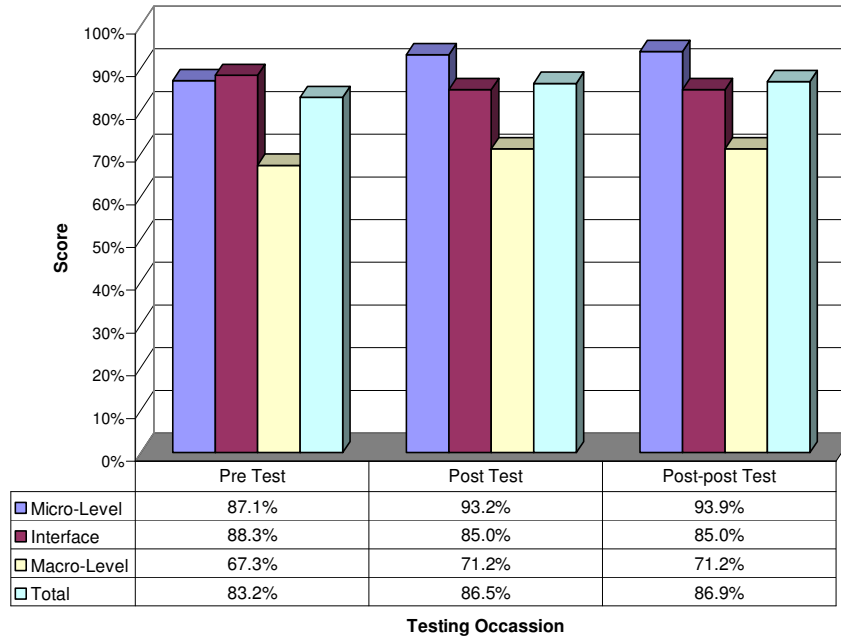
Figure 5.3: Graphic representation of empowerment status of Respondent 3

Respondent 3 was the only respondent who showed a consistent linear increase in empowerment scores from pre- to post- to post-post test. The scores for this respondent were very similar when comparing the post-post test score with the post-testing occasion. The improvement that was evident after the learning and development intervention was therefore sustained in the long term. Compared to the baseline measurement, this respondent had clearly benefited from the intervention. The biggest impact was evident on the micro-level.

5.3.1.1.4   Respondent 4

Testing Occassion	Pre Test	Post Test	Post-post Test
Micro-Level	88.6%	96.2%	93.9%
Interface	83.3%	88.3%	91.7%
Macro-Level	80.8%	86.5%	78.8%
Total	85.7%	92.2%	90.2%

Testing Occassion
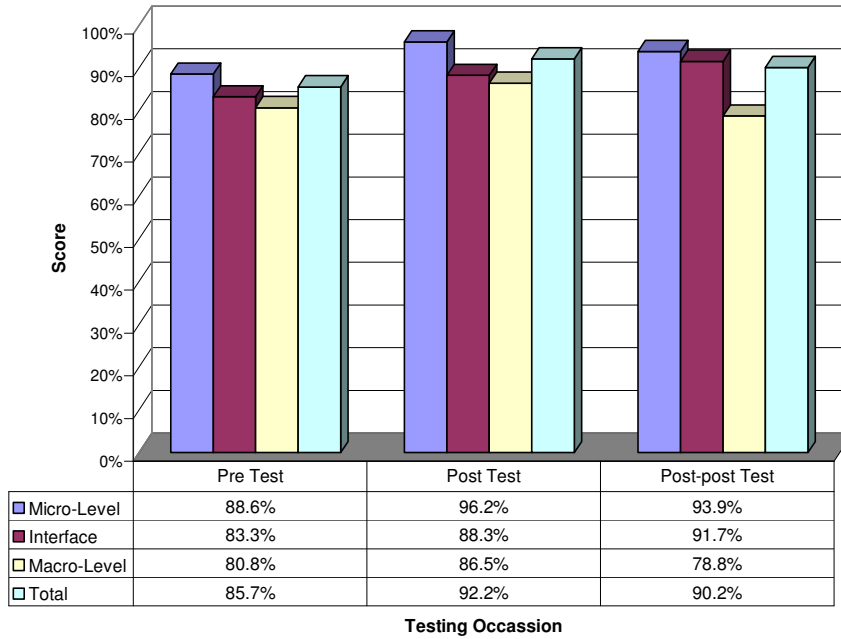
Figure 5.4: Graphic representation of empowerment status of Respondent 4

The long-term effect of the learning and development activity reflected that the biggest effect was found on the interface level. Whereas there was a decreased post-post test score compared to the post-test score on the micro-level, the score was still higher than the pre-test score. There appeared to have been a decrease in the macro-level score over time.

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5.3.1.1.5   Respondent 5

	Pre Test	Post Test	Post-post Test
Micro-Level	68.9%	79.5%	79.5%
Interface	68.3%	71.7%	76.7%
Macro-Level	63.5%	71.2%	86.5%
Total	67.6%	75.8%	80.3%

Testing Occassion
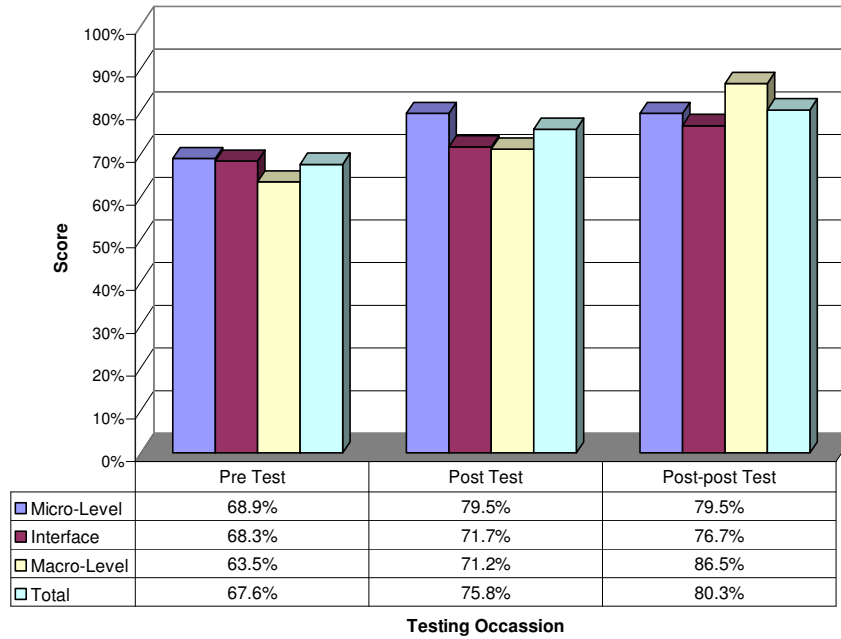
Figure 5.5: Graphic representation of empowerment status of Respondent 5

There was a steady improvement of the empowerment scores in the course of time and the biggest improvement in the long term was found on the macro-level. This respondent had clearly benefited from the learning and development intervention.

5.3.1.1.6   Respondent 6

	Pre Test	Post Test	Post-post Test
■ Micro-Level	89.4%	85.6%	82.6%
■ Interface	76.7%	68.3%	68.3%
□ Macro-Level	69.2%	71.2%	71.2%
□ Total	82.0%	78.3%	76.6%

Testing Occassion
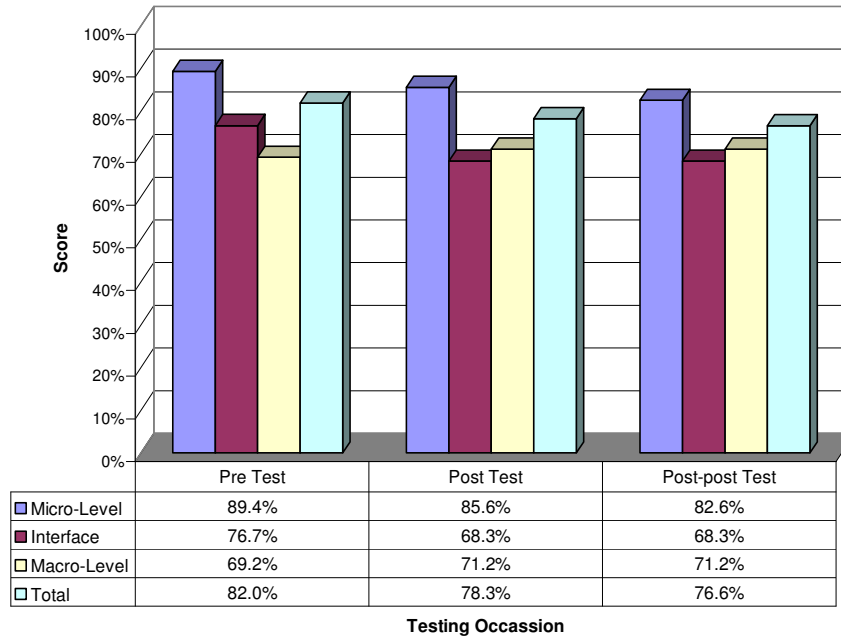
Figure 5.6: Graphic representation of empowerment status of Respondent 6

This respondent had improved only in terms of the macro-level of empowerment in the short as well as the long term. On the other levels of empowerment, there was evidence of a steady decrease in the scores, except on the interface level where there was no change from the post- to the post-post test.

5.3.1.1.7   Respondent 7

Testing Occassion	Pre Test	Post Test	Post-post Test
■ Micro-Level	75.8%	76.5%	74.2%
■ Interface	75.0%	73.3%	70.0%
□ Macro-Level	71.2%	65.4%	63.5%
□ Total	74.6%	73.4%	70.9%
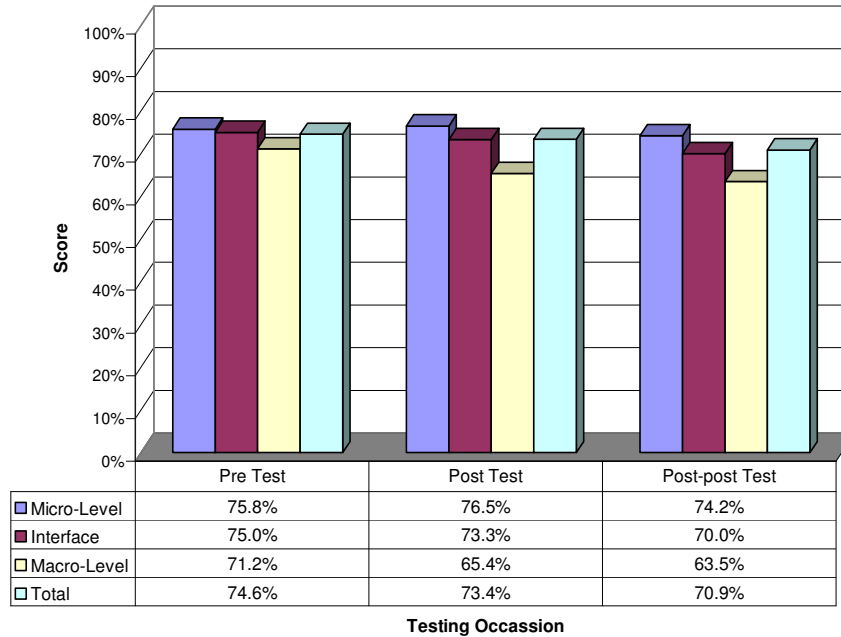
Figure 5.7: Graphic representation of empowerment status of Respondent 7

With regard to this respondent, it was noted that there was a decrease in the scores in both the short and the long term, on the interface as well as the macro-levels. On the micro-level there was a slight improvement in the short term, but after three months the score was lower than the baseline score prior to the learning and development intervention.

5.3.1.1.8   Respondent 8

	Pre Test	Post Test	Post-post Test
■ Micro-Level	78.0%	76.5%	78.8%
■ Interface	73.3%	80.0%	83.3%
□ Macro-Level	59.6%	61.5%	67.3%
□ Total	73.0%	74.2%	77.5%

Testing Occassion
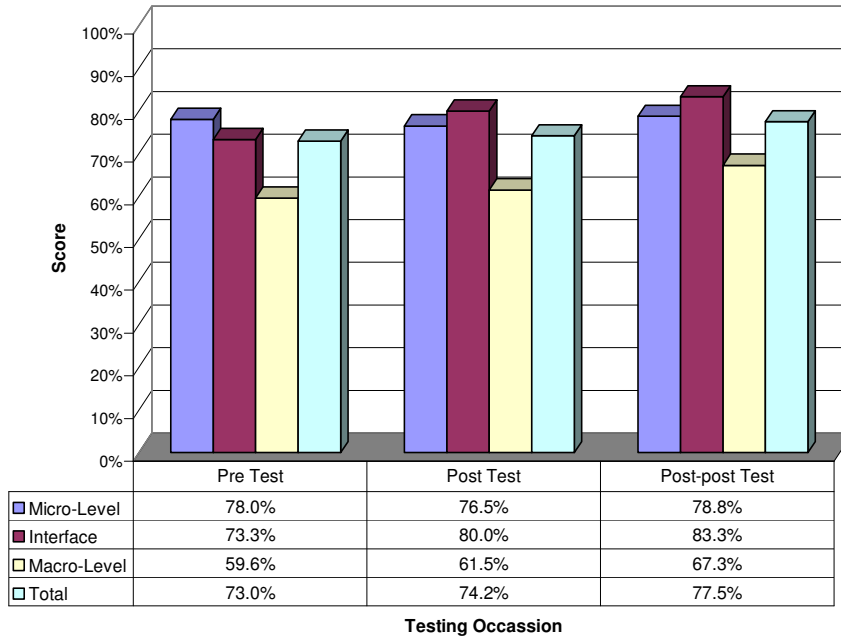
Figure 5.8: Graphic representation of empowerment status of Respondent 8

There was a long-term improvement in the empowerment scores of this respondent when comparing the post-post test and pre-test measurements. The biggest improvement was noted on the interface and the macro-level. This means that there was evidence of sustainable growth and development in empowerment.

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5.3.1.1.9   Respondent 9

	Pre Test	Post Test	Post-post Test
☐ Micro-Level	80.3%	79.5%	74.2%
☐ Interface	86.7%	76.7%	75.0%
☐ Macro-Level	71.2%	65.4%	67.3%
☐ Total	79.9%	75.8%	73.0%
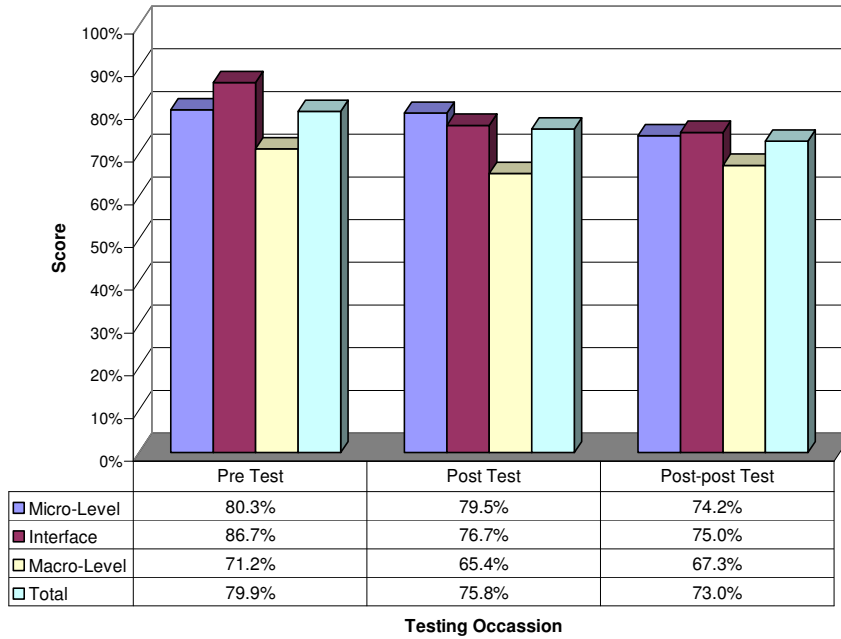
Testing Occassion

Figure 5.9: Graphic representation of empowerment status of Respondent 9

The post-testing occasion showed that this respondent had decreased scores on all the levels of empowerment. At the post-post testing occasion, the scores on the micro-level had decreased even further. The macro-level score, however, had increased. There was also a decrease in the interface level scores.

5.3.1.1.10   Respondent 10

Testing Occassion	Pre Test	Post Test	Post-post Test
□ Micro-Level	93.9%	94.7%	77.3%
■ Interface	96.7%	95.0%	73.3%
□ Macro-Level	88.5%	82.7%	69.2%
□ Total	93.4%	92.2%	74.6%
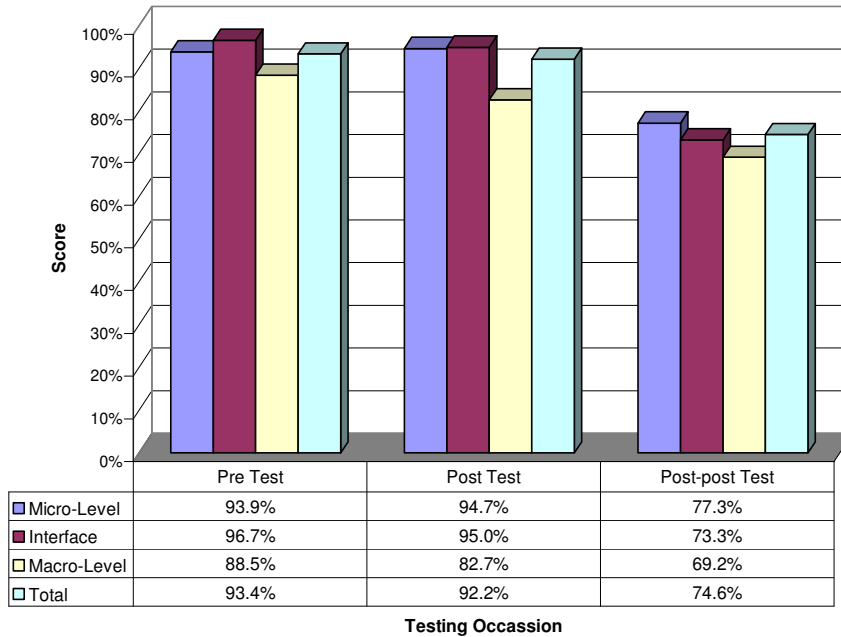
Figure 5.10: Graphic representation of empowerment status of Respondent 10

It is interesting to note the sharp decrease in this participant's score at the post-post-test after the period of three months. The respondent had an unusually high pre-test score before commencing the learning and development intervention.

5.3.1.1.11   Summary and overview of scores of the individual respondents.

The following section endeavours to give a brief summary and overview of empowerment scores of the individual respondents, as well as of the group as a whole.

The scores of the 10 respondents on the micro-level of the test were all relatively high (Figure 5.11). No respondents scored less than 70 out of 100 on any of the two post-test measures, whilst one respondent (R5) did so on the pre-test. Moreover, big fluctuations were evident in the individuals' scores from one test occasion to another. Only one respondent (R3) showed a consistent linear increase in scores from pre- to post- to post-post tests, whereas the scores of another two respondents (R6 and R9) consistently decreased from one test occasion to the other. For most respondents, however, it is a case of scores increasing from pre- to post-test and then decreasing from post- to post-post-test.

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	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10
■ Pre-test	73.5	72.7	87.1	88.6	68.9	89.4	75.8	78.0	80.3	93.9
▨ Post-test	87.9	78.8	93.2	96.2	79.5	85.6	76.5	76.5	79.5	94.7
☐ Post-post-test	80.3	72.0	93.9	93.9	79.5	82.6	74.2	78.8	74.2	77.3
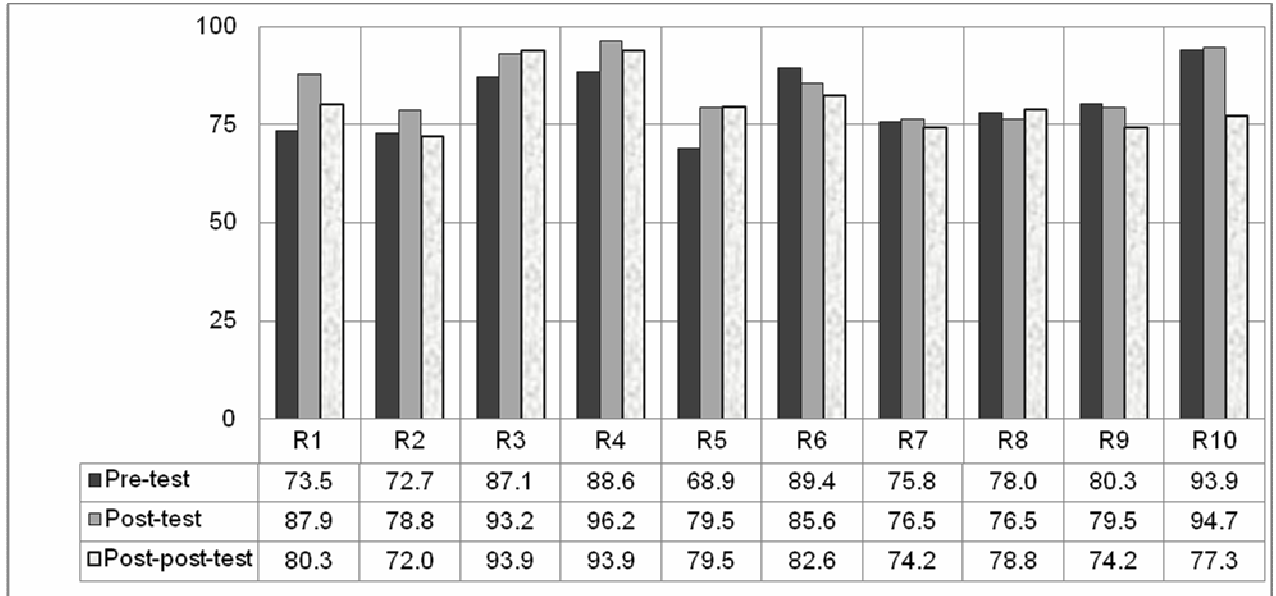
Figure 5.11: Scores obtained by 10 respondents on the micro component of the test

Figure 5.12 shows that the biggest increase from pre- to post-test (micro-component) occurred for respondent R1 (a difference in score of 14.4, i.e. 87.9 minus 73.5). Similarly, the smallest increases between pre- and post-tests on the micro-component, are associated with Respondents R7 and R9. Figure 5.12 further reveals that Respondent R10 experienced the biggest decrease (-17.4) between the two post-test measures. The most salient decrease overall (i.e. from pre- to post-post-test) is also associated with Respondent R10 (-16.6). In terms of positive performance, the most salient increase overall (from pre- to post-post-test) was that of Respondent R5 (10.6).

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	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10
■ Pre-test	73.5	72.7	87.1	88.6	68.9	89.4	75.8	78.0	80.3	93.9
▣ Post-test	87.9	78.8	93.2	96.2	79.5	85.6	76.5	76.5	79.5	94.7
☐ Post-post-test	80.3	72.0	93.9	93.9	79.5	82.6	74.2	78.8	74.2	77.3
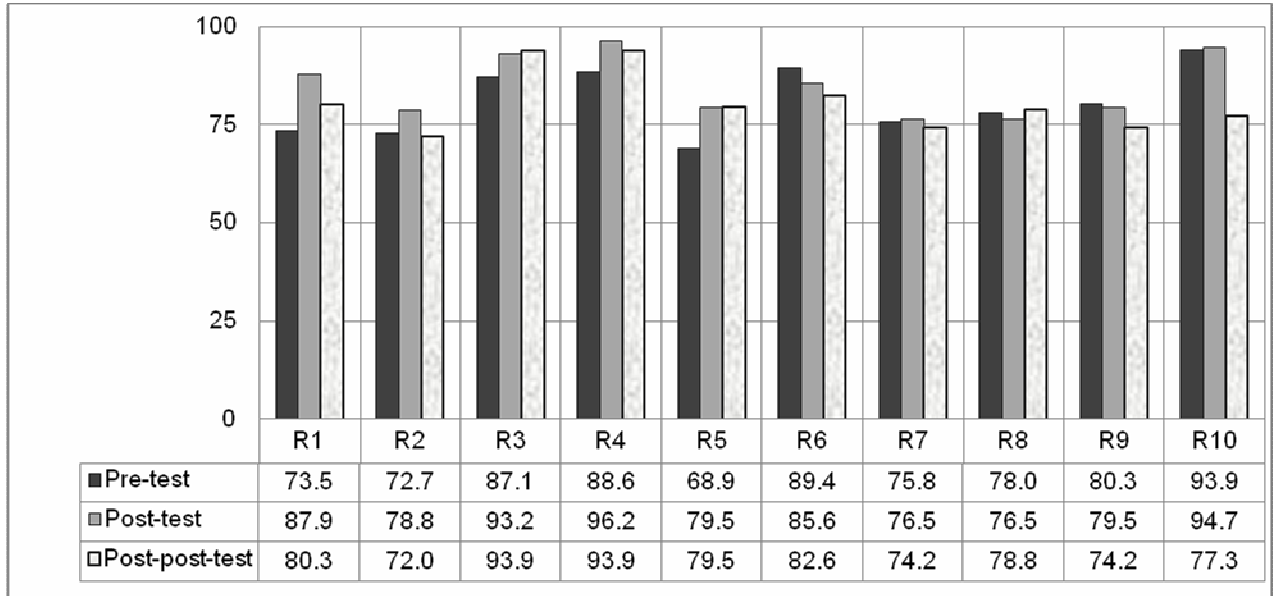
Figure 5.12: Scores obtained by 10 respondents on the micro-component of the test

As far as the interface level is concerned, the series of scores are also relatively high. According to Figure 5.13, only one respondent (R5) obtained less than 70 out of 100 on the pre-test. The scores of four respondents (R1, R4, R5 and R8) systematically increased between test occasions, whereas those of another three respondents systematically decreased from pre- to post- to post-post-test (R7, R9 and R10).

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	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10
Pre-test	75.0	75.0	88.3	83.3	68.3	76.7	75.0	73.3	86.7	96.7
Post-test	78.3	76.7	85.0	88.3	71.7	68.3	73.3	80.0	76.7	95.0
Post-post-test	81.7	71.7	85.0	91.7	76.7	68.3	70.0	83.3	75.0	73.3
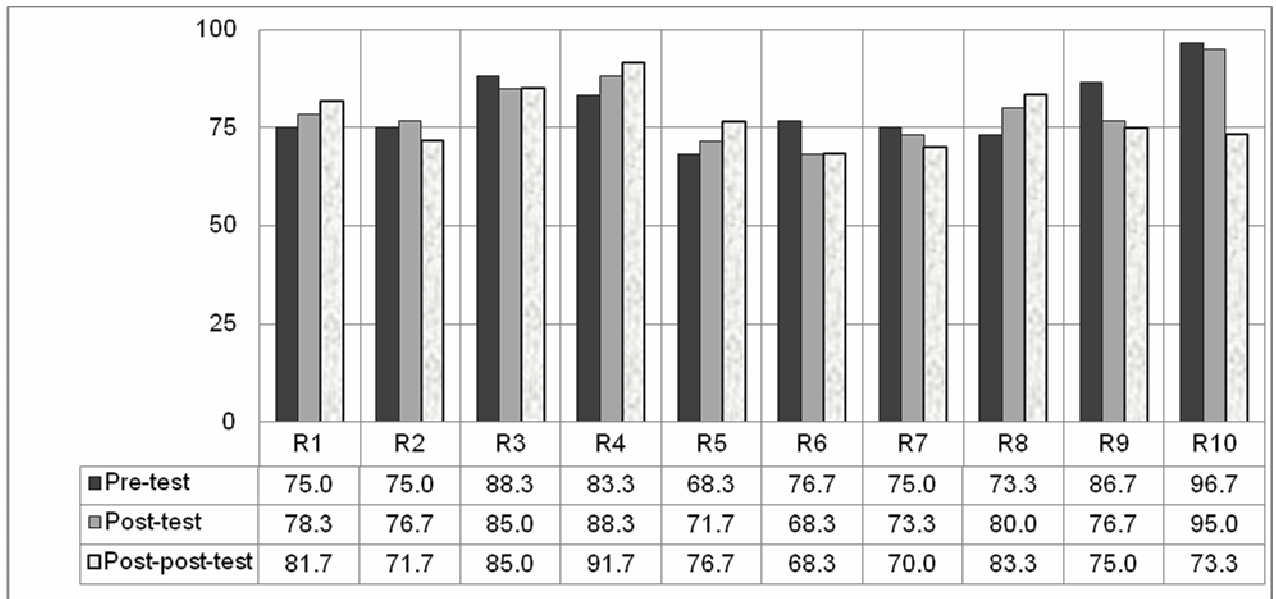
Figure 5.13: Scores obtained by 10 respondents on the interface component of the test

Again, the largest decrease in scores between the two post-tests is associated with Respondent R10 (a difference in score of -21.7 in Figure 5.14).

	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10
Pre to Post	3.3	1.7	-3.3	5.0	3.4	-8.4	-1.7	6.7	-10.0	-1.7
Post to Post-post	3.4	-5.0	0.0	3.4	5.0	0.0	-3.3	3.3	-1.7	-21.7
Pre to Post-post	6.7	-3.3	-3.3	8.4	8.4	-8.4	-5.0	10.0	-11.7	-23.4
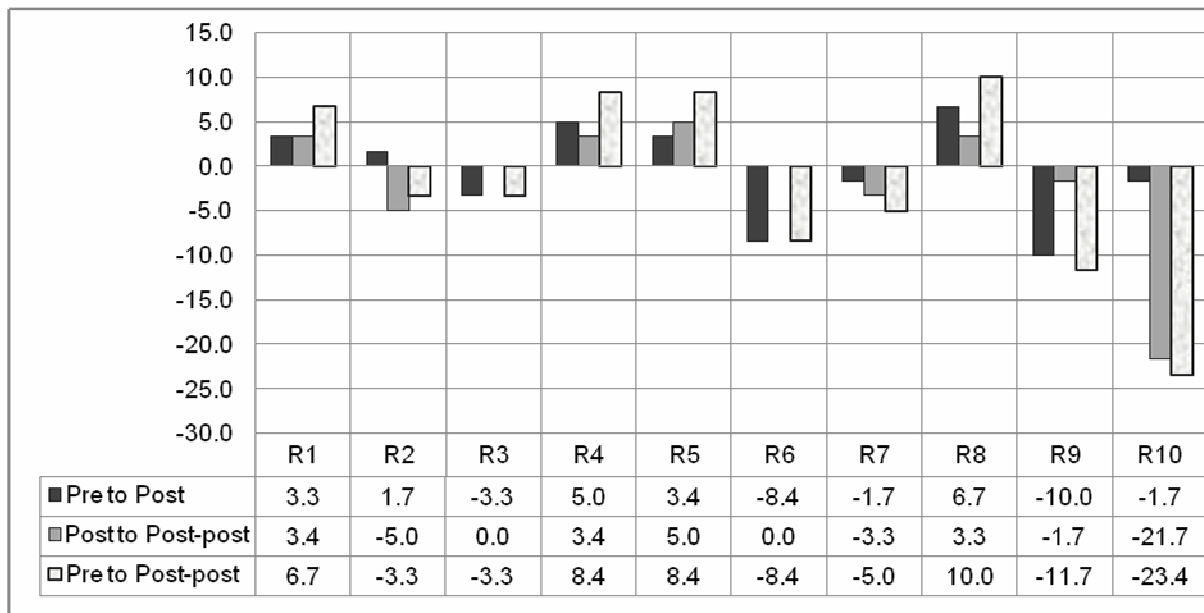
Figure 5.14: Difference scores on the interface component of the test by individual respondent

The scores on the macro-level of the test are relatively lower than those on the micro- and interface components, as nine of the 10 respondents obtained a score of less than 70 out of 100 on at least one test occasion (Figure 5.15).

	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10
Pre-test	67.3	71.2	67.3	80.8	63.5	69.2	71.2	59.6	71.2	88.5
Post-test	73.1	65.4	71.2	86.5	71.2	71.2	65.4	61.5	65.4	82.7
Post-post-test	86.5	69.2	71.2	78.8	86.5	71.2	63.5	67.3	67.3	69.2
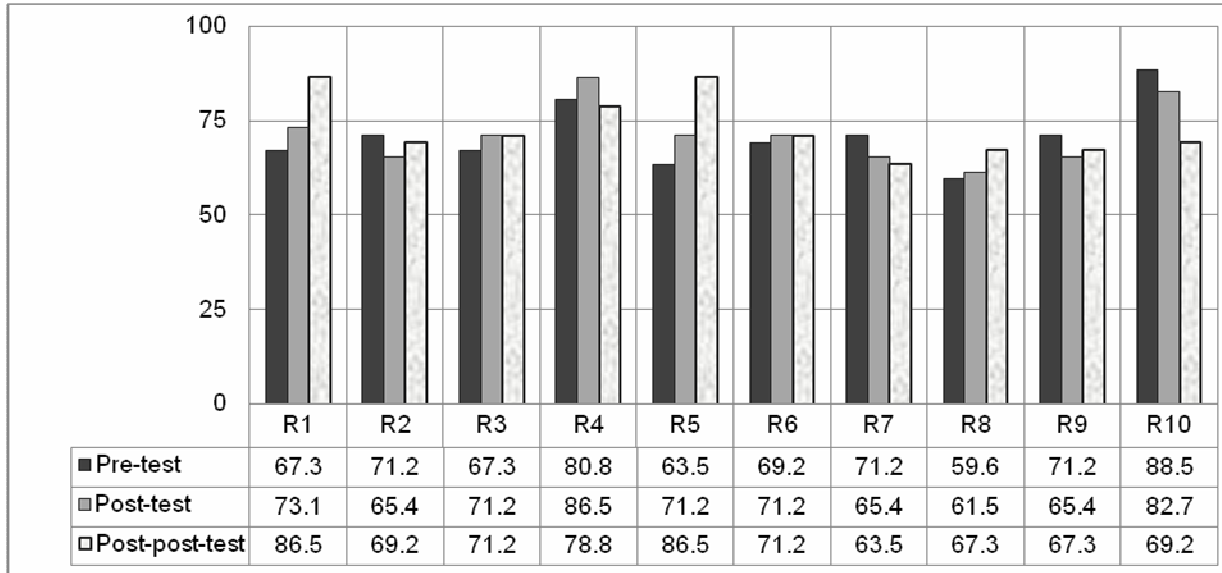
Figure 5.15: Scores obtained by 10 respondents on the macro-component of the test

Moreover, consistent linear increases from one test to another are associated with Respondents R1, R5 and R8, and consistent decreases with respondents R7 and R10 (Figure 5.16).

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	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10
■ Pre to Post	5.8	-5.8	3.9	5.7	7.7	2.0	-5.8	1.9	-5.8	-5.8
▨ Post to Post-post	13.4	3.8	0.0	-7.7	15.3	0.0	-1.9	5.8	1.9	-13.5
▢ Pre to Post-post	19.2	-2.0	3.9	-2.0	23.0	2.0	-7.7	7.7	-3.9	-19.3
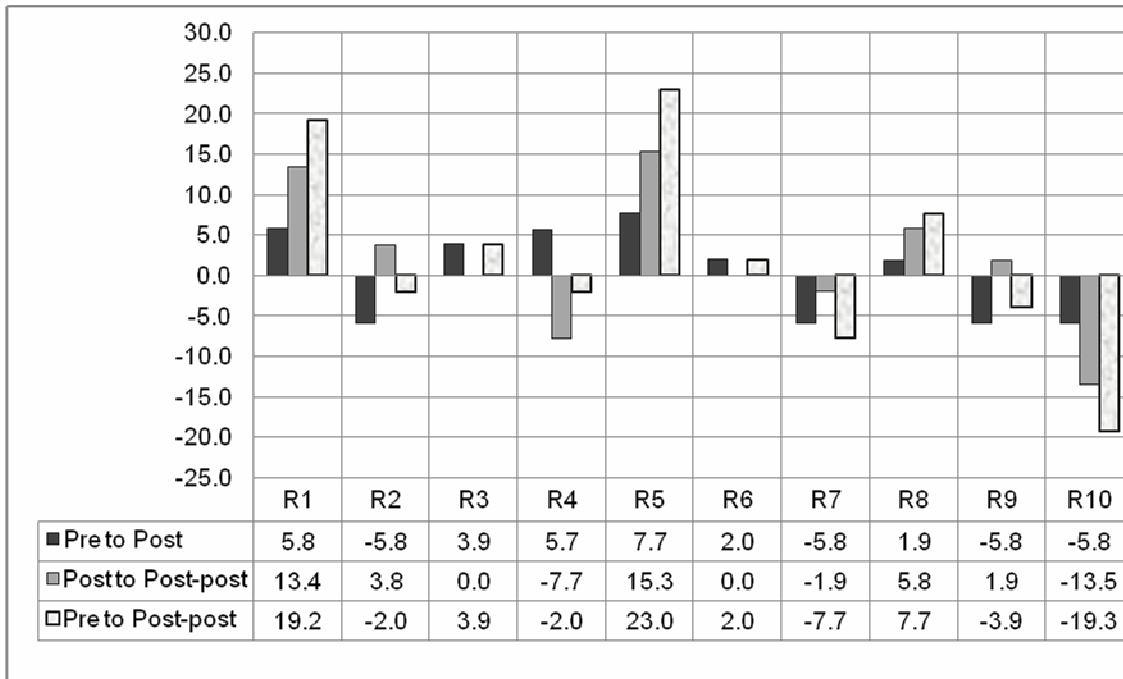
Figure 5.16: Difference in scores on the macro-component of the test by individual respondent

Five respondents (R2, R4, R7, R9 and R10) showed decreases in the overall comparison of pre- and post-post-test scores. The largest of these decreases (-19.3) was recorded for Respondent R10. Respondent R1 displayed a positive difference score (an increase) of similar size (19.2) from pre- to post-post-test.

As far as performance on the total test is concerned, only two respondents (R5 and R8), and to some extent also Respondent R3, showed a consistent increase in the score obtained from pre- to post- to post-post-test (Figure 5.17).

	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10
■ Pre-test	72.5	73.0	83.2	85.7	67.6	82.0	74.6	73.0	79.9	93.4
▣ Post-test	82.4	75.4	86.5	92.2	75.8	78.3	73.4	74.2	75.8	92.2
▢ Post-post-test	82.0	71.3	86.9	90.2	80.3	76.6	70.9	77.5	73.0	74.6
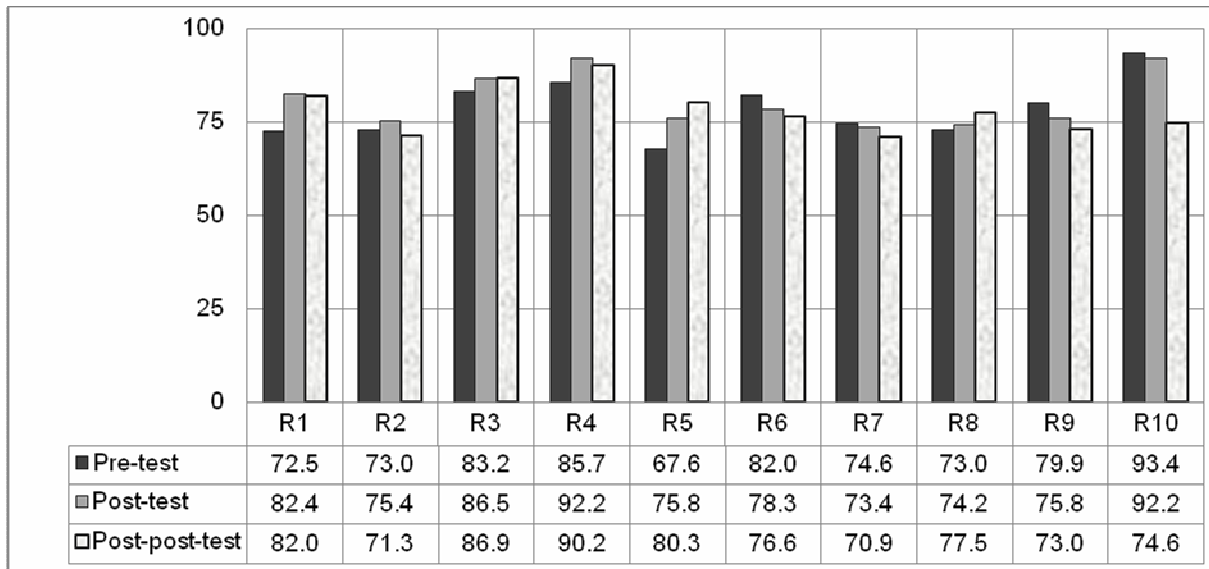
Figure 5.1Figure 5.17: Scores obtained by 10 respondents on the total test

Four respondents (R6, R7, R9 and R10) showed consistent decreases from one test occasion to another. The case of Respondent R10 is interesting, as the individual ranked first on the pre-test, but only seventh on the post-post-test. As shown in Figure 5.18, Respondent R10 recorded the largest difference score from post-test to post-post-test (-17.6), as well as from pre- to post-post-test (-18.8).

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	R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	R6	R7	R8	R9	R10
■ Pre to Post	9.9	2.4	3.3	6.5	8.2	-3.7	-1.2	1.2	-4.1	-1.2
▣ Post to Post-post	-0.4	-4.1	0.4	-2.0	4.5	-1.7	-2.5	3.3	-2.8	-17.6
▢ Pre to Post-post	9.5	-1.7	3.7	4.5	12.7	-5.4	-3.7	4.5	-6.9	-18.8
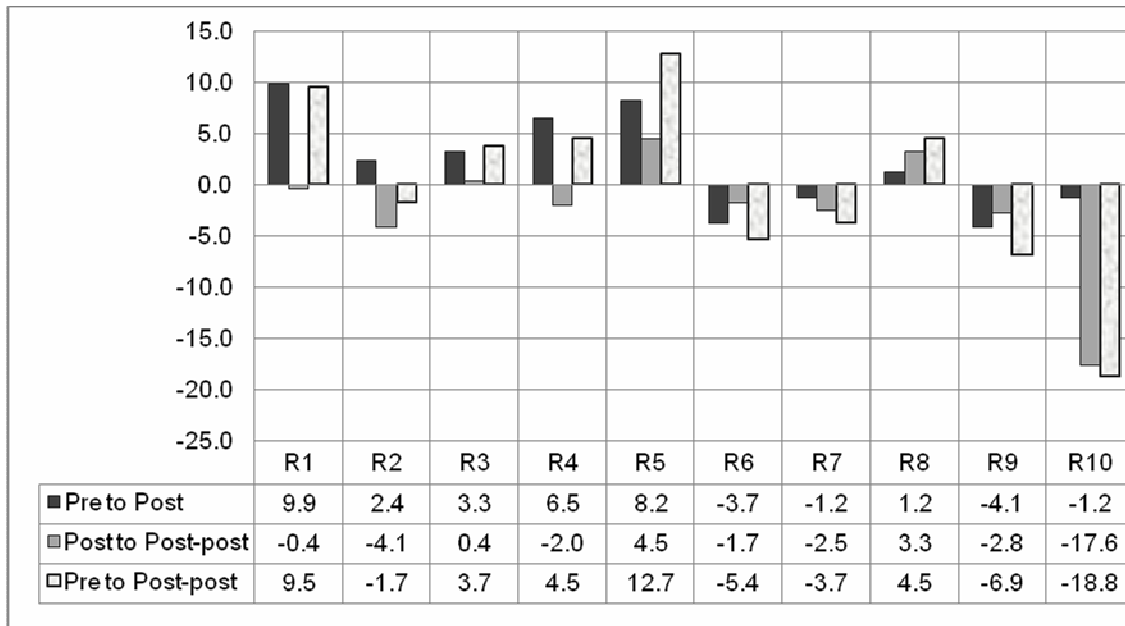
Figure 5.18: Difference scores on the total test by individual respondent

Moreover, Respondent R5 recorded the largest increase from pre-test to post-post-test of all respondents, with a difference score of 12.7.

Figure 5.19 provides a visual summary of the direction of change for each respondent from pre-test to post-test and from post-test to post-post-test.

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Participant	Micro		Interface		Macro		Total	
	Pre to Post	Post to Post-post	Pre to Post	Post to Post-post	Pre to Post	Post to Post-post	Pre to Post	Post to Post-post
1	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓
2	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓	↑	↑	↓
3	↑	↑	↓	No change	↑	No change	↑	↑
4	↑	↓	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓
5	↑	No change	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
6	↓	↓	↓	No change	↑	No change	↓	↓
7	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓
8	↓	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
9	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↑	↓	↓
10	↑	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓	↓

Figure 5.19: Visual summary of the direction of change from pre- to post and from post- to post-post-test

As can be seen, the performances of Respondents R7, R9 and R10 are almost exclusively characterised by decreases from one test to another. On the other hand, the test performances of Respondent R5 and R8 are almost exclusively positive (i.e. characterised by increases).

5.3.1.2 Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI)

Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI) is the most frequently used instrument to assess learning styles in adult education (referred to in Appendix H), and classifies learning styles into four different categories: accommodators, divergers, convergers and assimilators. The following table (Table 5.1) represents the preferred learning styles of the different middle managers. Following the table, a brief overview of each style is given. Within the context of the research, it is important to note that these are preferred learning styles. However, for effective learning to take place, the learner needs to pass through all four modes of the learning cycle, namely concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation.

Table 5.1: Learning Style Inventory (LSI) (Kolb, 1984)

Respondent	Learning style
Respondent 1	**DIVERGER**
Respondent 2	**DIVERGER**
Respondent 3	**DIVERGER**
Respondent 4	**DIVERGER**
Respondent 5	**DIVERGER**
Respondent 6	**CONVERGER**
Respondent 7	**ASSIMILATOR**
Respondent 8	**DIVERGER**
Respondent 9	**ASSIMILATOR**
Respondent 10	**ASSIMILATOR**

An accommodator combines learning steps of concrete experience and active experimentation. People with this learning style have the ability to learn primarily from "hands-on" experience. A diverger combines learning steps of concrete experience and reflective observation. People with this learning style are best at viewing concrete situations from many different angles. Their approach to situations is to observe rather than to take action. A *converger* combines learning steps of abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. People with this learning style are best at finding practical uses for ideas and theories. Lastly, *assimilators* combine learning steps of abstract consceptualisation and reflective observation. People with this learning style are best at understanding a wide range of information and putting it into a concise, logical form (Kolb, Osland & Rubin, 1995). Of the ten respondents, there were six divergers, three assimilators and one converger.

5.3.1.3   *Honey and Mumford's Learning Styles Questionnaire (LSQ)*

The other questionnaire used during the research was the Learning Styles Questionnaire (LSQ), developed by Honey and Mumford (1992). The questionnaire helps to pinpoint learning preferences, so that as learner or coach, one is in a better position to select learning experiences to suit the style of the learner. According to Honey and Mumford (1992), there are four learning styles. In the following table (Table 5.2), the preferred learning styles of the different middle managers are presented.

Following Table 5.2, a brief overview of each style is presented. Within the context of the research, the results of this questionnaire were used only to back up the results from that of the LSI of Kolb (1984).

Table 5.2: Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ) (Honey & Mumford, 1992)

Respondent	Learning style
Respondent 1	**REFLECTOR**
Respondent 2	**REFLECTOR**
Respondent 3	**REFLECTOR**
Respondent 4	**REFLECTOR**
Respondent 5	**REFLECTOR**
Respondent 6	**PRAGMATIST**
Respondent 7	**THEORIST**
Respondent 8	**REFLECTOR**
Respondent 9	**THEORIST**
Respondent 10	**THEORIST**

While this is basically the same as Kolb's model, there are a couple of differences. First, the authors substitute the terms "reflector" for divergers (reflective observation), "theorist" for assimilators (abstract conceptualisation), "pragmatist" for convergers (concrete experience), and "activist" for accommodators (active experimentation).

Activists involve themselves fully and without bias in new experiences. *Pragmatists* are keen on trying out ideas, theories and techniques to see if they work in practice. *Theorists* adapt and integrate observations into complex but logically sound theories. Lastly, *Reflectors* like to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many different perspectives.

The results of the questionnaire confirmed the same learning preference as those of Kolb (1984). However, the focus of the research emphasised an experiential approach whereby the individual learner needs to move through the four different modes, namely

concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and concrete experience.

5.3.2 Observations

In the following section (5.3.2.1), both types of observation, namely direct and participant observation, are discussed.

5.3.2.1   *Structured observation and participant observation*

5.3.2.1.1   *Respondent 1*

During formal observation (the pre-test phase), which was videotaped, Respondent 1 seemed very nervous, not only because of the camera, but also because of her more reserved nature. She did not like the limelight, and simply preferred to complete her job. She did not like confrontational issues (as was role-played during the recording), which was evident in her response.

Participant observation of Respondent 1 showed her growing in confidence and decision-making over time. Towards the end of the coaching sessions, she offered suggestions and definite action plans. There was also evidence of the respondent being able to reflect critically on situations, making her needs known and wanting to know more. Over time she facilitated her own meetings with much understanding and more assertiveness.

5.3.2.1.2   *Respondent 2*

Respondent 2 did not do well in the role-play (structured observation), which highlighted ineffective communication skills. The respondent was fairly young (20-29 years) and gave the impression that he did not assert himself in specific situations. He seemed very uncomfortable throughout the structured observation.

Participant observation of this respondent did not show much improvement over time. The respondent did not seem to act on areas that he (the coachee) had decided on. Change involves action and the respondent seemed to take note, but failed to implement it. In facilitating his departmental meetings, the respondent's lack of communication skills led to instructions not being completed, leaving his subordinates unsure of their actions.

5.3.2.1.3   Respondent 3

During the role-play (structured observation), the respondent showed engagement as well as enjoying the new learning experience. The respondent acted upon challenges during the role-play and showed much enthusiasm.

Participant observation showed the respondent putting new strategies into place and constantly moving forward in the developmental process. The respondent reflected upon experience and did well in managing his department. Over time, it became evident that the respondent interacted and communicated with members of his department on a new level.

5.3.2.1.4   Respondent 4

During the structured observation (role-play), Respondent 4 seemed hesitant and unsure of herself.

Participant observation showed the respondent displaying much more confidence and assertiveness over time. She became much more direct in her requests with staff and other parties. She handled several difficult situations with confidence and showed application of newly learned skills, such as planning. One could definitely observe a change in the respondent's way of doing things.

5.3.2.1.5   Respondent 5

The structured observation (role-play) was handled with much care. However, the respondent did well.

Participant observation showed the respondent growing in confidence and assertiveness. The respondent interacted very well with other members in his department. It became evident that the respondent reflected, conceptualised and acted on new knowledge and skills.

5.3.2.1.6   Respondent 6

The respondent did not take part in the role-play (structured observation) as was required. This was probably a way of showing his disapproval of the learning activity at large.

Participant observation showed no intention of displaying any behaviour other than his own. The respondent did not engage any of his staff and failed to interact with most of his peers (other middle managers).

5.3.2.1.7   Respondent 7

Respondent 7, despite his speech impediment, performed well in the initial role-play (structured observation). The respondent asserted himself in his interaction with the actor and handled new challenges successfully.

Participant observation showed disengagement with his staff and the researcher over time. No real changes were noted and the respondent seemed to avoid the researcher.

5.3.2.1.8   Respondent 8

The respondent seemed very aware of herself during the initial role-play (structured observation) and performed very well during some of the scenarios with the actor.

Participant observation showed the respondent becoming more assertive in her management approach, as well as displaying more confidence. The respondent reflected with her staff and conceptualised new approaches to problems. She managed her department sucessfully, and interacted and communicated well with her staff. At the end of the learning/coaching intervention the respondent created the impression of an empowered individual.

5.3.2.1.9   Respondent 9

The respondent performed very well in the role-play (structured observation), probably due to the fact that she was a customer services manager and used to handling difficult situations.

Participant observation showed that although the respondent was facing personal problems, she managed her department, as well as difficult customers, to the best of her ability.

5.3.2.1.10   Respondent 10

Respondent 10 did not perform well in role-play (structured observation). He did not assert himself at all and seemed eager to please everyone.

Participant observation showed the respondent not giving clear instructions to his staff, as well as not implementing decisions. The respondent did not seem to have self-confidence and did not take much initiative during interactions with staff and other members of management.

5.4   QUANTITATIVE DATA

5.4.1 Measurements and tests

The formal test (norm-referenced test, as referred to in Appendix C) was used to assess the middle managers in terms of skills and knowledge. The test was in line with areas of development as discussed in 4.3.2.6. The results of the evaluation/test are represented in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3: Results of the test

NAME	MANAGEMENT 25%	PLANNING 25%	CALCULATIONS 25%	CONTRACTS / LABOUR ISSUES 25%	TOTAL 100%
Respondent 1	10%	12%	12%	8%	42%
Respondent 2	11%	10%	16%	7%	44%
Respondent 3	12%	16%	12%	16%	56%
Respondent 4	13%	17%	18%	20%	68%
Respondent 5	8%	10%	10%	20%	48%
Respondent 6	12%	12%	12%	10%	46%
Respondent 7	3%	13%	22%	20%	58%
Respondent 8	13%	13%	15%	23%	64%
Respondent 9	3%	0%	8%	3%	14%
Respondent 10	5%	5%	6%	20%	36%

The scores reflect different levels of knowledge and skills. The test comprised four sections, namely the fields of management, planning, calculations pertaining to the organisation or company, and contract labour issues. Each section accounted for 25% of the total score, with a total score for the four sections being 100%.

The highest total score was 68% (Respondent 4) and the lowest was 14% (Respondent 9). Four respondents scored between 40% and 50%. Overall the scores were low, the average score being 47,6%.

5.4.2 Official statistics

The following section sets out to detect statistically significant differences between scores on the pre-test, post-test and post-post-test.

The repeated-measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) is the appropriate test to determine whether statistically significant differences exist between mean scores generated from the same respondents on more than two test occasions. In this study, there were three test occasions (pre-test, post-test and post-post-test). The repeated-measure ANOVA is a parametric test, because it requires certain assumptions to be met, including the assumption of normally distributed data. However, with samples that include fewer than 30 cases, the normality assumption tends to be violated. In such instances a non-parametric equivalent, the Friedman's ANOVA, is more suitable, as it is an assumption-free test. Non-parametric tests do not base their analyses on the original scores, but on ranks that are assigned to the original scores. In the present study, both the repeated-measures ANOVA and Friedman's ANOVA were used to detect an overall significant difference between the mean scores on the three test occasions. This dual procedure was performed for the test in its totality, as well as for each of the three sub-components, namely the micro-, interface and macro-components.

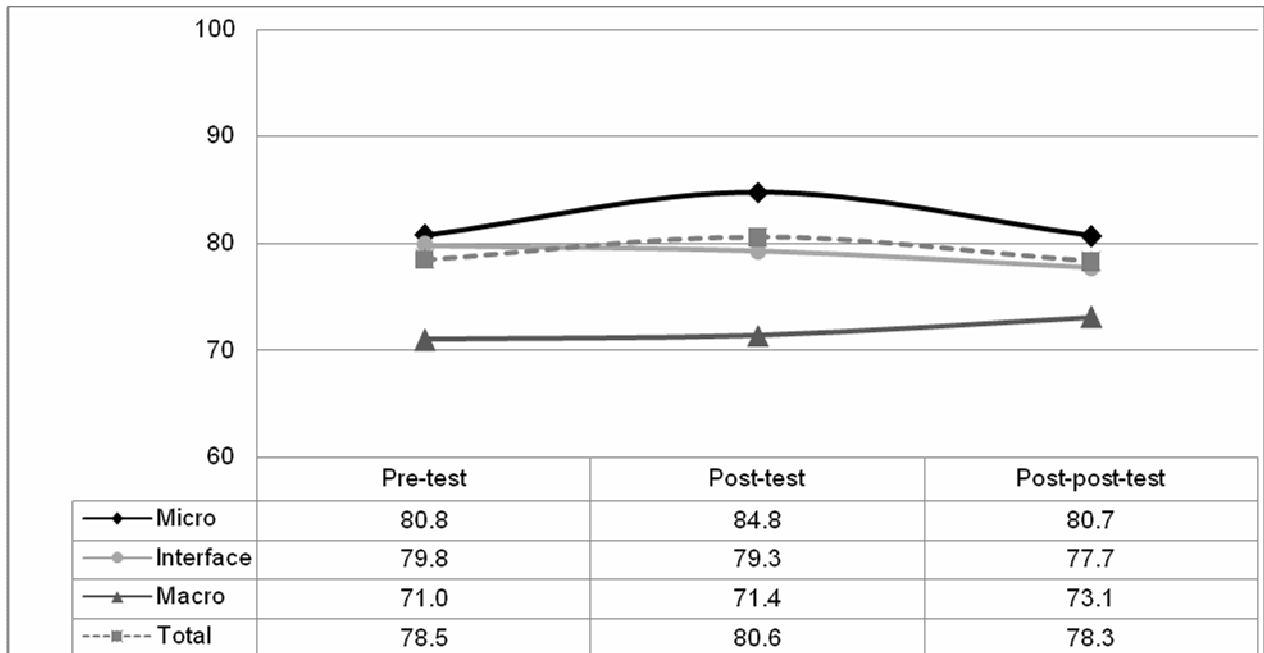Table 5.4 below shows that no statistically significant differences were detected between the mean scores on the three test occasions for the total test, as well as for the three sub-components (because, in all instances, the significance value, p, is higher than the critical level of significance set at 0.05). Both the parametric and non-parametric measures are in agreement as far as this finding is concerned.

Table 5.4: Results of tests performed to detect statistically significant differences between the mean scores on the three test occasions

Test	Mean score	Median score	Std dev.	Lowest score	Highest score	Number of cases	Statistical significance testing	
							Parametric	Non-parametric
Micro								
Pre-test	80.8	79.2	8.43	68.9	93.9	10	Repeated-measures ANOVA = 2.538; p = 0.107 (not significant)	Friedman's ANOVA = 3.128; p = 0.209 (not significant)
Post-test	84.8	82.6	7.74	76.5	96.2	10		
Post-post-test	80.7	79.2	7.67	72.0	93.9	10		
Interface								
Pre-test	79.8	75.9	8.63	68.3	96.7	10	Repeated-measures ANOVA = 0.371; p = 0.695 (not significant)	Friedman's ANOVA = 0.211; p = 0.900 (not significant)
Post-test	79.3	77.5	8.09	68.3	95.0	10		
Post-post-test	77.7	75.9	7.51	68.3	91.7	10		
Macro								
Pre-test	71.0	70.2	8.29	59.6	88.5	10	Repeated-measures ANOVA = 0.285; p = 0.755 (not significant)	Friedman's ANOVA = 0.211; p = 0.900 (not significant)
Post-test	71.4	71.2	7.92	61.5	86.5	10		
Post-post-test	73.1	70.2	8.09	63.5	86.5	10		
Total								
Pre-test	78.5	77.3	7.75	67.6	93.4	10	Repeated-measures ANOVA = 0.683; p = 0.518 (not significant)	Friedman's ANOVA = 1.400; p = 0.497 (not significant)
Post-test	80.6	77.1	7.29	73.4	92.2	10		
Post-post-test	78.3	77.1	6.52	70.9	90.2	10		

Nevertheless, a visual inspection of mean scores reveals that the general trend from pre- to post- to post-post-test were different for the total test and its three sub-components (Figure 5.20).

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	Pre-test	Post-test	Post-post-test
Micro	80.8	84.8	80.7
Interface	79.8	79.3	77.7
Macro	71.0	71.4	73.1
Total	78.5	80.6	78.3

Figure 5.20: Mean scores obtained for pre-test, post-test and post-post-test, by test component

For the macro-component, the mean scores linearly increased from one test occasion to another (from 71.0 to 71.4 to 73.1), whereas the mean scores for the interface component displayed a systematic linear decrease. The distribution of mean scores for the micro component, as well as for the total test, resembles a U-shape (i.e. an increase from pre- to post-test, followed by a decrease from post- to post-post-test).

The results were also subjected to a series of systematic post-hoc comparisons to determine whether the means of any two tests differ significantly. In other words, pair-wise comparisons were performed by testing for statistically significant differences between the means of the pre- and post-test, the means of the post- and post-post test, and the pre- and post-post test. Tables 5.5 and 5.6 represent two different methods of post-hoc comparisons for the Friedman's ANOVA that was performed.

Table 5.5: Results of post-hoc tests based on a series of Wilcoxon tests

Comparison	Median of test 1	Median of test 2	Significance testing			Effect size (r)
			Test statistic (s)	p-value	Statistically significant difference	
Micro						
Pre to Post	79.2	82.6	-1.63	0.102	No	0.37
Post to Post-post	82.6	79.2	-2.20	0.028	No	0.49
Pre to Post-post	79.2	79.2	-0.15	0.878	No	0.03
Interface						
Pre to Post	75.9	77.5	0.00	1.000	No	0.00
Post to Post-post	77.5	75.9	0.00	1.000	No	0.00
Pre to Post-post	75.9	75.9	-0.36	0.720	No	0.08
Macro						
Pre to Post	70.2	71.2	-0.05	0.959	No	0.01
Post to Post-post	71.2	70.2	-0.63	0.528	No	0.14
Pre to Post-post	70.2	70.2	-0.36	0.720	No	0.08
Total						
Pre to Post	77.3	77.1	-1.07	0.283	No	0.24
Post to Post-post	77.1	77.1	-1.02	0.308	No	0.23
Pre to Post-post	77.3	77.1	-0.10	0.919	No	0.02

Adjusted level of significance = 0.017

Table 5.5 uses a series of Wilcoxon tests (another non-parametric test used to determine whether two sets of scores differ significantly) where the standard critical level of significance (0.05) has been adjusted. As explained by Field (2009), the probability of a family-wise error rate would be inflated beyond 0.05 if two or more Wilcoxon-tests are used as post-hoc comparisons for the Friedman test. Consequently, an adjustment is needed to provide a more conservative test of statistical significance. This was done by dividing the standard significance level of 0.05 by the total number of pair-wise comparisons (3), resulting in a new significance level of 0.017. In Table 5.5, the p-values (or exact probabilities that the differences between group means could have occurred by chance) are all higher than 0.017 (the adjusted critical level of significance). This means that none of the changes (between pre- and post-test, between post- and post-post-test, and between pre- and post-post-test) is statistically significant.

The second post-hoc procedure (in Table 5.6) is based on a formula by Siegel and Castellan (1988), that compares the absolute difference between the mean ranks on the two different test occasions, called the empirical difference, to a critical difference.

Table 5.6: Results of post-hoc tests based on the formula by Siegel and Castellan (Field, 2009)

Comparison	Mean rank 1	Mean rank 2	Difference between mean rank 1 and mean rank 2	Absolute difference between mean rank 1 and mean rank 2	Statistically significant difference
Micro					
Pre to Post	1.80	2.45	-0.65	0.65	No
Post to Post-post	2.45	1.75	0.70	0.70	No
Pre to Post-post	1.80	1.75	0.05	0.05	No
Interface					
Pre to Post	2.10	2.00	0.10	0.10	No
Post to Post-post	2.00	1.90	0.10	0.10	No
Pre to Post-post	2.10	1.90	0.20	0.20	No
Macro					
Pre to Post	1.90	2.00	-0.10	0.10	No
Post to Post-post	2.00	2.10	-0.10	0.10	No
Pre to Post-post	1.90	2.10	-0.20	0.20	No
Total					
Pre to Post	1.90	2.30	-0.40	0.40	No
Post to Post-post	2.30	1.80	0.50	0.50	No
Pre to Post-post	1.90	1.80	0.10	0.10	No

Critical difference = 1.07

The critical difference in all comparisons is 1.07, which is based on a formula that incorporates a z-score, the total group size (10) and the number of test occasions (3). A statistically significant difference is concluded where the empirical difference exceeds the critical difference, which was not the case in any instance. Therefore, the results of both Table 5.5 and Table 5.6 confirm that none of the post-hoc comparisons is statistically significant.

Lastly, Table 5.6 also includes effect sizes, which is a measure of the magnitude of the observed effect (in this case the difference between two group means). As Field (2009) explains, statistical significance testing provides a decision tool as to whether or not an effect can be accepted as genuine, but does not conclude anything about the meaningfulness or practical importance of the effect. A measure of effect size is therefore also required. Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) is such a measure. Its absolute values range between 0 and 1, where 0.10 represents a small effect, 0.30 a medium effect and 0.50 a large effect. As seen in Table 5.8, substantial effect sizes were only observed for the micro-component, particularly the change from the post- to the post-post-test (0.49), as well as the change from the pre- to the post-test (0.37).

In summary, no statistically significant differences were detected between the mean scores on the three test occasions for the total test, as well as for the three sub-components.

5.5   INDIVIDUAL RESULTS (INTEGRATION OF RESULTS)

In the following section, the results of the individual test, learning styles, interviews, observation and empowerment scores are integrated and triangulated to establish a meaningful synthesis. Each middle manager is discussed individually:

5.5.1 Respondent 1

Respondent 1 scored 42% in the initial formal test (see 5.4.1), which indicated an overall need for improvement and development. From a learning perspective, the LSI (Learning Style Inventory) indicated that the respondent was a diverger. People with this learning style are best at viewing concrete situations from many different points of view, as mentioned in paragraph 5.3.2. The individual's approach is to observe rather than take action. This was confirmed with the second Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ) that was applied, as discussed in paragraph 5.3.3, which indicated that the respondent was a reflector (reflectors prefer to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many perspectives). Knowledge of the respondent's learning preference allowed the researcher/coach to facilitate the respondent's learning through the other learning modes (Kolb, 1984).

Drawing from the interviews (5.2.1.1.1 and 5.2.1.2.1), the respondent was very quiet at the beginning of the learning intervention, but this changed as the coaching process

evolved. Interviews at the post-test indicated better engagement (more confidence) and at the post-post-test, answers showed reflection and conceptualisation, which led to action.

Drawing from the observations (5.3.4.1.1), Respondent 1 showed more confidence and assertiveness as the coaching intervention progressed. The fact that the respondent made her needs known towards the end of the learning intervention also indicates an internal change, with the respondent feeling more empowered.

Content analysis of field notes (5.2.2.1) reflects "a sense of true empowerment" and the respondent "growing in confidence".

The respondent's empowerment scores (see 5.3.1.1.1) indicated an improvement in overall scores (from 72,5% at pre-test to 82,0% at post-post-test), with a steady improvement in the interface and macro-level scores reflecting sustainable change.

Based on the above evidence, it became evident that the respondent has moved through all the learning modes (namely concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation, active experimentation). Coaching, as a method to facilitate learning, seemed to benefit this respondent, as indicated by the empowerment scores of the individual.

From a learning perspective, the learner showed autonomy in the form of praxis of thought and action, which is indicative of a self-directed learner.

5.5.2 Respondent 2

Respondent 2 scored 44% in the initial formal assessment, as mentioned in 5.4.2, which indicated an overall need for improvement and development. From a learning perspective, the LSI (Learning Style Inventory referred to in 5.3.2) indicated that the respondent was a diverger, indicating the individual's preference to observe rather than to take action. This was confirmed with the second Learning Style Questionnaire (the LSQ mentioned in 5.3.2) that was applied, which indicated that the respondent was a reflector (reflectors prefer standing back to ponder experiences and to observe them from many perspectives).

The respondent did not communicate well, and in most instances appeared distant, not engaging the coach (researcher). During the interviews referred to in 5.2.1.1.2 and 5.2.1.2.2, the respondent did not show any reflection and did not attempt to conceptualise. The respondent's answers did not relate to any actioning of learning.

Observation (5.3.4.1.2) of this respondent posed difficult in that no real changes seemed evident in the respondent. Rather, there seemed to be a regression in the respondent as the coaching intervention moved ahead.

Content analysis of field notes (5.2.2.2) identifies that words such as "not taking action" and "not communicating" were used very often.

The respondent's empowerment scores (5.3.1.1.2) indicated a decrease in all the scores when comparing the post-post score with the measurement prior to commencing the coaching intervention (from 73,05% at pre-test to 71,3% at post-post-test).

The respondent did not move through the different modes of the experiential learning process. Overall, the individual learner (coachee) did not engage the development process, creating the impression that the respondent seemed disempowered. Disempowered individuals experience a sense of hopelessness, inferiority and a loss of power (Albertyn, 1995:9).

From a learning perspective, the respondent did not show any autonomy in the learning process.

5.5.3 Respondent 3

Respondent 3 scored 56% (see 5.4.1) in the initial formal assessment, which indicated a fair score with certain areas needing to be worked on. From the start of the coaching intervention, this respondent seemed interested in the learning and developmental aspect of the intervention. In most cases, the respondent seemed to implement, or attempt to action tasks and challenges as had been agreed upon.

From a learning perspective, the LSI (Learning Style Inventory, mentioned in 5.3.2) indicated that the respondent was a diverger. The respondent displayed a definite preference for this learning style, and the second learning style questionnaire (LSQ, mentioned in 5.3.3) confirmed the respondent being a reflector, indicating the individual's

preference to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many perspectives.

Drawing from the interviews (referred to in 5.2.1.1.3 and 5.2.1.2.3), the respondent showed reflection on the different learning opportunities, as well as reflection leading to action (or the respondent experimenting with ideas).

This was also evidenced during observation (mentioned in 5.3.4.1.3) of the respondent, where the respondent showed engagement throughout the whole learning and development process.

Content analysis of field notes (referred to in 5.2.2.3) highlights words such as "reflecting well" and "acting on".

The respondent's empowerment scores (as indicated in 5.3.1.1.3) indicated an improvement in overall scores (from 83,2% at pre-test to 86,9% at post-post-test). The biggest impact seemed evident on the micro-level, where there was an increase from pre-test to post-test scores and from post-test to post-post-test scores.

From a learning perspective, the respondent moved through all the learning modes (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation), as well as displaying praxis of reflection and action, which is indicative of an autonomous self-directed learner.

5.5.4 Respondent 4

Respondent 4 achieved the highest score (68%) of all the respondents in the initial formal assessment (mentioned in 5.4.1). This respondent had previously undergone training with the coach (researcher) and had a firm understanding of the role of a supervisor and first line manager.

From a learning perspective, the LSI (Learning Style Inventory – see 5.3.2) indicated that the respondent was a diverger, with the second learning style questionnaire (LSQ – see 5.3.3) indicating the respondent being a reflector. This became very evident in the overall approach of the respondent.

Drawing from the interviews (see 5.2.1.1.4 and 5.2.1.2.4), the respondent moved from being very quiet to someone who asserted herself, reflecting upon learning experiences, and actively experimenting with what she had learnt.

This was further evidenced in the observations (see 5.3.4.1.4) of the respondent. The respondent's empowerment scores (see 5.3.1.1.4) indicated an improvement in overall scores (from 85,7% at pre-test to 90,2% at post-post-test), with the biggest effect on the interface level.

Content analysis of field notes (see 5.2.2.4) shows the use of the words "growing in confidence", as well as a sense of moving ahead.

From a learning perspective, the respondent moved through all the learning modes (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation) in completing the experiential learning cycle. The respondent displayed praxis of reflection and action, which is indicative of a self-directed learner.

Coaching (as a method of facilitating learning) seemed to furnish this respondent with an overall sense of empowerment and change within the individual.

5.5.5 Respondent 5

Respondent 5, although being the most senior in age, showed the most drive and enthusiasm of the middle managers. This manager had not undergone any previous management training, and seemed very grateful for being part of the learning and development intervention.

The respondent scored less than 48% in the initial formal assessment (see 5.4.1), which indicated an overall need for improvement and development. From a learning perspective, the LSI (Learning Style Inventory – see 5.3.2) indicated that the respondent was a diverger, with the second learning style questionnaire (LSQ – see 5.3.3) indicating that the respondent was a reflector. The respondent seemed to personify these preferences, as he would only act after much observation.

Drawing from the interviews (see 5.2.1.1.5 and 5.2.1.2.5), the respondent took much time to reflect on matters, and this led to action.

From the observations (see 5.3.4.1.5), it appeared that the respondent conceptualised new structures, as well as experimenting with these structures.

Content analysis of field notes (see 5.2.2.5) indicates that the respondent drew from "experience", as well as being "engaged" in the learning process, indicating a sense of moving to action.

From an empowerment perspective, the respondent showed a steady improvement in his empowerment scores (a total increase of 67,6% at pre-test to 80,3% at post-post-test), as reflected in 5.3.1.1.5.

From a learning perspective, the respondent moved through all the learning modes (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation) in completing the experiential learning cycle. The respondent displayed praxis of strong reflection and action, which is indicative of a self-directed learner.

The respondent clearly benefited from the learning and development intervention.

5.5.6 Respondent 6

Of all the middle managers, Respondent 6 was the most challenging to work with. From the onset of the learning activity, the respondent seemed disinterested and never truly engaged with the coaching process.

The respondent scored 46% in the initial formal assessment (see 5.4.1), indicating that the respondent seemed in need of some developmental work.

From a learning perspective, the LSI (Learning Style Inventory – see 5.3.2) indicated that the respondent was a converger. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, people with this learning style are best at finding practical uses for ideas and theories. The second learning style questionnaire (LSQ – see 5.3.3) showed that the respondent was a pragmatist. Pragmatists are seen as keen to try out new ideas, although this was not evident in the respondent.

Drawing from the interviews (see 5.2.1.1.6 and 5.2.1.2.6), the respondent failed to interact in any meaningful dialogue with the researcher (coach), and from observing the respondent (see 5.3.4.1.6), there seemed to be no evident change.

Content analysis of field notes (5.2.2.6) shows the respondent "not engaging in the process" at any level.

From an empowerment perspective (see 5.3.1.1.6), there was a steady decrease in the empowerment score (from 82% at pre-test to 76,6% at the post-post-test).

The respondent failed to engage in the learning process and it became evident that the respondent became more negative and disengaged as the learning and development activity progressed.

5.5.7 Respondent 7

Respondent 7 scored 58% in the initial formal assessment (see 5.4.1), which indicated a fair understanding of basic principles.

From a learning perspective, the LSI (Learning Style Inventory – see 5.3.2) indicated that the respondent was an assimilator. As mentioned, people with this learning style are best at understanding a wide range of information and putting it into a concise, logical form. The second Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ – see 5.3.3) indicated that the respondent was a theorist. Theorists tend to adapt and integrate observations into theories, which the respondent clearly did not engage in.

Initially, this respondent showed enthusiasm at the beginning of the learning and development intervention. However, there seemed to be a visible decline in the respondent's overall engagement in the learning activity over time. As the respondent cannot speak very well, conversation and interaction did not seem to "flow". Observation (see 5.3.4.7) and field notes pointed to the respondent not being part of the coaching process.

Content analysis of field notes (see 5.2.2.7) points towards the respondent being "distant" as well as not engaging in the learning process on any level or dimension.

From an empowerment perspective (see 5.3.1.1.7), there was a steady decrease in the empowerment score (from 74,6% at pre-test to 70,9% at the post-post-test).

As the learning and development activity progressed, the respondent seemed to gradually withdraw from the coaching process, which could explain the steady decline in empowerment scores. The respondent clearly did not engage in the learning process.

5.5.8   Respondent 8

Respondent 8 scored the second highest (64%) in the initial formal assessment (see 5.4.1). The respondent had previously gone through supervisory training with the researcher (coach). The score indicated a basic grasp of concepts and understanding.

From a learning perspective, the LSI (Learning Style Inventory – see 5.3.2) indicated that the respondent was a diverger. As mentioned, people with this learning style are best at viewing concrete situations from many different points of view. The individual's approach is to observe rather than take action. This was confirmed with the second Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ – see 5.3.3) that was applied, which indicated that the respondent was a reflector (reflectors prefer to stand back to ponder experiences and observe them from many perspectives).

From the interviews (5.2.1.1.8) it became clear that the respondent reflected upon the learning material as well as implementing new concepts.

Based on observations (see 5.3.4.1.8), it became evident that the respondent became more assertive, as well as giving an overall impression of growth.

Content analysis of field notes (see 5.2.2.8) gives an impression of growth and overall improvement in this respondent.

This was confirmed by the results of the empowerment questionnaire (see 5.3.1.1.8) that indicated an overall improvement in empowerment from 73% at pre-test to 77,5% at post-post-test.

From a learning perspective, the respondent completed the experiential learning cycle (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation). The respondent displayed praxis of strong reflection and action, which is indicative of an autonomous, self-directed learner.

5.5.9   Respondent 9

Respondent 9 scored the lowest percentage of all the respondents in the formal assessment (14%). This result (see 5.4.1) indicated that much development work was needed. It is important to note that the respondent was going through a very difficult time in her personal life.

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From a learning perspective, the LSI (Learning Style Inventory – see 5.3.2) indicated that the respondent was an assimilator. As mentioned, people with this learning style are best at understanding a wide range of information and putting it into a concise, logical form. The second Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ – see 5.3.3) indicated that the respondent was a theorist. Theorists tend to adapt and integrate observations into theories, which the respondent did not show.

Drawing from the interviews (see 5.2.1.1.9 and 5.2.1.2.9), the respondent did not open up to engagement with the researcher; however, during observation (see 5.3.4.1.9), she did engage well with customers.

Content analysis of field notes (see 5.2.2.9) reflects potential to develop, although it has not been realised.

From an empowerment perspective (see 5.3.1.1.9), there was a steady decrease in empowerment score (from 79,9% at pre-test to 73,0% at the post-post-test).

From a learning perspective, the respondent failed to complete the experiential learning cycle (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation).

5.5.10 Respondent 10

Respondent 10 scored the second lowest percentage (see 5.4.1) in the formal assessment (36%). Although the respondent had previously undergone supervisory training, the result indicated a lack of understanding of basic management principles and concepts.

From a learning perspective, the LSI (Learning Style Inventory – see 5.3.2) indicated that the respondent was an assimilator. As mentioned, people with this learning style are best at understanding a wide range of information and putting it into a concise, logical form. The second Learning Style Questionnaire (LSQ – 5.3.3) indicated that the respondent was a theorist. Theorists tend to adapt and integrate observations into theories, which the respondent clearly did not show.

During the interviews (see 5.2.1.1.10 and 5.2.1.2.10), the respondent gave the impression that he was not being honest with himself or the researcher. The respondent

failed to reflect on basic issues. Observation (see 5.3.4.10) of the respondent showed that the respondent was not being direct.

Content analysis of field notes (see 5.2.2.10) highlights that the respondent was not being true to himself, thereby not honoring his own experience.

From an empowerment perspective (see 5.3.1.1.10), the respondent's pre-test score seemed skewed (in that the result seemed much too high – a 93,4% average), indicating that the respondent initially did not really understand (although the process had been explained to the respondent) what the coaching process was hoping to achieve. A possible explanation for this can also be the Hawthorne effect. This is a tendency of research subjects to behave atypically because of their awareness of being studied, causing a distortion of research results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001). The respondent saw the empowerment questionnaire as a "test", meaning that "failure" would indicate incompetence, which might hinder promotion to senior management.

From a learning perspective, the respondent failed to move through the four modes of the experiential learning cycle, as well as not showing autonomy in the learning process. The respondent struggled to come to terms with self-reflection and was reluctant to give the coach (researcher) a "wrong" answer, even though there are no "right" or "wrong" answers in the coaching process. True empowerment requires the individual to act independently.

5.6   SUMMARY

This section does not seek to draw definite conclusions regarding the overall effect of the learning intervention. The sample group (the group of ten managers) is too small to draw inferences. A general overview will, however, be provided.

The empowerment of the individual managers through the learning process remained the most valuable outcome of the coaching intervention (learning and development activity). The effect of the learning and development activity is best looked at individually. Changes in individuals (both positive and negative) are of interest to the individual, the researcher and the organisation. Other important measures might include gains in self-esteem, increased awareness, commitment to challenge oneself, knowledge of one's

preferred learning style, ability to reflect both individually and publicly, the ability to share with others, and the confidence to present oneself.

The most important aspect was the fact that the individuals who completed the learning cycle (concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation) showed empowerment gains. This type of empowerment could be seen as a means to sustain lifelong learning.

Coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) was effective in the case of five individuals, although some learners may not use their new insights, knowledge or abilities until a long time after the actual coaching session (Dembkowski, Elridge & Hunter, 2006).

The human being is far too complex to make absolute inferences. The fact that empowerment may be seen as a "soft" outcome (involving feeling, belief and perspective) in contrast to tangible "bottom line results" makes the evaluation process challenging.

Although the acquisition of new knowledge and skills are important, a developmental perspective with changes in perception and reflection, and leading to action, is indicative of an autonomous individual, which describes a truly empowered lifelong learner.

The following chapter, Chapter Six, provides a synthesis as well as the conclusions that were reached. Lastly, recommendations are made with regard to the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 6:   SYNTHESIS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1   INTRODUCTION

The final chapter consolidates the research by providing a synthesis of the literature, the research findings and conclusions. The chapter further addresses the research questions and presents a lifelong learning model (using coaching as a method to facilitate learning). Lastly, the chapter sets out recommendations based on the findings and the conclusions of the research.

Present-day organisations are increasingly experiencing changing business environments. Fierce competition where both small and large organisations compete for more business and a bigger share of the market has placed more emphasis on individuals working for such organisations. The role of the manager (the adult learner) points to an empowered individual with the competencies and confidence to fulfill and adapt to an ever-changing role.

According to Sadler-Smith (2006), learning (lifelong learning) does not only have the power to transform the individual.Through learning, the individual may also gain the power to transform the context in which they find themselves, or to create new contexts for themselves.

It could be argued that most methods of training, as well as learning and development activities (although of value to individuals and organisations), are mostly concerned with the acquisition of predefined knowledge and skills, rather than a more strategically aligned perspective that characterises the development and empowerment of individuals. Such a perspective may be deemed an empowered perspective. Coaching (as a method of learning) could facilitate such a perspective.

The research goal was to evaluate the effect of coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) in facilitating the empowerment of middle managers in the retail sector. The research was conducted from a lifelong learning perspective focusing on the adult learner.

In the large retail organisation where the research was conducted, all the participants in this study were middle managers. The coaching intervention was implemented over a period of 12 months. The following research questions were posed in Chapter One:

- What is the effect of coaching as a method of learning and development in the facilitation of lifelong learning to empower middle managers in the food retail environment?

- Is coaching (as only another way of facilitating learning) an effective method for learning and development of middle managers in the retail environment?

- Which dimensions should be taken into consideration when implementing a coaching methodology (as a method of learning) in developing middle managers in the retail sector?

In the previous chapter, the individual results of each of the middle managers were presented and integrated. This chapter seeks to answer the research questions and provides a synthesis of the literature reviewed in respect of changes in empowerment. Chapter Six also gives a synthesis of the findings of the research, as well as presenting the conclusions and offering recommendations for theory, practice and further research.

6.2   SYNTHESIS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The inter-relatedness of the concepts of lifelong learning, coaching, empowerment and learning organisations needed to be investigated to provide a rationale for this research. As it is important to understand the influence of these concepts, it formed the focus in the literature review.

6.2.1 Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning amounts to more than education and training beyond formal structures. A lifelong learning framework encompasses learning throughout the life cycle and in different learning environments.

The concept of learning is facing fundamental changes in the context of the global knowledge economy. One important source of change is the accelerating speed of scientific and technological advancement and the resulting changes in the society and economy (or labour market) at any given time. Another reason for new conceptions of

learning is the fact that diverse and innovative approaches to learning are increasingly becoming available to accommodate the needs of people with diverse backgrounds and levels of skills and competencies. New approaches to learning (such as coaching) allow learning to take place beyond traditional education and training to update required skills and competencies. A new emphasis is therefore placed on the individual lifelong learner. Tobin (2000) reiterates the role of individual lifelong learners within organisations, in that committed lifelong learners are seen as vital catalysts for effective business activities and competitiveness.

From a lifelong learning perspective, Tuijnman and Bostrom (2002:102) conclude that with a shift to the notion of self-directed learning (being given more prominence) the emphasis is "on the individual lying at the centre of the educational processs, having the potential to take charge of his/her own learning".

Within the context of the research, andragogy and experiential learning are used as conceptual frameworks in the facilitation of lifelong learning. Andragogy can be seen as "the art and science of helping adults to learn" (Knowles, 1980:43). Within the context of experiential learning, Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning was used as framework. The model advocates that the learner needs to pass through a cycle of concrete experience, reflection on that experience, abstract conceptualisation, and application of the insights in a new context. Although learners may have preferences for one or more stages of the cycle, a journey through the whole process leads to growth and development.

6.2.2 Coaching

From the reviewed literature, it is clear that coaching is a modern and rapidly growing method for helping others to improve, develop, learn new skills, find personal success, achieve aims, manage change and meet work challenges.

Coaching is an enabling process, and within this context, a lifelong learning and coaching approach is suited to meet the challenges facing managers, in the sense that they are required to operate to the best of their ability in a constantly changing and uncertain environment. Alexander and Renshaw (2005) conclude that coaching is about helping individuals and organisations become more effective and successful.

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Based on the two conceptual models used as conceptual framework, namely the Co-Active Coaching Model (Whitworth et al., 2001) and the Behavioural Coaching Model (Skiffington & Zeus, 2003), the two models highlight the following common aspects:

- Coaching draws out rather than puts in.

- Coaching develops rather than imposes.

- Coaching reflects rather than directs.

- Coaching is flexible and enabling.

- Coaching is non-judgemental.

- Coaching can help people grow.

- Coaching involves continuous learning.

The research draws from the two coaching models, integrating the strengths of each model (by using the experiential model of Kolb, 1984) to facilitate the empowerment of middle managers (adult learners) in the South African food retail sector.

Hargrove (2003) concludes that coaching is about drawing the very best out of someone, as well as having the potential to empower the individual.

6.2.3 Empowerment

As coaching entails helping individuals grow and become more self aware, it also allows the individual to become more empowered. According to Tamasane (1998), empowerment is the process of increasing people's power or potential at different levels. Vogt and Murrell (1990) describe empowerment as a journey that seeks a personal as well as an organisational transformation by tapping into the human potential for growth and development. Within this context, empowerment involves change. As change is the essence of any developmental process, managers and organisations should play an active role in empowerment processes. Moreover, learning has the potential to create new perspectives.

Learner empowerment has long been the goal of adult education (lifelong learning). Mezirow (1991:138) describes learner empowerment as "becoming more aware of one's

own awareness". Mezirow (1991) further advocates a movement from simple awareness to an awareness of the conditions of experiencing (a reflection on the process), and beyond this, to an awareness of the reasons why learners experience as they do, and to action based on these insights. Mezirow (1991) concludes that learning is not complete until the learner acts on the changed assumptions or values.

6.2.4 Learning organisations

According to Sadler-Smith (2006:224), the learning organisation is not a destination, but rather a state of "being" which continuously unfolds one's understanding of oneself and one's organisation, the world and one's place in the world.

A learning organisation strives to learn through its individual members. A learning environment does not simply occur spontaneously; a learning and development culture needs to be actively developed. Coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) strives to bring individuals to reflect, as well as to conceptualise and take action.

A hidden characteristic of organisational structure is authority. A decentralised authority orientation provides the most potential for employee growth and development (Gilley, 2005), allowing employees to enhance their personal self-esteem and their loyalty to the organisation. Within the context of the research (within an organisation that uses a centralised authority approach), the decentralisation of authority creates a certain dilemma. Although an organisation might wish to empower employees, the culture within the organisation does not always allow this to manifest.

Although dated, Burke (1992:196–197) proposes a "developmental organisation" where "the growth and development of organisational members are just as important as making profits or staying within budget". Burke (1992:6) concludes that by "taking learning to its highest form – to development – employees can reach their full potential".

The researcher is of the opinion that learning has unlimited potential for developing both the individual and the organisation. Learning has the potential to enhance the overall development of employees, thereby maximising their contribution to the organisation.

The different concepts discussed in this chapter have obvious interconnections. Lifelong learning (facilitated by the use of a coaching methodology) has the potential to empower individuals, which again affects organisations.

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6.3   SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

The findings of the research are discussed to couch it within the context of the research questions and the research methodology, as well as relating it to the literature. The research focused on a coaching intervention (using coaching as a method to facilitate learning) to empower a group of middle managers in the retail sector, deployed from a lifelong learning perspective.

The research followed a multiple case study design and was conducted in three phases. The methodological framework for this research applied mixed methods, in that both qualitative and quantitative methods were used during the research. According to Creswell and Clarke (2007), the use of mixed methods can lead to an increased sophistication of evidence. Methods included interviews, field notes, questionnaires, observations, tests and official statistics. This evaluation is valid in the sense that it is congruent with the methodology.

In the following section, the findings of the research are presented and discussed:

6.3.1   Coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) indeed led to the increased empowerment of certain individual managers (Respondents 1,3,4,5 and 8). This finding is supported in the literature, corresponding with Whitmore's (2002) assertion(mentioned in 3.1) that coaching is a process of empowering others.

6.3.2   Only the individual middle managers who completed the experiential learning cycle (the cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation) showed overall empowerment gains, which is in line with the arguments held by Kolb (1984) and Chapman (2010), indicating that movement through the whole process leads to growth and development.

6.3.3   Individual managers who were more involved, engaged and positive during the coaching process showed improvement in the empowerment score, as well as in the overall learning gain (Respondents 1,3,4,5 and 8). Albertyn (1995), as mentioned in 3.3.2.3, indicates that an empowered individual is someone who participates. Tamasane (1998) (see 3.3.2.3) agrees with this

finding and argues that through participation, changes may be effected. Smith and Spurling (2001) (see 3.1) support this finding when they state that coaching can help individuals learn consistently over time. However, these authors caution that learners need to express commitment, a proactive attitude and involvement.

6.3.4   Respondents who had undergone supervisory training were quicker to demonstrate learning gains (compare 5.3.2.1 – participant observation) and were generally more engaged than individuals who had not undergone any form of supervisory training (Respondents 1,3,4 and 8). This can be equated to experience, or being able to draw from such experience. This is reflected in the results of the test (see 5.4.1) pertaining to the initial evaluation in the pre-test phase, with Respondents 4 and 8 obtaining the highest scores.

6.3.5   The two individuals who did not attend their coaching sessions regularly showed a decline in empowerment scores (Respondents 6 and 7). It could be concluded that they were not part of the learning and development activity by choice (voluntary participation). With regard to facilitating effective adult learning, Brookfield (1986), as mentioned in 2.5, cautions that participation in learning should be voluntary. Field notes (see 5.2.2) consistently refer to these individuals "not engaging" the process. The decline in empowerment scores in both respondents is reflected in figures 5.7 and 5.8 (see 5.4.2).

6.3.6   Some individuals (like Respondent 6) are reluctant to change at all. Through observation (see 5.3.2), it became evident that some individuals (Respondent 6) showed no intention of making an effort to change. Skiffington and Zeus (2003) explain this by arguing that change involves action (see 3.2.3.2), something Respondent 6 failed to do throughout the coaching process. Learning should always lead to action.

6.3.7   Those respondents who wanted to be part of the coaching intervention showed both empowerment and learning gains, whereas those who had no such interest, showed the opposite results (Respondents 1,3,4 and 8

versus Respondents 6 and 7). This is reflected in 5.3.1.1 (questionnaires), indicating improvements in empowerment scores (Respondents 1, 3, 4 and 8) versus a decline in scores (Respondents 6 and 7). Brookfield (1986) (see 2.5) refers to the effective facilitation of learning being collaborative and involving "continual renegotiation of activities and priorities".

6.3.8   The individual female managers seemed more engaged during coaching sessions than their male counterparts (Respondents 1,4,8 and 9). Flaherty (1999) supports this finding, as mentioned in 2.6 in the literature, pointing out that women are seen to approach learning in a way that highlights "connectedness". This became evident during unstructured interviews (5.2.1.2) and participant observation (5.3.2.1) of the female respondents. Respondent 8 seemed most engaged during the majority of the interactions (see 5.5).

6.3.9   The general level of trust in the relationship between the researcher (coach) and the individual coachee's was higher in those individuals who had completed previous training with the researcher (coach), than in individuals who had not previoulsy been in interaction with the coach (the researcher), as mentioned in 5.3.2.1 – participant observation. This was true of Respondents 1,3,4,8, and to a lesser degree of Respondent 9. Cilliers (2005) confirms this finding, as seen in 3.2.3.5, by reporting that the relationship is a critical element in the coaching process. This became evident during unstructured interviews (see 5.2.1.2) where individuals shared personal and intimate details.

6.3.10 Interpersonal communication, as well as interpersonal interaction, seemed to be an important skill during the coaching process. When not displayed, it could lead to detachment and a sense of disengagement (Respondents 2, 6 and 7), as displayed during unstructured interviews (5.2.1.2), as well as during participant observation (5.3.2.1). This was evidenced in the content analysis of field notes (see 5.2.2). The finding is in line with the importance of a relationship and builds on good communication, as noted by Cilliers (2005) and Stout Rostron et al. (2009) in 3.2.3.5.

6.3.11 People feel safer and more secure when they know they are being listened to (see 5.2.1.2 – unstructured interviews), which leads to a deeper sense of trust (most notably in Respondents 3, 5 and 8). Brookfield (1986) (in 2.5) explains that people feel valued as separate, unique individuals in interactions characterised by trust. Effective listening, as used in both coaching models, is a critical element in the coaching process.

6.3.12 The effect of finding the answers "within" the individual was facilitated by asking effective questions resulting in reflection and conceptualisation (Respondents 1, 3, 4, 5 and 8), as found during unstructured interviews (5.2.1.2) and participant observation (5.3.2.1).

6.3.13 Coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) leads individual managers to self-reflection and to finding the answers in themselves (most notably in Respondent 8). Mezirow (1990) (see 2.4.3) speaks of a "deepening of awareness", which may indicate internal reflection to find answers within the individual. This is confirmed by Skiffington and Zeus (2003) (see 3.2.3.2), as well as by Whitworth et al. (2001) (see 3.2.3.1), confirming that the individual is capable and resourceful and has the answers. This became evident during participant observation (see 5.3.2.1) in respondents who showed improvement in empowerment scores.

6.3.14 Most of the coachees, namely Respondents 1,3,4,5,8 and 9 (see 5.2.1.2 – unstructured interviews and 5.2.2 – field notes), who were enthusiastic and engaging at the start of the coaching intervention, remained so throughout, which created a positive culture of exploration, learning and development. This finding is confirmed by Peters (1996) (see 3.2.3.5) and contributes to building an educative framework (creating a culture of learning and development), which involves individual adult learners in a lifelong learning context (see 3.4).

6.3.15 Coachees that showed commitment to the coaching intervention/process (see 5.2.1.1 – structured interviews, 5.2.1.2 – unstructured interviews and 5.2.2 – field notes) completed most of their given tasks (5.3.2.1 – participant observation) and goals that they set for themselves(structured interviews).

This equated to "finishing" tasks and eventually implies action, which forms an integral part of the learning process (Chapman 2010).

6.3.16 Initial individual challenges or areas to be developed (within the individual coachee's) became strengths over time. Examples of this finding (see 5.5.) was evident in Respondent 1, (not being able to make her own needs known), and Respondent 3 (not being able to confront people). For both of the respondents, these areas became strengths over time, indicating a possible change in perspective. This transformation could be described as becoming more empowered in themselves (see micro-level empowerment score in 5.4.2) as well as viewing their world from a different, enriched perspective as found by Skiffington and Zeus (2003) (see 3.2.3). Stout Rostron et al. (2009), mentioned in 2.4.3, alludes to the reconstruction of thinking and feeling to gain perspective and become self-directed learners.

6.3.17 Reinforcement of success is important within the coaching context. This was particularly evident in Respondent 8 (see 5.2.1.2 – unstructured interviews), as it was only after much reinforcement and encouragement that the respondent became confident of her new behaviour. This is reflected in her micro-level empowerment score (see 5.4.2).

Most of the findings are based on participant observation, due to the nature of the learning process (using coaching as a method to facilitate learning). However, findings are also based on interviews, field notes, questionnaires and tests.

6.4   CONCLUSIONS

A conclusion can be seen as an opinion or judgement reached after consideration. Within the context of the research, the findings show that coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) did seem to have an effect on the individuals who participated in the coaching intervention. Considering the findings of the research, the following conclusions can be drawn:

6.4.1   Coaching (as method to facilitate learning) may lead to the empowerment of middle managers. One of the findings (6.3.1) indicated that five of the ten middle managers showed empowerment gains after participating in a

coaching intervention, further indicating that the process of coaching could have led to the empowerment of these individuals.

6.4.2　Using an experiential approach in facilitating learning may be an effective methodology to facilitate learning, in that the only respondents who showed empowerment gains were also the only five respondents who completed the learning cycle (6.3.2).

6.4.3　In facilitating learning, andragogical principles such as self-concept, experience, readiness to learn, orientation to learning and motivation to learn could provide a better understanding for facilitating learning to empower individuals (6.3.5, 6.3.7, 6.3.13).

6.4.4　Effective facilitation of learning involves praxis of action and reflection, and by using coaching (as a method to learning), such praxis of reflection and action could be an inherent part of the coaching process (6.3.13, 6.3.15).

6.4.5　The aim of facilitation is the nurturing of self-directed, empowered adults. Within the context of self-directed learning, the notion of changing perspective and becoming more aware could allow the individual to operate independently (6.3.16).

6.4.6　The longer participants attend or become involved in the coaching intervention, the more their empowerment status would grow. This corresponds with the findings of Bester (2002), mentioned in 1.7. The respondents who did not complete the coaching intervention (R2,6 and 7) showed a decline in the empowerment score. All individuals who showed empowerment gains showed engagement (as found in 6.3.3), enthusiasm (6.3.14) and commitment (as found in 6.3.15).

6.4.7　Interpersonal skills seem to be a critical factor during the coaching process. This conclusion is based on the findings in 6.3.10, 6.3.11 and 6.3.12. The very nature and essence of the coaching process involves and revolves around interpersonal interaction and the relationship (3.1.6) between the coach and coachee.

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6.4.8 Effective coaching requires masterful listening, attuned and adept, with the ability to maximise the listening interaction. This conclusion is drawn from the finding as presented in 6.3.11, as well as from the extensive use of the two conceptual models (the Co-Active and Behavioural Coaching Models).

6.4.9 Effective questioning generates and defines the search within the individual, as expressed in 6.3.13. This "searching", allows for self-reflection and self-regulation (3.2.3.2), which is indicative of empowered lifelong learners. This is further evidenced in the use of self-refection in the three conceptual coaching models used during the research. This searching could relate to the internal exploration within the individual. Critical to questioning is clarification of what the individual is expressing or trying to express.

6.4.10 Exploration should create learning opportunities, and within this context, learning could become more meaningful as the adult engages learning that is more self-directed. This further implies a commitedness to self-reflection (6.4.6) as an essential lifelong learning skill. This type of learning is important in coaching, because it leads to sustainable change and growth. This conclusion is grounded in 6.3.13.

6.4.11 By finding the answers in themselves, the individual managers become even more resourceful. This allows the individual to become more autonomous, pointing to an empowered lifelong learner as expressed in 3.3.2 and 6.3.16.

6.4.12 Positive results must be reinforced, as mentioned in 6.3.16, and point towards the importance of building an educative environment and helping concerned individuals learn, as proposed in 3.4.

6.4.13 The coachee/individual should be encouraged to "finish" tasks, as described in 6.3.15. Learning should ultimately lead to action (see Chapman, 2010 in 1.8.3). This could be seen as finishing what the coachee has started. Whitworth et al., 2001 (see 3.2.3.1) describe this as "actioning the learning", implying that the individual/moves to action to complete tasks.

The majority of evidence is based on/drawn from observations in different types of settings. From the evidence and observations, the researcher aims to create concepts and build logically sound theories. Judging by the evidence that supports the findings and conclusions of this research, the following section aims to answer the three research questions as posed in Chapter One, namely:

Research Question 1

What is the effect of coaching as a method of learning and development in the facilitation of lifelong learning to empower middle managers within the food retail environment?

Coaching as a method of learning and development did indeed seem to empower some (five respondents) middle managers, though not all. From a lifelong learning perspective, all of the respondents who completed the experiential learning cycle were empowered through the coaching process. By considering andragogical principles when facilitating learning (lifelong learning), the learning process is further enhanced. The notions of self-directed learning (changing perspective) and autonomy (which could be defined as having understanding and awareness of a range of alternative possibilities) are integral aspects throughout the developmental process.

Research Question 2

Is coaching (as only another way of facilitating learning) an effective method for facilitating learning and development of middle managers in the food retail environment?

The dynamic nature of coaching makes it an effective method for learning and development in the retail sector. The researcher could complete the coaching (as a learning and development activity) intervention with all the learners. Time constraints are amongst the biggest challenges to be met when implementing effective learning and development interventions in the retail sector. Coaching is dynamic, flexible and situational, and mirrors the dynamic, flexible and situational nature of the retail environment.

The retail sector is fast-paced and rich in challenges. Coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) demands a quick response and a rapid change in the approach to different situations. Within this context, coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) can be seen as a practical method of capacitating (empowering) middle managers to adapt and explore new challenges and opportunities.

The research pointed to middle managers becoming empowered through the learning/coaching process. It could be argued that an individual who has been empowered would have gained from such a learning and development intervention. Most of the respondents had more knowledge and displayed more confidence at the end of the coaching intervention, indicating that coaching was an effective method of learning and development of middle managers in the retail sector.

Research Question 3

Which dimensions should be taken into consideration when implementing a coaching methodology (as a method of learning) when developing middle managers in the retail sector?

In the following section, the researcher endeavours to answer this research question, as well as making the dimensions explicit in the form of a proposed lifelong learning model (using coaching as a method to facilitate learning). In making the model explicit, it may be held up for critical reflection.

6.5   PROPOSED LIFELONG LEARNING MODEL

The researcher did not set out to construct a new lifelong learning model, but strived to identify key dimensions in facilitating lifelong learning. However, in using coaching as a method to facilitate learning, a new model evolved as the researcher implemented an experiential approach to the facilitation of the learning. Based on the findings and conclusions of the research, the research proposes a new model of learning (using coaching as method) to facilitate learning for empowering middle managers in the food retail sector. The model is relevant and applicable to the food retail environment, allowing for individual differences and the uniqueness of both the individual (middle manager) and the organisation. A learning model (using coaching as a method to facilitate learning) cannot be static. It should be a fluid, dynamic working model. It further requires a built-in flexibility and adaptability to meet the specific needs of the coachee (middle manager) and the environment in which it operates. The researcher therefore proposes a new model, naming it the "New Retail Coaching Model".

The model was developed by examining the case studies (involving ten individual middle managers), together with the findings and the conclusions of the research, which involved the gathering of multiple forms of data. Mixed methods research encourages

the use of different perspectives and constitutes a practical and natural approach when researching diverse audiences (Creswell & Clarke, 2007). All of this was done within the context of creating a learning and development landscape, developing a culture of learning (using coaching as a method to facilitate learning) and developing a culture of lifelong learning. In the following section, the New Retail Coaching Model is presented visually (Figure 6.1), as well as giving a brief overview of the core dimensions. Thereafter each dimension (6.5.1-6.5.7) is explained and linked to the findings, conclusions and the reviewed literature.

The unique perspective that the research aims to bring is that of lifelong learning. In the New Retail Coaching Model the central feature is the unique adult learner who becomes empowered through coaching and the experiential learning process. The core dimensions of the New Retail Coaching Model are numbered 2 (building rapport and trust), 3 (listening), 4 (effective questioning) and 7 ("earthing – getting things done), each of which is explained. These red "points" represent the core dimensions of this specific learning model in which coaching is used as a method to facilitate. Apart from being critical to this specific learning model, the said dimensions are grounded in the experiential learning cycle (namely concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation), while also taking the notion of andragogy into consideration. These core dimensions are fundamental to the coaching process at large. The researcher is of the opinion that the activity cannot be defined as coaching unless most of these dimensions are present in the coaching process.

The other dimensions, 1 (provide a foundation – voluntary participation), 4.1 (clarification), 5 (self-reflection) and 6 (creating a culture of learning and development), are shaded in different colours to give the model a three-dimensional depth. The use of these specific colours has no special significance.

In the following figure (Figure 6.1), the New Coaching retail Model is presented graphically. Following this, each dimension contributing to the model will be discussed individually.
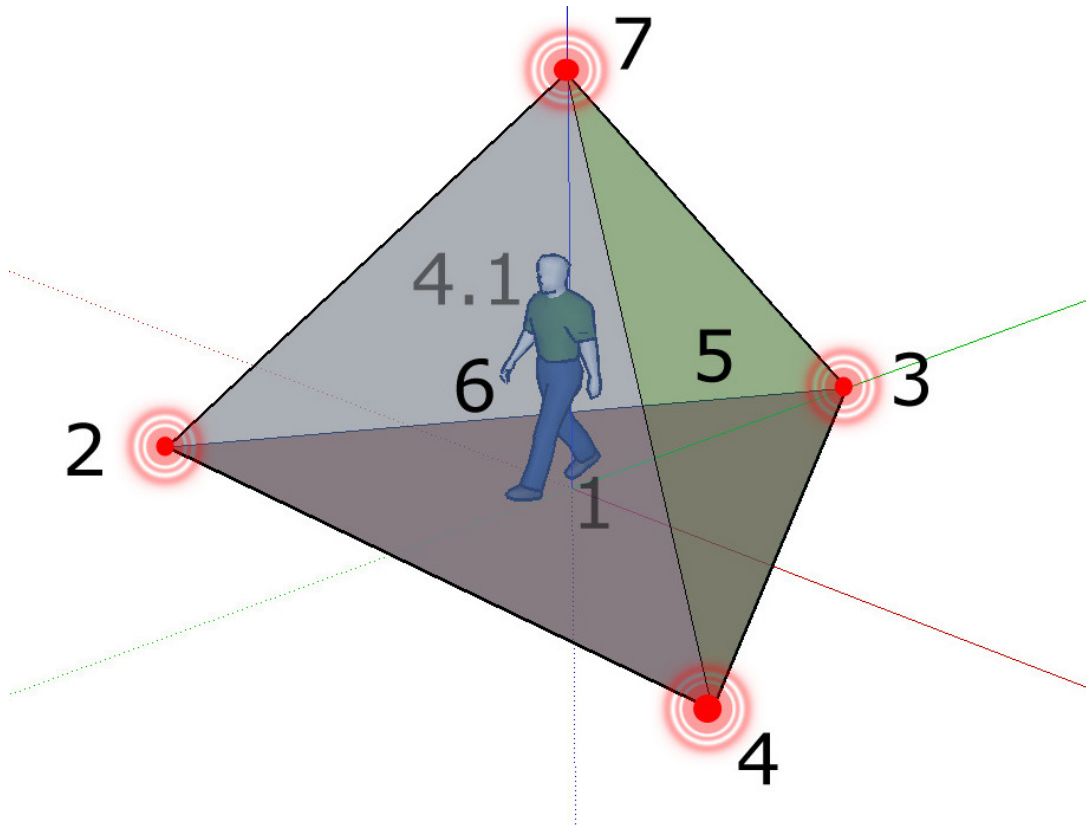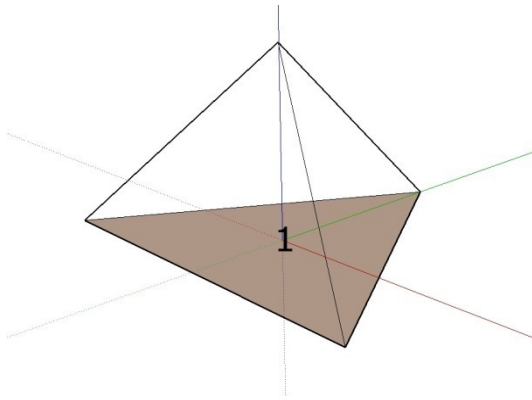
Figure 6.1: The New Coaching Retail Model

6.5.1   Provide a foundation – Voluntary participation

The first dimension (1) that makes up the learning model points to providing a foundation for the learning process, as well as allowing the individual to decide whether he/she wishes to be part of this particular learning and development activity.
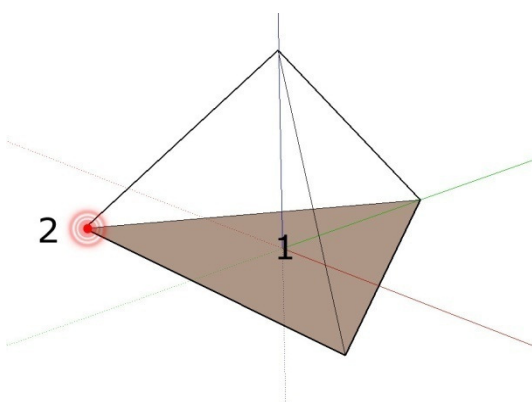

Figure 6.2: Dimension 1

Within the context of the experiential learning process, this dimension alludes to **concrete experience**. Prospective coachees should receive an overview of the coaching process and outcomes. Participation needs to be voluntary, and potential learners (adults) should be consulted individually, prior to a general "roll-out". This allows the adult learner to make a personal decision. As mentioned in Chapter Two, Knowles (1990) proposes that the adult learner (coachee) should be respected and should be free to voice their options, implying that forced attendance may show a lack of respect to the individual who may not wish to become part of the process. There is a probability that certain individuals (6.3.6) may become negative and are reluctant to change at all, because they do not want to be part of the proposed learning intervention. Coaching is a two-way process, and the coaching relationship will be more fruitful if the coachee has the freedom to decide whether he/she wishes to engage in such a two-way partnership, or wants to participate in the said learning and development activity (see 6.3.7). It would also be useful to allow prospective managers to undergo some form of structured supervisory training (refer to 6.3.4) before entering into a learning development activity (such as coaching) aimed at facilitating more effective learning. Individuals (6.3.4) who had previous supervisory training would be better equipped to proceed to a management programme, as they would probably have more confidence and a better understanding of certain supervisory and management principles.

Continued interaction between coach and coachee (from a supervisory level to management level) may strengthen the relationship between coach and coachee (refer to 6.3.9), which is the most critical component in the learning process (6.3.9). The foundation for the coaching triangle (New Coaching Retail Model) is the individual adult learner (coachee), which emphasises the importance of the individual. In this respect, Smith and Spurling (1999:225) conclude that lifelong learning is about fulfilling deep human needs.

6.5.2 Building rapport and trust

The second dimension (2) of the learning model points to building rapport and trust for strengthening the relationship between the coach and learner.
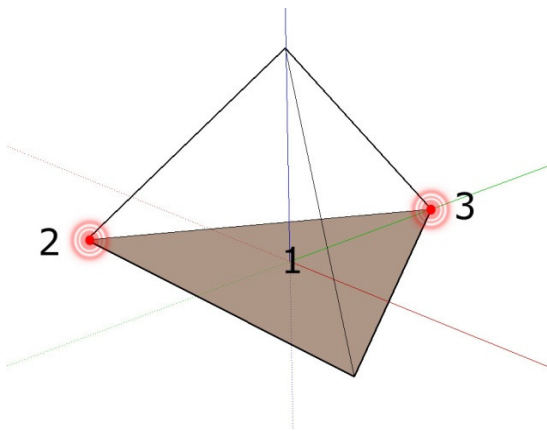

Figure 6.3: Dimension 2

The coach's ability to build rapport and the ensuing relationship with the coachee is vital to the success of the intervention. Normally this ability stems from a desire to help others. The focus is on the coachee, which naturally supports the rapport building process. The coach and coachee view themselves as collaborative and as equal partners engaged in a mutual endeavour. Lifelong learning can be a unique learning process for each individual, as confirmed in 2.6.

Within this context, the coaching relationship rests on a foundation of safety and trust. Trust can be seen as a vital ingredient in the coaching process and is built through consistently being "there" for the coachee (6.3.9). The longer the engagement, the better the results will be (6.4.6 and 6.4.7). Frequency of interaction does not occur automatically, as many daily challenges and obstacles could interfere with coaching sessions. This is very pertinent in the retail sector, as the nature of a retail business

creates a sense of busyness, and managers are faced with various challenges on a daily basis. The coach needs to be fully committed to the coachee, as proposed by Hargrove (2003, in 1.6.2), and at times the coach needs to "push through" to ensure that coaching sessions do materialise. Being committed to the coachee, means laying aside one's own agenda and being present both physically and cognitively. To create trust, it is helpful to discuss safety, maintain confidentiality, tell the truth and actively listen to what the individual is telling the coach.

6.5.3 Listening

The third dimension (3) of the learning model points to effective listening.
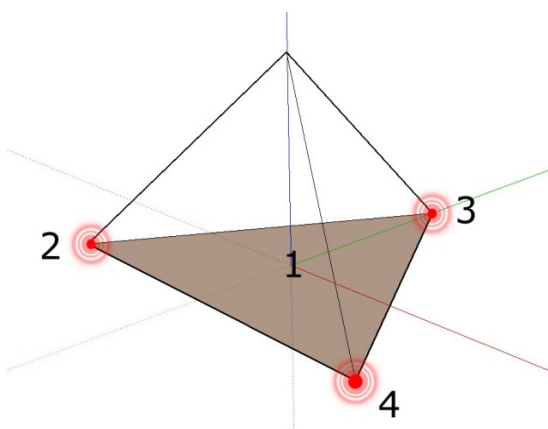

Figure 6.4: Dimension 3

Within the context of the experiential learning process, this dimension alludes to **reflective observation** as well as **abstract conceptualisation**. In facilitating learning (using a coaching methodology), listening is more important than talking. By listening, people can be helped to overcome their fears, be offered complete objectivity and given undivided attention and unparalleled support, as mentioned in 6.3.11. Listening is a critical element in the coaching process (6.4.8). Listening also formed an integral part of the Co-Active (3.2.3.1) and Behavioural Coaching (3.2.3.2) Models that were used as conceptual frameworks for coaching in the research, thereby demonstrating their essential worth.

The coach listens for the individual's purpose in their words and demeanour (5.2.1), which leads to intuitive and effective questioning. This allows coachees to explore what is going on within themselves. By listening effectively, the coach will be able to ask the

right questions at the right time, maximising the listening interaction as concluded in 6.4.8.

6.5.4 Effective questioning

The fourth dimension (4) that forms part of the learning model points to asking effective questions.
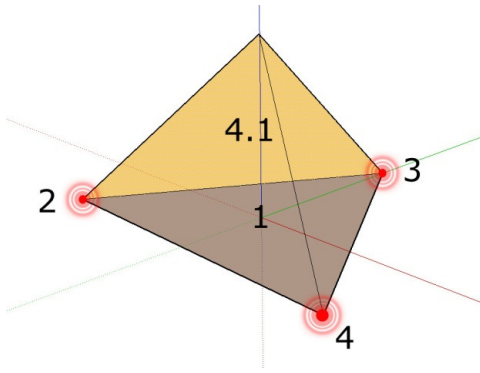

Figure 6.5: Dimension 4

Within the context of the experiential learning process, this dimension alludes to **reflective observation** as well as **abstract conceptualisation**. The quality of the questions asked in a coaching interaction will determine the quality of the output. The coach's ability to ask insightful questions (5.2.1) is the key to heightening awareness (as found in 6.3.13), unlocking information, exploring realities, opening new avenues and establishing actions (6.3.12). It is essential that questions will be considered carefully, mindful of their purpose, relevance and possible value, as mentioned in 5.2.1. The right types of questions provide a non-threatening climate for the coachee to reflect upon his/her situation. Part of the questioning process involves clarification of what has been said.

6.5.4.1   Clarification

Following on dimension 4, the next dimension (4.1) alludes to clarifying what the learner is trying to share.
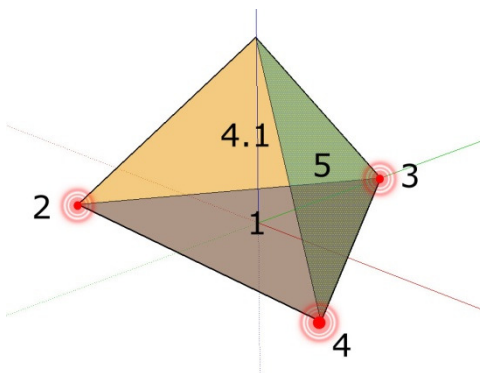
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Figure 6.6: Dimension 4.1

Within the context of the experiential learning process, this dimension alludes to **reflective observation** as well as **abstract conceptualisation**. What people say is not always what they mean. Clarification is a technique to clarify the coachee's own thoughts, but also to prevent the coach imposing his/her own (possibly incorrect) interpretations on what the coachee is trying to express. Clarification is critical to what the individual is expressing or trying to express (as found in 6.4.9). Whitworth et al. (2001) confirm that clarification may be used in response to the coachee's vague sense of what it is they want to express, and where there is confusion or uncertainty (5.2.1). This dimension represents a synergistic application of questioning, and this shared dialogue generates new ideas, shifts and transformations (as found in 6.3.16) in the coachee. Part of transformation involves being able to self-reflect (a critical lifelong learning skill).

6.5.5 Self-reflection

The fifth dimension (5) in the learning model points to the ability to self-reflect.
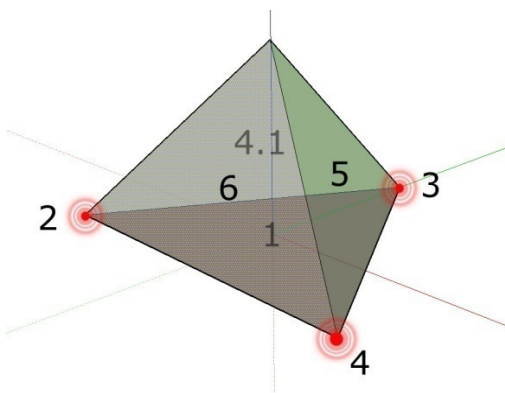

Figure 6.7 Dimension 5

Within the context of the experiential learning process, this dimension alludes to **reflective observation**. Self-reflection within this context, highlights the major difference between new thinking and traditional ways of training and learning. The new thinking requires the individual to reflect upon and "mediate" the differences between the old and new behaviours, as concluded in 6.3.16. This demands that the individual "think through" the old behaviour and proceed to a new mode. From a lifelong learning perspective, such reflection is a means of bypassing the interference from prior learning, helping the individual to gain perspective and become self-directed in his or her learning (see 6.3.16). This means that the learner is responsible for learning, understanding and changing.

6.5.6 Creating a culture of learning and development

The sixth dimension (6) refers to creating a culture of learning and development.
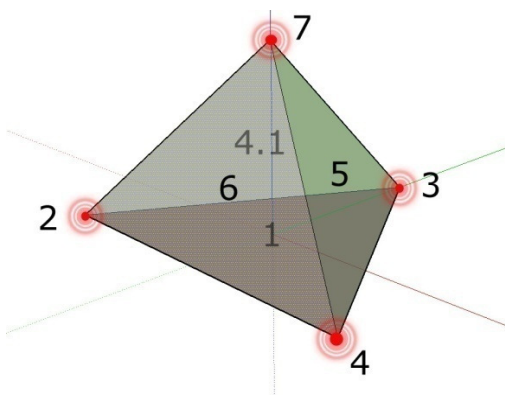

Figure 6.8: Dimension 6

Within the context of lifelong learning and adult learning, the proposed model is not so much focused on goals and goal setting, but rather on a culture of learning and development. Coaching requires a structure that allows a continuous process of conversation to promote learning and development. From a lifelong learning perspective, Smith and Spurling (1999) envisage individuals learning consistently throughout life (2.2).

Such a culture needs to be nurtured and developed as proposed in 3.4. It is through this style of conversation that the coach and coachee learn about each other's perceptions, worldviews, values and meaning. It is through building an educative environment (as

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found in 6.4.12) that coachees/lifelong learners can continually grow and develop, as new ways of thinking, behaving and coming into being come to fruition. This type of environment is discussed further in section 3.4. Hunt and Weintraub (2007) conclude that organisations have a critical role to play in the learning process (within a coaching context), providing an environment which fundamentally supports learning and coaching.

6.5.7 "Earthing" – Getting things done

The last dimension (7) refers to actioning the learning.

Figure 6.9: Dimension 7

Within the context of the experiential learning process, this dimension alludes to **active experimentation**. As proposed in Chapter Three, the purpose of coaching is to generate action and learning.

"Earthing" is a term that the researcher uses to explain the concept of "getting things done" or "finishing" a task or project in which the individual has engaged. The researcher describes it as "developing a finishing mentality". Consistency in finishing tasks (varying in size and nature) allows the coachee to get into a habit of "finishing" things through reinforcement, as found in 6.3.17. In conclusion, 6.4.13 refers to actioning the learning; it implies that the individual moves towards taking action in the process of completing tasks. Eventually this becomes a way of life whereby a person "actions" or gets things done consistently, thereby finishing what has been started.

6.6   RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THEORY, PRACTICE, POLICY AND FURTHER RESEARCH

This section proposes recommendations relating to theory, practice, policy development and further research, based on the findings and the conclusions of this research.

6.6.1   Recommendations for theory

It is recommended that the New Coaching Retail Model could be considered for use as a practical framework for learning and development in the food retail sector. As coaching is situational (as mentioned in Chapter One) and individuals are uniquely different, this model is to be used as guideline only, and facilitators should guard against merely following different "steps" in the coaching process. The New Coaching Retail Model consists of dimensions, rather than steps. The implication is that the New Retail Coaching Model is neither a recipe for how to coach, nor a means to define the coaching process. The New Retail Coaching Model could be applied to facilitate lifelong learning.

The most important element in the application of the New Retail Coaching Model is an acknowledgement of both the individual adult learner and the concept of lifelong learning. Awareness of lifelong learning principles, as well as better understanding of the individual adult learner, allows the model to be applied in a fluid, dynamic way. The act of facilitating learning is challenging and complex and facilitators should avoid prepackaged solutions.

6.6.2   Recommendations for practice

Although the sample size is too small to generalise about the broader implementation of a learning model, this research provides insight into the learning and development of middle managers in South Africa's food retail sector. Given the limitations of the research, the learning model could be effective where similar contextual factors are present. It could further be postulated that the learning model caters for specific application within the food retail sector. However, by making adjustments to cater for other contextualities, facilitators could apply this model in other sectors in the retail industry.

Critical to the implementation of this learning and development activity, is the readiness and commitment of the organisation to implement and support a learning intervention of this kind. Hunt and Weintraub (2007) refer to a "coaching-friendly context", whereby the

context can be viewed as a subculture within the organisation that directly supports coaching and learning.

In a coaching-friendly context, employees (adults) feel free to speak frankly about their development and challenges. In such an environment, the employees' natural interest in learning and self-improvement emerges, and the responsibility for driving the learning process is shared between the individual and the organisation. This philosophy accommodates lifelong learning in that the learner becomes self-directed and empowered. In reality, and especially in the retail environment, organisations need to guard against the notion of seeing learning activities as a "once-off" activity. Lifelong learning is defined by continuous learning, which means that the sustainability of such learning is of crucial importance.

By employing a strategy to learning (within the context of lifelong learning), the sustainability of such learning and development activities could be raised. From this research, it appears that the organisation should guard against falling back on old practices or ignoring the development of employees.

Coaching does not always yield immediate results. Individuals learn in different ways and at their own pace. The food retail environment is always busy and presents many challenges, as the industry looks at results as well as the bottomline. A lifelong learning perspective approaches coaching from a different angle.

Although flexible, coaching sessions (opportunities to learn) should not be set aside because of time constraints or other reasons. The challenge is to make time and set times to meet regularly and consistently.

According to the researcher, the most critical factor for implementing a learning and development activity (such as coaching to facilitate learning) is the coaching relationship and the coach. Hargrove (2003) captures this statement well (in 1.6.2) by emphasising that coaching is based on being completely committed to the coachees, so as to leave them inspired, empowered and enabled with respect to their concerns.

The New Retail Coaching Model, due to its fluidness and flexibility, is relatively easy to implement. However, it is recommended that the lifelong learning model be tested and adjusted to suit a particular context and to allow for wider applicability. Hargrove

(2003:259) sets the context of the coach by describing his/her task in terms of acting as a "steward" of the process. By implication, only a committed individual would be suited to implementing the proposed lifelong learning model.

6.6.3   Recommendations for policy

Every company needs policies and procedures to operate efficiently, promoting the vision and strategic objectives of the company in respect of standards of excellence and employee development. Policies and procedures should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure alignment of the specific business environment.

Within the context of the research, and within the South African context, Du Toit (2009) proposes the following important human resource policies to be put in place within organisations, namely:

- skills development policies and procedures (including learning and development activities);

- a coaching policy, process and procedures; and

- a performance management policy, process and procedure.

It is recommended that organisations, institutions or companies consider adopting coaching (as a method of facilitating learning) to capacitate and develop potential supervisors or managers.

Coaching (as a method to facilitate learning) could be incorporated in any organisation's skills development policies, learning and development policies and performance management policies. Coaching can become part of the organisation's bigger development philosophy, indicative of a shift in philosophy where employees are not merely viewed as human resources, but as unique adult learners to be taken care of and developed individually. This could create a sense of wellness throughout an organisation, as well as within the individual as person (on a micro-level).

6.6.4   Future directions for research

Exploring the gaps between research and practice is a primary role of the reflective practioner/coach (Swanson & Holton, 1997). The call to action is to implement best practices and to conduct more research related to methods for assessing valid learning needs, for creating and implementing valid strategies to achieve learning goals, and to

conduct valid assessment and evaluation of learning. This effort should be directed at organisational needs as well as the particular needs of teams and individual performers.

In its current form, coaching is an evolving field, the definition of which yet has to be determined, and where good practice is still being studied and developed.

An important challenge for coaching and lifelong learning in the future will be the ability to maintain links between the personal development of individual learners and the attainment of solid business results for their organisation. Only when this is achieved consistently, can a coaching intervention justify the investment that it demands. The formula for success will display a number of characteristics, such as coaches being able to address issues pertaining to the individual, the team and the organisation. At the same time, coaches will need to continue exploring leadership within the powerful dynamics of human interaction, commonly referred to as relationships.

In reflecting on the study, the researcher acknowledges that more reflection is required when working with individuals. Each individual is unique and this uniqueness unfolds as the learning experience progresses. In capturing the uniqueness of such an experience a much more narrative rich picture could become evident. This could open up a new perspective on learning which could help us understand the inner dimensions of the adult learner and the concept of empowerment.

In combining these elements, the New Coaching Retail Model could provide a blueprint for the coaching of managers in the retail sector. This framework, in essence, asserts that coaching functions optimally when located within a relationship aligned with lifelong learning principles.

In conclusion, it needs to be emphasised that learning will become a key business driver in the future, and that coaching will play a significant role in this respect. The researcher proposes that in the future:

- Coaching and learning interventions will become more reflective of the diversity of individual learning requirements and approaches.

- Meaning and balance will be most relevant in learning activities.

- There will be new concern for the individual in key positions within organisations.

- Measurable results will remain crucial, but complex forms of measurement involving human capital and capability will evolve along with encompassing business goals.

The principles underlying the development are basic to the lifelong learning process. The success of a learning and development activity (such as coaching) to facilitate learning will depend on a democratic and supportive climate. In addition, the effectiveness of an adult education (lifelong learning) process will vary according to the extent to which the educative environment has been developed.

Using a lifelong learning approach to design coaching interventions can be a first step in creating a climate in which these strategies can flourish.

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